

**BULLETIN FOR TRINITY MARBURG, ST JOHN'S MINDEN,
OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD.**

7th Sunday after Pentecost 23rd July 2017.

Closed Communion

The A.E.L.C upholds the historical, biblical and Lutheran practice of closed communion. Therefore we ask that only A.E.L.C members come forward for communion.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-44.

HYMNS: 407, 164, 564, 338, 293, 511.

INTROIT: Psalm 119 :57-64.

P You are my Portion, O LORD.

C I have promised to keep Your Words.

P I have sought Your favour with all my heart.

C Be gracious to me according to Your Word!

P I have been considering my ways,

C and turned my feet back to Your Testimonies.

P I have been hurrying, and I have not been delaying,

C to keep Your Commandments.

P Although the ropes of wicked people have been wrapped around me,

C I have not forgotten Your Instruction.

P At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to

C You because of Your righteous Decisions.

P I am a companion of all who fear You,

C and of those who keep Your Directions.

All The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy. Teach me Your Prescriptions!

COLLECT: O God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your final judgement, we maybe stirred up to holiness of living here and dwell with You in perfect joy hereafter; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

READINGS:

Old Testament: Isaiah 44:6-8.

Epistle: Romans 8:18-27.

Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30,36-43.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**

The text for our sermon for this morning is written in the book of Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 which was our gospel reading before.

24 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. **25** However, while people were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. **26** When the wheat came up and formed grains, then the weeds also showed up. **27** The owner’s slaves came to him and asked him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’

28 ‘He told them, “An enemy has done this.”

‘The slaves asked him, “Do you want us to go and pull them out?”

29 ‘He said, “No. If you pull out the weeds, you may pull up the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest! When the grain is cut, I shall tell the reapers, ‘Gather the weeds first, and tie them in bundles to be burnt, but bring the wheat into my barn!’”””

34 Jesus told all these things to the crowds in parables. He did not tell them anything without a parable, **35** so that what had been said through the prophet might be fulfilled: “I shall open My mouth in parables. I shall utter things that have been hidden since the foundation of the world.”

36 When Jesus had dismissed the crowds, He went into the house. His disciples came to Him and said, “Explain the parable of the weeds in the field to us!”

37 He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

38 The field is the world. The good seeds are the people who belong to the kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One. **39** The enemy who sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are the angels. **40** Therefore, as the weeds are gathered and burnt with fire, it will be like that at the end of the age. **41** The Son of Man will send His angels, they will gather out of His kingdom all the things that cause sin and the people who continue to do evil, **42** and they will throw them into the fiery furnace. There people will weep and grind their teeth. **43** Then righteous people will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let the one who has ears listen!

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

On Making the Sign of the Cross

Through the millennium physical gestures have accompanied those who have prayed to their “higher power”. Such physical gestures whatever they may be are “signifiers” that the individual is speaking to one who is unseen. It is the attitude of the heart that determines the use of these physical gestures.

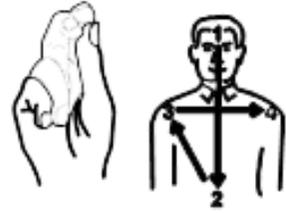
In our prayer life as Lutherans Martin Luther encourages Christians to make the sign of the cross. This is seen in his Morning Prayer where he encourages:

Morning Prayer

In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say: In the name of the Father and of the X Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, You dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen. (The same encouragement and format is also found in Luther’s Evening Prayer.)

To make the sign of the cross one may observe this helpful illustrated example found in a most recent and delightful publication from CPH. The physical actions are explained as follows:



[1]“Touch your head at the naming of the Father; then bring your hand to the middle of your chest (over your heart) at the naming of the Son. At the naming of the Holy Spirit, touch your right shoulder and then your left shoulder.”[2]

Making the sign of the **X** cross in no manner makes one a superior Christian, more Lutheran, or somehow more confessional than those who for their own reasons chose not to. Such an action is to be entirely left up to Christian freedom with no coercion.

This “touching,” or “marking” the forehead is first seen in Scripture with the High Priest as he carried out his duties in the Tabernacle. “You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to the LORD.’ And you shall fasten it on the turban by a cord of blue. It shall be on the front of the turban. It shall be on Aaron’s forehead...” (Ex 28:36-38a). It is in and through our Baptisms that we have been declared priests to serve the Lord Jesus. As priests “we are encouraged to be the people of God, the royal priesthood, and to let the vitality of the Lord flow in our daily living in service to our neighbours, both for their temporal needs and their eternal salvation” This priestly identity upon our foreheads whereby we serve the risen Christ is seen in the New Testament which will be addressed shortly.

