



Prints of Peace

Peace in Christ Lutheran Church
Walkersville, Maryland
May 2008

Church Staff

Pastor Emeritus
Rev. David Betzner

Minister of Music
Aaron Jansen

Parish Administrator
Michele Blentlinger

Church Council

President
Richard Benjamin

Vice President
Debbie Bolthouse

Treasurer
David Brown

Financial Secretary
Susan Riddles

Recording Secretary
David Kohler

Christian Education
Kelly Flynn
Jennifer Kaetzel

Church Property
Richard Nehring

Board of Outreach
Michael Ball

Board of Stewardship
Betty Bennett

Board of Elders
Doris Ochs
Gail Burck
Cindy Hofflinger
David Hofflinger
John Jakupciak
Gwen Nolte
Gregg Oberhaus
Donna Roszak

Grace, Mercy, and Peace in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

May is the month our congregation traditionally has the rite of confirmation, which in the Lutheran Church is a public profession of faith prepared for by long and careful instruction. It is the affirmation of baptism and traditionally has been the transition from being a child to a communicant member of the congregation. Normally it is held on Pentecost, a day that marks the Holy Spirit entering into the apostles and followers of Jesus and their subsequent speaking in tongues which led to 3000 being added to the church that day. So, we have the day of the Holy Spirit entering into the followers of Christ combined with the day our maturing youth proclaim their faith and belief. This year, due to Easter coming so early and other events normally held in mid May that caused some conflicts, we are moving confirmation to the 18th of May. This allows us to celebrate for two Sundays the blessings of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in our youth.

I have been teaching the catechumens for several years now and exclusively since Pastor Betzner began his final months before retirement. It has been a challenge for me to teach the catechumens, but it has been rewarding as well. Their questions require me to reaffirm my beliefs and strengthens my faith. In working with them, it has been clear that we have been short changing our children in educating them in our Lutheran beliefs. Martin Luther saw this when he wrote "The deplorable, miserable condition which I discovered lately when I, too, was a visitor, has forced and urged me to prepare [publish] this Catechism, or Christian doctrine, in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Good God! what manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and, alas! many pastors are altogether incapable and incompetent to teach [so much so, that one is ashamed to speak of it]. Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, have been baptized and receive the [common] holy Sacraments. Yet they [*do not* understand and] cannot [*even*] recite either the Lord's Prayer, or the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live like dumb brutes and irrational hogs; and yet, now that the Gospel has come, they have nicely learned to abuse all liberty like experts."

We have come some way from those times that Dr. Luther observed that prompted him to write the Small Catechism and that frank introduction. Yet I have found the catechumens still struggling with the concepts in the Small Catechism even though they can recite some of the items Dr. Luther cites. This makes it difficult to explore in depth their concerns and questions regarding their faith as I feel the last year or two before confirmation should be concentrating on. Therefore, I urge you, as parents, to use the Small Catechism as a focal point in your daily teachings to your children. God tells us to teach our children diligently, talking to them about these truths when we sit together in our houses, when we travel, at bedtime and at breakfast. These truths that we espouse should be everywhere, so that we and our children see them when we enter or leave our house (see Deuteronomy chapter 6). Make it a family tradition to daily explore the gospel and our Christian Doctrine so that the entire family continues to grow in faith and belief. For those of us that are beyond the child rearing days, we too should do the same, that we do not forget the incredible love God has for us and the plan he put in place for our salvation and eternal life.

(Continued on page 9)

We see God's people gathered together, growing up and going out by God's grace.

