



From Pastor's Desk The Three Feasts: Ascension, Pentecost, Holy Trinity

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

The three feasts of Ascension (40 days after Easter), Pentecost (50 days after Easter) which leads to Trinity (the Sunday after Pentecost), in their different ways celebrate and recognize the truth that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not just events of the past, but present day realities pointing the way to life, freedom, and hope for all humankind now.

The Ascension

The Ascension is usually described as marking the completion of Jesus' ministry on earth as he returned to Heaven. But it is far more than that. It marks the exact moment when Jesus, Son of God, commissioned his disciples to begin the gigantic task of converting the whole world. As recorded in St Mark's Gospel, Jesus said: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one

who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned."

After He rose from the dead, the Lord Jesus presented Himself alive to the Apostles, "appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). When He ascended to the right hand of the Father, He did not orphan His Church, but fills all things in heaven and on earth, and gives gifts to His disciples. Even now, through His Church, He continues "to do and teach" (Acts 1:1), preaching "repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Luke 24:47), even "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Though the cloud hid Jesus from the sight of His disciples then, and He remains hidden from sight even now, He remains with His people through His Gospel and Sacraments. He comes to us by the Word of His Apostles, by the promise of His Father and the power of the Holy Spirit, whom He pours out upon "the church, which is His body" (Eph. 1:23). In this holy, Christian

Church, we bless God and worship Christ with joy, for in His Church He blesses us with forgiveness, lifts us up in His hands, and seats us with Himself “in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:20).

The Day of Pentecost

St Luke tells us that Pentecost occurred a short time after the Ascension, and marked the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise, at his Ascension, to send the Holy Spirit on the disciples.

The gift of the Holy Spirit electrified these fearful followers—who only weeks before had run away when Jesus was arrested, and were still hiding for fear of those who had been responsible for their Lord’s death—and transformed them into men and women willing to lay down their lives for their faith, as many of them did.

In returning to His Father by way of the Cross and Resurrection, Christ Jesus sends “the Helper” to His Church, that is, “the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father.” The Spirit testifies of Christ and glorifies Him, by taking what is His and declaring it to the world in the preaching of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (John 15:26; 16:7, 14). He convicts the world of sin by the word of the Law; He forgives sins and justifies sinners by the Word of the Gospel; and He bestows the faith which says “Amen” to this righteousness of God (John 16:8–11). Therefore, the Lord pours out His Spirit on the Apostles, that by their preaching, the Spirit should be given to His entire church. As the multitudes are gathered from all the nations by “this sound,” that is, by the preaching of “the mighty works of God” in Christ Jesus, so does God the Father pour out the Spirit of His Son “on all flesh” (Acts 2:6, 11, 16). The Lord God breathes upon the slain, and so shall they live; for

so the Lord has spoken, and He shall do it (Ezek. 37:5–14).

The Holy Trinity

The feast of Holy Trinity, though logically linked with the other two, was established much later. Although its existence was clearly stated in the New Testament, and early recognized as a doctrine of the faith, it was only when the Arian heresy—which denied Jesus was God—was spreading in the fourth century, that the church fathers prepared propers with canticles, responses, a preface, and hymns, to be recited at the Divine Service. From these, the feast we now celebrate as Trinity Sunday gradually evolved.

Together, these great feasts mark the promise that Jesus gave to his disciples, and its fulfillment in the Church on earth. As recorded by St Matthew, the very last words Jesus said to his Apostles before going up to Heaven, were: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Through these feasts three central but hidden realities are affirmed: Jesus Christ is Lord of all (Ascension), the Spirit of God has been poured out to create faith through Word and Sacrament (Pentecost), and that the Christian faith is always lived out in a triune community of one’s faith toward God and fervent love toward one another, as the very nature of God is triune community (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). However, in celebrating these feasts, as with the celebration of faith through the whole year, the important thing is not simply intellectual understanding, for faith is not just rational comprehension. It is also letting these spiritual realities take root in your hearts, minds, and spirits so that they are lived out here in time and there in eternity.

From the President Baptized For This Moment

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

Someone once said, "Courage is faith that has said its prayers." I prefer to say, "Courage is fear that has been baptized!" The theme for this summer's LCMS convention is "Baptized for This Moment." The theme verse is from the great missionary book of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (Acts 2:38b39).

If ever the Church has needed courage, it is now. But as an armchair historian, I'm familiar enough with what Christians have written and experienced through the centuries. There is a common theme from Paul's epistles to Luther to C. F. W. Walther: "Things can hardly get worse! We are in the very last days, and Jesus will return soon!" "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20). So as bad as things may look to us now, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13). Indeed, the Lord has blessed and preserved the Church through all the centuries, and Jesus promised that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!" (Matt. 16:18).

