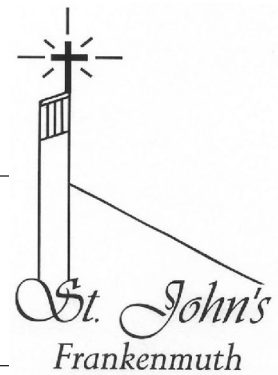


THE VICTORY



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Newsletter

September 2021

Peace in Afghanistan

Unrest hurts lives and ends them. It destroys wealth, disrupts education, and hampers business. It doesn't matter who is fighting or what the issues are. Violence does a number on the places and people caught in the middle of it.

Afghanistan has been a fixture of the American consciousness since the 9/11 attacks. The unrest in that country the past two weeks has been discouraging and heart wrenching for many.

The political situation looms large in the papers and Facebook feeds. Every Christian should be praying for all the people of Afghanistan, that they would achieve stability and outward peace in their nation. Pray also for those in America and around the world who personally sacrificed for the cause in Afghanistan that seems to be crumbling. However, if we fixate on that outward peace alone, we're missing the bigger picture.

Peace in Afghanistan, or anywhere else, is desirable to Christians not just for its own sake, but because the gospel

has a hard time flowing across front lines. Where there is stability, there the proclamation of sins forgiven for Jesus' sake can best take place. True, there are times when chaos galvanizes the church. God promises that suffering among Christians will still work for their good. But estimates place the number of Christians in Afghanistan at only several thousand in a nation of over 30 million. The vast majority of Afghans are Muslim. They are outside God's forgiveness because they do not believe in Jesus as God's Son who won it for them. We pray and work for peace in Afghan governance in part for the eternal peace of Afghan souls through the word of Christ (Rom 10:14–17).

Other kinds of peace are also threatened by these developments. Our peace with each other and our peace with God are jeopardized when our opinions about foreign policy become a point of division among Christians. As we discuss the unrest in Afghanistan, zeal for peace in that nation is good. But don't let that zeal run roughshod over the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3) that we enjoy as members of Christ's body. Is your opinion about peace in

Sunday Service 10 a.m.

Youth Sunday School 9 a.m.

Bible Classes

Sunday: 9 a.m.

Wednesday: 6:30 p.m.

Service Broadcast

- ♦ Sunday 8 a.m.
Radio WKCQ 98.1 FM
- ♦ Monday 7 p.m.
Charter Cable TV
channel 191

Church Office Hours

Monday—Friday
10 a.m.—4:30p.m.

Office Phone

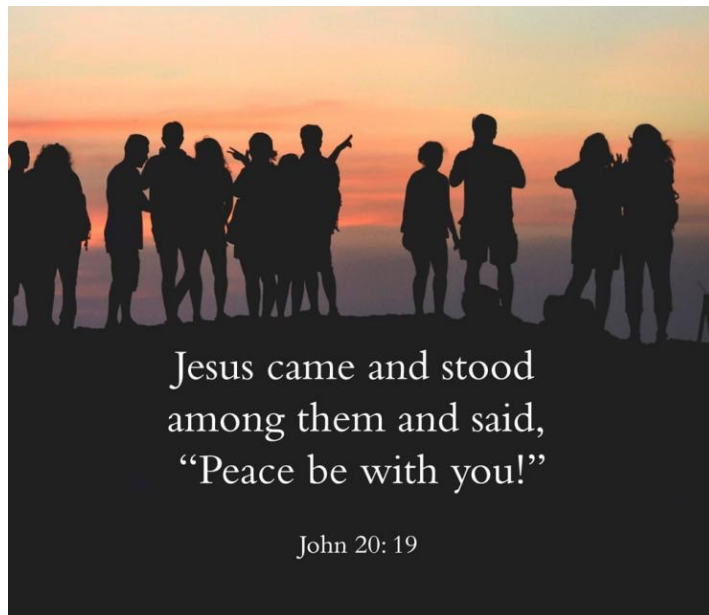
(989) 652-6201

Pastor Patrick Ernst

(612) 845-9162

(cont'd from p. 1) Afghanistan worth sacrificing the peace you have with fellow church members? Is it worth sacrificing the peace you have with God? Don't misunderstand: It's not sinful to have opinions about politics. It's sinful when they drive you to approach your fellow Christians with hostility and anger instead of goodwill and self-control.

