

Easter 6            5/25/14  
John 14:15-21    A

“I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU AS ORPHANS; I WILL COME TO YOU YET A LITTLE WHILE AND THE WORLD WILL SEE ME NO MORE, BUT YOU WILL SEE ME. BECAUSE I LIVE, YOU ALSO WILL LIVE. IN THAT DAY YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM IN MY FATHER, AND YOU IN ME, AND I IN YOU.”

In 1922, a couple had a little girl, with a full mop of red hair and tiny, black eyes. They decided they couldn't keep her, so they took her to the Municipal Girls Orphanage and left her on the front stoop with a note pinned to her that said her name was Annie and they'd be back to pick her up.

11 years went by. It was now 1933. Those parents had not come back to pick her up, so little Annie had to face the music -- she was an orphan. And when you're an orphan in the Municipal Girls Orphanage, life is rotten and life is smelly. And a big part of that has to do with the fact that Miss Hannigan runs the orphanage. When it comes to Miss Hannigan, words like loving, kind, compassionate, caring are never, ever, used to describe her. Miss Hannigan hates the girls she cares for at the orphanage. She wants to step on their freckles; straighten their curls; she wants to see them die, by whatever means it takes. A big part of it for Miss Hannigan is that she drinks -- a lot. And all of her drinking and all of her hatred makes life absolutely miserable for all the girls at the orphanage. It's so bad, in fact, that they describe it this way,

Don't it feel like the wind is always howl'n?  
Don't it seem like there's never any light  
Once a day, don't you want to throw the towel in?  
It's easier than puttin' up a fight.  
No one's there when your dreams at night get creepy!  
No one cares if you grow ... or if you shrink!  
No one dries when your eyes get wet and weepy  
From all the cryin' you would think this place's a sink!  
Empty belly life!  
Rotten smelly life!  
No tomorrow life!  
It's a hard knock life for us!

The girls know they have a creepy, weepy, smelly life. They know that when you're an orphan and no one cares for you, it's a hard knock life.

The interesting thing about that thought is that it's not just true for the girls under the care of Miss Hannigan at the Municipal Girls Orphanage, it's true of everyone who has ever felt abandoned and lonely and destitute, like an orphan.

That even includes us. You've been there, haven't you? You've felt as though the wind is always howl'n, your dreams at night are creepy, so you lay there and cry and no one cares enough to wipe your tears away, and there seems to be no tomorrow. You've been there, done that, haven't you? We all have.

Your mom or dad may have been like Miss Hannigan and to this very day, you wonder if he/she loved the liquor bottle more than they loved you. And, you feel like an orphan.

Your spouse said "I do," that is, until the day, he/she said, "I don't," and packed up and left. And, you feel like an orphan.

You get sick, so there you are stretched out in the MRI machine or hooked up to the chemotherapy drip and you wonder what's going to happen to me? Who's going to see that I get through this? And, you feel like an orphan.

You're in the autumn of life. You think to yourself, "I've outlived my family and friends. If I get sick, there is no one to take care of me. If I go into the nursery home, who is going to visit me?" Now, you are all alone, and you feel like an orphan.

That feeling of a hard knock life isn't just for Annie and the girls at the orphanage, it's how we feel. And that's how the disciples felt.

They knew what it felt like to be an orphan because Jesus announced that He was going away. "Where" Jesus was going wasn't as important to them as the "What?" -- What's going to happen to us when He goes away? We've left everything -- homes, families, careers -- to follow Jesus, to learn from Him, and now He's going away. What's going to happen to us? What

are we going to do? They felt like Jesus had just pinned a note with their name on it to their chest and dropped them off at the orphanage.

What they know is that Jesus is leaving them ... and that's scary. They know life without Jesus is a creepy, smelly life; a hard knock life.

Look at the world these guys lived in and look at the world you live in. It's a world of devils and demons; a world filled with cares, worries and fears. It's a world that's creepy. It's a world where people hate you and want nothing to do with you because you follow Jesus. As frightening as old, drunk Miss Hannigan is, she's not nearly as scary as the devil and demons, cares and worries, and the people who hate you simply because you love Jesus.

Without Jesus in this world and in your life, you're left to their schemes; you are at their mercy. You're left out there all alone, abandoned in the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death just like an orphan – and its scary, its creepy.