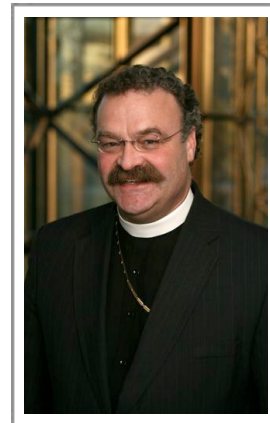
In all of history, this is the moment the Lord has given us. Like Luther standing in front of the powers of the western world when he gave his "Hear I stand speech," we stand in the face of "principalities and powers" of darkness (Eph. 6:12). The devil knows his time is short, and his attacks are intense, especially upon the Missouri Synod (Rev. 20:7f.; Matt. 24:24). The devil and

our sinful flesh would lull us into apathy over the Gospel and do anything to decrease our passion and zeal for proclamation of the Gospel to those who need Christ, tempting us to believe that, having it all correct, we can smugly sit back and keep our light under a bushel, hoping that a few parched

souls might stumble upon us (Matt. 5:15; 22:2f.). Or we might be tempted to jettison portions of God's Word and our confession for the sake of mission--a kind of mission reductionism (Matt. 28:20; Acts 20:27). If the devil can set confession against mission or mission against confession, he's got us! The two belong together (1 John 4:1415).

The convention theme verse has something to say to us all.

1. "Repent!" I love to confess the sins of someone else! "I thank thee that I'm not like other men!" (Luke 18:11). It's time for me to confess my sins of apathy, coldness toward the Gospel, lack of love for my neighbor who needs Christ, apathy for the fellowship of which the Lord has made me a part and so on.
2. "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus!" "I am baptized" was Luther's greatest comfort. Despite my sins and manifold failings, God has grabbed me by the neck, sinner that I am, and made me His own (Titus 3:5).
3. "For the forgiveness of your sins." I'm forgiven! I forgive! (Read all of Matthew 18.)
4. "And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." I have the Spirit of Christ. I recognize the Word of my Savior in Holy Scripture (John 10:27). I have comfort in



affliction (Matt. 11:28). I have courage in duress! (John 14:27). I can speak the Word of God to my neighbor (1 Peter 2:9).

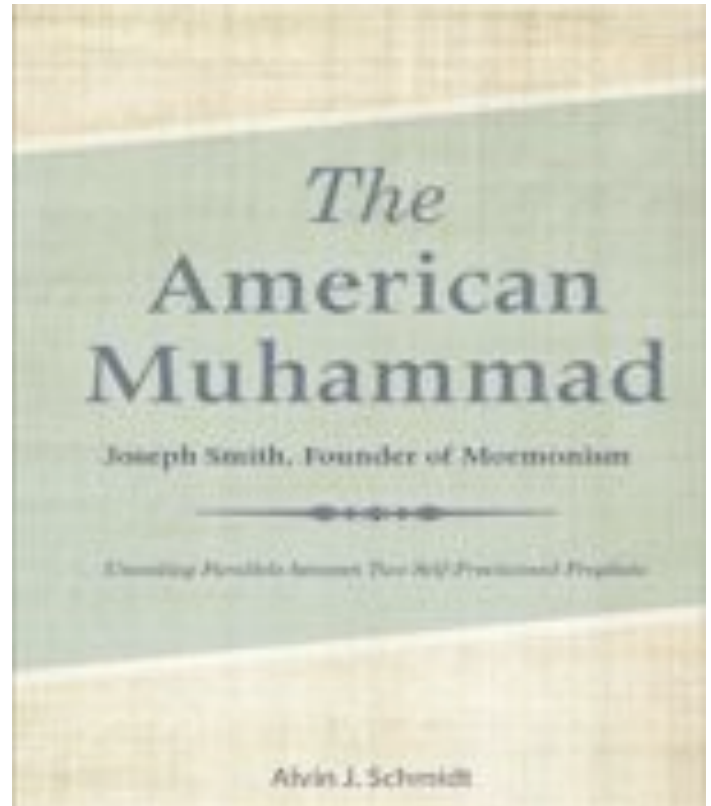
5. "The promise of for you and your children, for all who are far off, and everyone whom the Lord will call." I have a promise, God's own promise in Christ! His blood sealed it. The promise is for me and my family and for all whom the Lord will call. And just how does the Lord do His calling? Through His Word preached from pulpits and shared by everyone in his or her vocation, whether missionary or humblest father, mother, son, daughter or friend (Rom. 10:8).

Have courage! We are baptized for this moment. And courage is fear that has been baptized.

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The Book of the Month **The American Muhammad: Joseph Smith, Founder of Mormonism**

Soon after Joseph Smith, Jr., founded the Mormon Church in 1830, newspaper editors called him "the American Mahomet," "Modern Mahomet," or "Yankee Mahomet." In *The American Muhammad* Alvin Schmidt has undertaken the challenging but informative task of documenting, discussing, and analyzing over seventy parallels that exist between Smith and Muhammad. He cites valid arguments why parallels between noteworthy individuals in history need to be studied in order to understand why they engaged in similar acts that left major marks in history. This fascinating book provides many facts not commonly known about Joseph Smith and Muhammad and will help readers see and understand how the teachings of these two men contradict biblical Christianity.