Christ lived perfectly and died innocently to take away the sins of the world: Afghans' sins, your sins, and the sins of the person who disagrees with you. Baptism unites us to Christ and each other, forming a stronger bond than any other affiliation we have, even family (Matt 10:37). Repent of violence perpetrated by you with thoughts and words against your neighbors. Believe God when he makes peace with you, forgiving your sins for Jesus' sake. Then pray for peace among all peoples, peace that will last, peace forever (Is 26:3). —Pastor Patrick Ernst



Church Budget Update

Beginning this month, the newsletter will include a year-to-date report on our congregation's income and expenses to keep members aware of our financial surplus or loss. The numbers will come from the treasurer's report at the previous month's council meeting. St. John's is supported by your donations, so thank you for your offerings to the work of the gospel!

YTD Income: \$93,913.51
YTD Expenses: \$124,620.47
Net Loss: **\$30,706.95**

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. —1 Timothy 6:17-19



LIFE HAPPENS

Check out God's Yellow Pages located on the kiosk! Featuring many psalms, bible readings and proverbs to help guide you through life happenings and events. Take the yellow pages home with you!

For further spiritual guidance please call the church at 989-652-6201 or Pastor Ernst at 612-845-9152.

Confessions Corner

Fifth Commandment

Small Catechism

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we may not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

Large Catechism

Now we go forth from our house among our neighbors to learn how we should live with one another. This commandment forbids everyone to be angry, except those who are in the place of God, that is, parents and government [and all authorities].

For example, when your neighbor sees that you have a better house and home, a larger family and more fertile fields, greater possessions and fortune from God than he does, he gets in a bad mood, envies you, and speaks no good of you. So by the devil's encouragement you will get many enemies who cannot bear to see you have any good, either bodily or spiritual. When we see such people, our hearts also would like to rage and bleed and take vengeance. Then there arise cursing and blows. From them misery and murder finally come. In this commandment God—like a kind father—steps in ahead of us, intervenes, and wishes to have the quarrel settled, so that no misfortune comes from it.

God wants to make us used to keeping this commandment ever in view, always to contemplate ourselves in it as in a mirror, to regard the will of God, and to turn over to him

the wrong that we suffer with hearty confidence and by calling on his name. In this way we shall let our enemies rage and be angry, doing what they can. We learn to calm our wrath and to have a patient, gentle heart, especially toward those who give us cause to be angry (i.e. our enemies).

God also rightly calls all people murderers who do not provide counsel and help in distress and danger of body and life. It is just as if I saw someone navigating and laboring in deep water, or one fallen into fire, and could extend to him the hand to pull him out and save him, and yet refused to do it. How would I look, even in the eyes of the world? Just like a murderer and a criminal.

Therefore, it is God's ultimate purpose that we let harm come to no one, but show him all good and love.



CAIN KILLS ABEL
(GENESIS 4)

September's book recommendation:

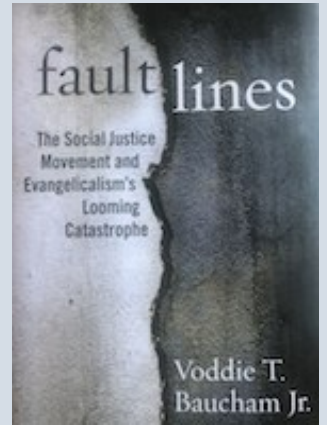
Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe

by Voddie T. Baucham Jr.

The death of George Floyd at the hands of police in the summer of 2020 shocked the nation. As riots rocked American cities, Christians affirmed from the pulpit and in social media that "black lives matter" and that racial justice "is a gospel issue." But what if there is more to the social justice movement than those Christians understand? Even worse: What if they've been duped into preaching ideas that actually oppose the Kingdom of God?

In this powerful book, Voddie Baucham, a preacher, professor, and cultural apologist, explains the sinister worldview behind the social justice movement and Critical Race Theory—revealing how it already has infiltrated some seminaries, leading to internal denominational conflict, canceled careers, and lost livelihoods. Like a fault line, it threatens American culture in general—and the evangelical church in particular.