To you, to any who has ever felt abandoned, Jesus says, "I will not leave you as orphans I will come to you." No matter how much you may feel abandoned, no matter how many tears you cry, no matter how creepy it is, you are not alone!

Jesus cared for you in a way no one else could ever care for you. Yes, He left His disciples, but He left them carrying all of their sins and all of your sins -- all the things that make life creepy, all your worries, all your concerns, all your fears; all that makes your life rotten and smelly, and He carried them all the way to Calvary's cross. Nailed to the cross for you, He carried all that makes life a hard knock life.

As Jesus hung on that cross, clothed in your sins, the unthinkable happened -- God the Father abandoned His own Son. He turned His back on His only-begotten Son. Jesus was left destitute and alone; Jesus was left to be an orphan for you. He's left to hang there all alone, to die on that cross for you and buried in the grave. But, if you think that means Jesus threw in the towel and stopped fighting for you, you are sorely mistaken. For you see, while Jesus was in that tomb, He descended into hell, to face the devil and all his demons that want you to think and feel that you are an orphan to say to them, "You lose, devil and demons! They win because of

Me; because of My suffering, because of My abandonment, because of My death, because of My resurrection. These are the children of God and I and My Father will never leave them, nor forsake them.”

And He rises the 3rd day, coming forth from the tomb, to tell you the very same thing. Remember the day He came to you at your baptism, there by water and the Word, He washed away all of your sin, your doubt and all temptation to think that God would ever abandon you; He rescued you from death and the devil. You may gladly say that God is your own Father and you are God’s own child.

The GOOD NEWS of the Gospel is that because God the Father abandoned Jesus, you will never be abandoned by God. Jesus is with you to the very end of the age. And because He lives, you too, will live -- live forever with Jesus.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you,” Jesus promises. He comes to us in Word and Sacrament, so that when things get creepy and weepy and smelly, you can boldly and confidently say, “I am not alone. I am not abandoned. I am no orphan.” So much for the hard knock life when you have Jesus. Amen.

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# Concordia Lutheran Church

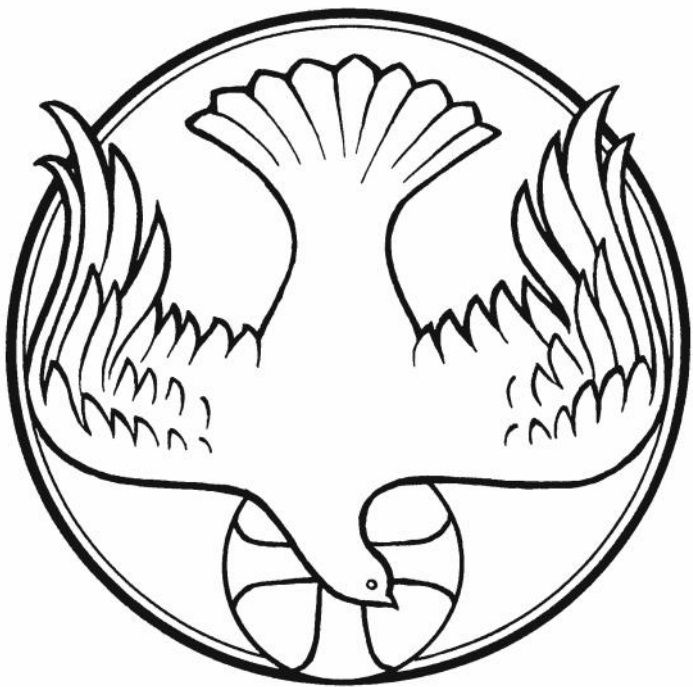
*The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod*

801 Beacon Lane

Beulah, North Dakota

Rev. Toby H. Heller, Pastor

May 25, 2014



*We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.*

*In the world you will have tribulation.*

*But take heart; I have overcome the world.*

*Romans 6:9; John 16:33b*

**DIVINE SERVICE**                      Setting One

**Hymn of Invocation**                # 770

**Confession & Absolution**        p. 151

**Introit**

Your word is a lamp to my feet

**and a light to my path.**

Forever, O Lord, your word

**is firmly fixed in the heavens.**

Your faithfulness endures to all generations;

**you have established the earth, and it stands fast.**

By your appointment they stand this day,

**for all things are your servants.**

If your law had not been my delight,

**I would have perished in my affliction.**

I will never forget your precepts,

**for by them you have given me life.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy**

**Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Your word is a lamp to my feet

**and a light to my path.**

**Kyrie**                                      p. 152

**This is the Feast**                      p. 155

**Salutation & Collect**                p. 156

O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**First Lesson: Acts 17:16-31 (ESV)**

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Some of the Epicurean

and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took hold of him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for " 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, " 'For we are indeed his offspring.' Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

## **Gradual**

Christ has risen from the dead.

