

**Devotions – June 21-27, 2015**  
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**Sunday, June 21, 2015**

Text: Romans 10:17

**So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.**

The abundant resources in Sundays and Seasons lend themselves well to lay people like me who are writing meditations for Prayfaithfully. The week of June 21-27 lists five commemorations, on June 21, 24, 25 (2) and 27, and we will consider them all.

Today we remember Onesimos Nesib, and we thank Swedish missionaries for rescuing him from slavery. Onesimos was born in Ethiopia to the Oromo people. Captured by slave traders and taken to Eritrea, he was bought, freed and educated by Swedish missionaries. He translated the Bible into his native tongue (Oromo) and returned to his homeland to preach the gospel. He died in 1931, and on his tombstone the following Bible verse can be found: "O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord!" from Jeremiah 22:29.

Let us pray: *Help us to be evangelists, telling others about Jesus, about the word of the Lord as it illuminates our lives. Amen.*



**Monday, June 22, 2015**

Text: Romans 12:6-7

**We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching . . .**

If you were a teacher, and scheduled your class for 6 AM, how many students would you expect to show up? Well, Philipp Melanchthon's classes at 6 AM at the University of Wittenberg would attract as many as 600 students! He was a brilliant scholar and a very popular professor, known as "the teacher of Germany." Martin Luther was his friend and colleague.

Melanchthon wrote the Augsburg Confession - see below June 25th, the date when the church has chosen to celebrate both Melanchthon and the Augsburg Confession. Melanchthon was conciliatory, finding ways for Christians to agree with each other. He was never ordained, but had a tremendous influence in the early Reformation. He died in 1560.

Let us pray: *We thank you, Lord, for leaders who are good thinkers, good teachers, and are able to bring together people with differing ideas, blending them for the good of all. Amen.*



**Tuesday, June 23, 2015**

Text: Ephesians 4:7, 11-13

**But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. . . . to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . .**

In a few days, on June 26th, the group of ten from Messiah Lutheran Church in Marquette who went to Tanzania on June 11th will be returning from their travels and their work in Africa.

They have been staying with church families and visiting many worship and ministry sites in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania.

Messiah's Pastor David Van Kley preached the sermon on Sunday June 14 at the Azania Front Cathedral. Together with their Tanzanian counterparts, they are looking at possible ways to engage youth leaders and ministers in an exchange program between our Synod and the ELCT.

Many congregations in the Northern Great Lakes Synod have enjoyed the music of the choirs that have traveled here from the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the ELCT. Bishop Alex Malasusa has visited us, as have other Tanzanian church leaders. It is good to see this outreach leading to friendship between peoples of faith.

Let us pray: *Bless this group as they return from a memorable journey. May we listen with open ears and enthusiasm as they share their stories of new experiences and sights in a new land. Amen*



**Wednesday, June 24, 2015**

Text: Matthew 3:11

**I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me...**

Six months before Christmas Eve, we remember John the Baptist who announced the coming of Jesus Christ and baptized him, thus beginning Christ's ministry. John spoke of his own life work as decreasing even as Jesus' life work would be increasing. Further, there is the comparison of calendar days: John being born as the long days are getting shorter, and Jesus' birth happening as the short days are becoming longer.

Of course, Saint John's Day in the Northern Hemisphere is associated with mid-summer, or the summer solstice. There have been St John's Day parades in Marquette, and Scandinavian Mid-Summer Festivals here and abroad on this longest day of the year.

Let us pray: *Put together Jesus the Redeemer, the beloved Son of God, and John the Baptist, the rough man of the wilds who ate locusts and honey, and you have the broad spectrum of Christian people. Praise the Lord who loves us all! Amen*



**Thursday, June 25, 2015**

Text: Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore **God also highly exalted him . . . so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

The Augsburg Confession, written by Philipp Melancthon and endorsed by Martin Luther, was presented to Emperor Charles of the Holy Roman Empire on June 25, 1530. It was written in both German and Latin. It was created to point out ways in which the reformers either agreed with or disagreed with the Roman Catholic Church teachings.

Fifty years later, in 1580, when The Book of Concord was published, the Augsburg Confession in its original form was included. It was considered the principal Lutheran confession of belief.

Let us pray: *As we confess our faith in the Nicene and the Apostles' Creeds, may we remember the first statement of our Lutheran belief as it appeared in the Augsburg Confession almost 500 years ago. Amen*



**Friday, June 26, 2015**

Text: Hebrews 13:4

**Let marriage be held in honor by all...**

Allow me a personal note today. It is our 50th wedding anniversary, 50 years from this date in 1965 in Shawano, Wisconsin, at Peace United Church of Christ where Peace Church's Reverend Walter Waeckerle and St Mark's (Marquette) Pastor Thomas Asuma officiated at our marriage ceremony.

The time, five decades mind you, has flown by. So many memories, so many family and friends to recall, so many activities in many different places, so many ups and downs (albeit far more ups I do believe). And now, even as we slow down a bit in our 70's, so many things to make both the present and the future interesting and relevant, even tantalizing.

Above all, John and I are grateful to God for a good and faithful life together, reasonable health which still allows us to get around, and precious family and friends to help us celebrate.

Let us pray: *Thank you, God, for each other and for all that you have made possible in our married life here on earth. A special thank you for our son Eric, who conscientiously looks out for us from a distance. And a resounding thank you to family and friends who hold us close in thoughts and prayers and in so many other ways. Amen!*



**Saturday, June 27, 2015**

Text: 2 Timothy 4:7

**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

Remember Philipp Melanchthon the conciliator, earlier this week? Today we remember Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria in the 5th century, an outstanding theologian who found himself in great and ongoing argument against Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, concerning orthodox teachings about Jesus Christ.

The conflict centered around the nature of Christ: was he both divine AND human? Nestorius said no, the divine and human nature of Jesus were distinct, and therefore his mother Mary could NOT be called "the bearer of God" or "theotokos". Cyril argued that Christ WAS both human and divine.

Also, part of this argument was a rivalry for pre-eminence between Alexandria (Cyril) and Constantinople (Nestorius), a rift which involved all the major Christian leaders of the time as well as the emperor and patriarchs of Rome, Antioch and Jerusalem.

Cyril's interpretation finally prevailed, and since then, Jesus Christ has been considered to be both human and divine. Cyril died in 444.

Let us pray: *When we disagree, help us to remember our common beliefs, our common interests, and make it possible for us to argue in peace. Amen*