Alvin J. Schmidt, MDiv, PhD, is professor of sociology emeritus at Illinois College, Jacksonville, IL, and a fellow of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. He is the author of numerous books, including the award-winning *Fraternal Organizations* (1980); *The Menace of Multiculturalism* (1997); and *How Christianity Changed the World* (2004).

Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

Greeters List

5 May	Laverl Byers – West Ruth Sims – East
12 May	Tim & Teri Pollock – West Donna & Gunnar Campbell – East
19 May	Harold & Irene Wattjes - West Jim Dyer – East
26 May	Joan Vukelich – West Laverl Byers – East
2 Jun	Ruth Sims – West Tim & Teri Pollock – East
9 Jun	Donna & Gunnar Campbell – West Harold & Irene Wattjes – East
16 Jun	Jim Dyer – West Joan Vukelich – East
23 Jun	Laverl Byers – West Ruth Sims – East
20 Jun	Tim & Teri Pollock – West Donna & Gunnar Campbell - East

Coffee Committee

May	Pastor & Lauren Braaten
Jun	Ronald W. and Judy M. Legg

Funeral Committee

May	Ruth Sims
Jun	Dolores Ford

Altar Committee

5 May	Sharon Allen
9 May (ASCENSION)	Pastor Braaten
12 May	Janice Arthur
19 May	Janice Arthur
26 May	Ruth Bretz
2 Jun	Ruth Bretz
9 Jun	Ruth Bretz
16 Jun	Sue Rothe
23 Jun	Sue Rothe
30 Jun	Sue Rothe

Elder On Duty – Communion

5 May	Geof Danielson
9 May (ASCENSION)	Josh Whitson
12 May	Steve Hilgendorf
19 May	Steve Hilgendorf
26 May	Josh Whitson
2 Jun	Geof Danielson
9 Jun	Jack Appleby
16 Jun	Jack Appleby
23 Jun	Josh Whitson
30 Jun	Josh Whitson

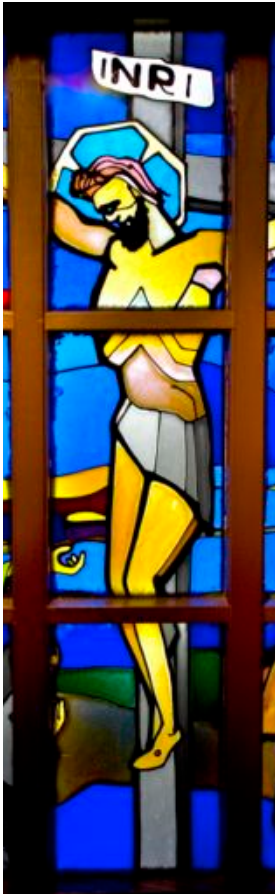
ATTENDANCE				OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	Special	General	Missions	Building
4/7	20	81	0	\$2,669.00	\$46.25	\$0.00
4/14	23	90	0	\$2,532.25	\$0.00	\$0.00
4/21	41	83	0	\$2,210.87	\$0.00	\$25.00
4/28	18	69	0	\$1,506.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	102	323	0	\$8,918.12	\$46.25	\$25.00
Total	425			\$8,918.12	\$46.25	\$25.00

June 2013 Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p> <p>8:30 AM Bible Class 9:30 AM Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class 11:30 AM Bible Class 12:30 PM Bible Class</p> <p>Catechism (Recreation Day)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 PM Elders Meeting</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins Jacob Higginbotham Kenny & Tammy Kress</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins Dolores Ford David & Maria Slaughter</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting George & Candy Crawford</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Michael Kuborn Byron & Marilyn Jennings Doreen & Dolores Ford Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>1</p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p>
<p>9</p> <p>8:30 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class</p> <p>Children's Service Day</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 9:00 PM Mission Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 11:00 AM Circuit Preter's Conference</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins Gerald & Joyce & Alexander 6:00 PM Vacation Bible School</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion Don & Mary Ellen Barnoff</p>
<p>16</p> <p>8:30 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class</p> <p>Catechism (Recreation Day)</p>	<p>17</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Board of Education Meeting Dolly Leonard</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Cousins Potluck/Evening</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Dary & Marilyn Mann Steven Higginbotham Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p>
<p>23</p> <p>8:30 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class 1:30 PM Circuit Forum Angela & Mary Jane Jones Steve & Ann Higginbotham</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Ann Campbell</p>	<p>25</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Don Snyder</p>	<p>26</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 11:30 AM T.A.M.U. Meeting</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 1:30 PM Ladies Aid Ruth Lewis Wade Cameron</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Byron & Deborah Bushlock David & Michele Starnost Marilyn Snyder Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>29</p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p>
<p>30</p> <p>8:30 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class 7:00 PM Youth Group</p>						

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Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.

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