**God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,**

He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;

**he has put all things under his feet.**

## **Epistle Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22 (ESV)**

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

**“Alleluia”**

p. 156



**Holy Gospel:** St. John 14:15-21 (ESV)

*[Jesus says] "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*

*"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

**Nicene Creed** p. 158

**Hymn of the Day** # 779

**Sermon** "I will not leave you as orphans"

**Prayer of the Church**

**Offering**

**"What Shall I Render"** p. 159

**Service of the Sacrament** p. 160

**Distribution Hymns** # 821, 619, 632

**"Thank the Lord"** p. 164

**Post-Communion Collect** p. 166

**Benediction** p. 166

**Closing Hymn** # 725

Today we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion in which we joyfully receive Christ's Body and Blood, under bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins. As we celebrate the Sacrament, we also give public witness that we are in complete agreement with the denomination's doctrinal teachings at whose altar we commune. Therefore, we ask that only communicant members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod commune with us. All guests are asked to talk to Rev. Heller before coming to the altar to receive the Sacrament.

## In our thoughts and prayers,

- † Our high school graduates, as they graduate today;
- † For favorable weather, that all agricultural endeavors may result in an abundant harvest.



## Stewardship of Offerings and Attendance

Attendance: 141 Offerings: \$2,934.00

*“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”*

Jesus is clear: our obedience to His Word comes from our love for Him. But where does that come from? Jesus tells us that as well, *“She was forgiven much, so she loved much”* (Luke 7:47). Christ shows us His love and gives us the forgiveness of our sins—and this causes love to well up in us, which in turn causes us to keep the commandments of Jesus. For after all, the summary of the Law is “Love.”

### ***We are the ND District...***

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is hosting a major Stewardship Conference in St. Louis this week. Representing the ND District will be Rev. Tom Eckstein, Rev. Adam Moline, Bill Sharpe, and me. The foundation of Biblical stewardship is who we are in Christ. We are His redeemed children for all eternity. Believing this, how do we then manage life and all of life’s resources? This is a good question for pastors, congregations, and our beloved church body to consider.

President Baneck

**Welcome to worship** in the season of Easter. Today, we look forward to Christ's ascension and His sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Even though Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, we rejoice. Jesus has not left us alone, as helpless orphans in this vale of tears. Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, who brings us to Jesus, so that we trust, rejoice and find comfort in our Savior. Visitors, please sign our guest book and worship with us again soon!

**Vacation Bible School** will be June 1-5, 5:00—7:30 p.m.



Registration sheets are on the table in the social hall. Please put all completed sheets in Joslyn Frey or Anne Rosenow's mailbox. All children are invited to join us!

**Stewardship Chair:** We are in need of a Stewardship Chairman to serve on the Church council. If you are interested, please talk to Jamey Backus.

**We would like to thank** Lorraine Sorge & Blake & Cheryl



Wiedrich for planting flowers in the flower bed. We would also like to thank Thrivent for the funds to purchase the flowers.

**The LWML ND District Convention** will be held June 20-22 at NDSCS in Wahpeton with the theme, "Filled... & Overflowing" (John 7:37-38). Registration begins at 12 noon on Friday, June 20, with servant events, choir practice and a delegate meeting in the afternoon followed by a fellowship dinner and worship service at 7:00 pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church. All women, spouses and guests are invited to attend any or all of the convention. Registration forms can be found at [ndlwml.org/messenger](http://ndlwml.org/messenger) or talk to your LWML unit president. Blocks of rooms are being held for you to reserve your own hotel room, or dorm rooms at NDSCS are available at \$25/night for a single room or \$15/person/night for a double room. Housing information is found on the registration form. See you in Wahpeton where you will be Filled... & Overflowing with God's love.