Whether you're a layperson who has woken up in a strange new world and wonders how to engage sensitively and effectively in the conversation on race or a pastor who is grappling with a polarized congregation, this book offers the clarity and understanding to either hold your ground or reclaim it.



Although we as Lutherans would not agree with all of Voddie Baucham's theology, his assessment of this particular issue is biblical and worth consideration. Mr. Baucham carefully deals with the extremism of Critical Race Theory while also maintaining the scriptural position against racial prejudice. As a supplemental source, Baucham was also interviewed on the Lutheran talk show Issues, Etc., to discuss the topic, which is also recommended for listening.

You can purchase this book at Amazon.com, or you can check out the copy of this book which can be found in St. John's library. —Jeremy Aiello, Christian Education Chairman

To All Our Students, Teachers, Support Staff, Administration and Parents ~

Prayer FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR
God of wisdom and might, we praise you for the wonder
of our being, for mind, body and spirit.
Be with our children as they begin a new school year.
Bless them and their teachers and staff.
Give them strength and grace as their bodies grow;
Give wisdom and knowledge to
their minds as they search for understanding; and peace and
zeal to their hearts.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

What Is Hope?

“I hope I get a raise.” “I hope I get married.” “I hope my team wins the Super Bowl.” “I hope I go to heaven.” When we use the word “hope,” there is often a lot of uncertainty attached to it. Sometimes we use the word “hope” as if it’s a wish or a dream, sometimes even an impossibility. “I hope.”

However, when the Bible uses the word “hope,” it uses it in a very different way. “Hope” in the Bible is sure and certain. It is sure and certain because it is based on an event that has already happened. The Apostle Peter explains: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.”* (1 Peter 1:3-4) “Hope” in this sense is not uncertain because Christ is risen. Because of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, we now have a sure and certain hope in Him.

So of what does Jesus’ resurrection make us certain? Peter points to our life in heaven. We should not look at life in heaven as some sort of “wish.” Our eternal life in heaven is a *Christ has won heaven for you* 26 certainty. It is not a certainty because of how we have lived or anything we have done, but because God sent Jesus to live, die, and rise again for our salvation. Jesus has earned it all He shares it with those who believe. This means the “hope” of heaven is yours.

Thank You, Jesus, for the sure and certain hope of heaven that You have given to me! Amen.

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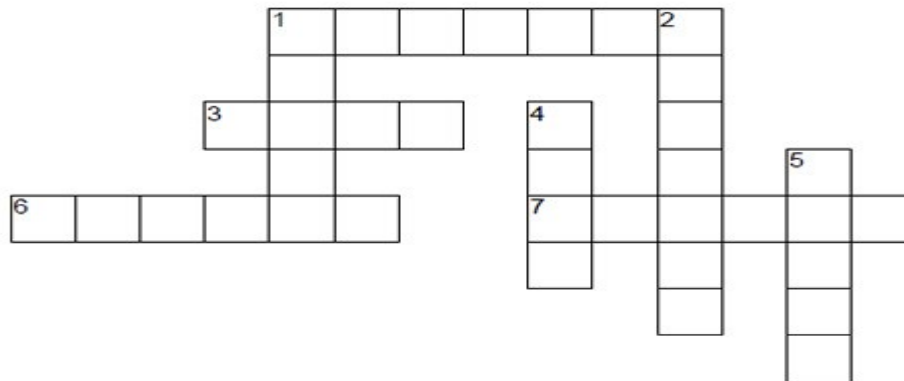


"When the teacher says 'Heaven help me',
is that praying in school?"

Faith Is the Key

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well. Luke 7:9-10 (NIV)

Puzzle is based on Luke 7:1-10



ACROSS

1. People that you know well and regard with affection
3. To be physically ill
6. To deserve something
7. To be overwhelmed, surprised, or shocked

DOWN

1. A strong belief in the power of God
2. A person working in the service of another
4. To cure or make healthy again
5. The Son of God

WORTHY
FAITH

SERVANT
JESUS

SICK
HEAL

FRIENDS
AMAZED