This theme of being marked upon our foreheads continues in Ezekiel. “And the LORD said to him, ‘Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it’” (Ez 9:4). The righteous were spared from death and destruction (v. 5) when they received the “mark,” upon their foreheads. This “mark,” is a translation of the last letter of the ancient Hebrew alphabet called “tau.” In the ancient script it was made either in the form of a plus sign “+”, or, that of a multiplication sign, an “x”. In the mind of God Christ was slain on a cross before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:20; Rev 13:8) so it should not surprise us that this mark of the “tau” bears an uncanny resemblance to a cross!

This mark—this “tau”—which sets us apart from destruction and for eternal life with Christ is referenced in the Apocalypse. It is placed upon the foreheads of the baptized who are protected from the destruction and judgment that comes upon the ungodly while the victory song of the redeemed is sung. Our priestly status is seen in the subsequent verses:

- “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads” (Rev 7:3).
- “They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads” (Rev 9:4).
- “Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads” (Rev 14:1).
- “They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads” (Rev 22:4).

This “mark” which sets us apart as being holy to the Lord is symbolically placed upon us in the rite of Holy Baptism. Prior to the actual washing with water the pastor “... *makes the sign of the holy cross upon the forehead and heart of each candidate while saying: ‘ Name, receive the sign of the holy cross both upon your **X** forehead and upon your **X** heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.*”^[5] Shortly thereafter the new birth in the womb of Holy Baptism occurs when the thrice holy name of Yahweh is spoken with the application of water and said individual is set apart from destruction for life eternal.

As far as I am able to determine there are seven physical actions or movements embraced by people the world over to accompany prayer.

They are:

1. Upstretched hands
2. Bowing the head
3. Closing one’s eyes
4. Folding one’s hands
5. Kneeling
6. Prostrating oneself on the ground
7. Making the sign of the **X** cross

All seven forms of prayer have in the church’s history been employed at different times and in their proper context are quite acceptable. Today, six of these forms are employed by non-Christians. In today’s context the

seventh form; “making the sign of the **X** cross” is unmistakably and uniquely Christian which cannot be said of the other forms. Making the sign of the cross is so uniquely Christian it would never be used by a non-Christian. It is a “signifier” much as is a woman’s *burqa* in Islam or a clerical shirt among liturgical Christians. When seen in the public market *burqas* and clerical shirts draw eyes and subtle shifts of the head. The employment of these signifiers speaks volumes. Might not making the sign of the **X** cross do the same in bearing unmistakable witness to the resurrected Christ?

People in our nation are becoming more and more spiritual as Christianity continues to decline. Opportunities to witness abound. Perhaps there is more to Luther’s encouragement to make the sign of the **X** cross than what would initially seem to us—especially in light of the rich Biblical witness and the presence of Islam in southeastern Europe in Luther’s day. In conclusion I commend these gentle words from that most recent delightful publication from CPH:

Again, to make the sign of the cross is a matter of Christian freedom. You may or may not feel comfortable doing it yourself, or you may not do it as often as your neighbor. That’s okay. But when the sign of the cross is made, whether by pastor or people, let this be the proclamation: Christ has died for your sins upon the cross; in Baptism he shares that cross with you; because you share in His cross, you are a child of God and are precious in His sight.

500th Anniversary celebrations of the Lutheran Reformation 2017

*MOVIE NIGHT FRIDAY 22nd September at Marburg. *Time to be advised.* Feature, "The Luther Movie", bring a friend, bring your neighbour.

*REFORMATION HYMN SINGING SATURDAY 21st of OCTOBER bring/share at Minden arriving at 5pm to start the meal by 5.30pm.

*REFORMATION BRING/SHARE COMBINED SERVICE on the 29th October at 10am AUGBIGNY Darling Downs. There will not be a local Service here in our Parish as I will be Preaching there on the day.

> Divine Service 30th July (Green)

9am Our Saviour Lowood.

Readings: Psalm 125

8th Sunday of Pentecost

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 7:6-9

Epistle: Romans 8: 28-39

Hymns: 188, 400, 173, 186, 191.

Gospel: Matthew 13: 44-52.

> Divine Service 6th August (Green)

9am St John's Minden

Readings : Psalm 136:1-9

9th Sunday after Pentecost

Old Testament: Isaiah 55:1-5 Bible Study bring and share, trivia on Nahum

Epistle: Romans 9:1-13

LSB Hymns: 648, 699, 684, 743, 642HC, 924.

Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21.

> Just a reminder to those who have copies of the LSB hymnal to bring them to a Minden Services to help out with numbers.

> Mid week Bible study on July the 20th at Lowood 10am bring and share, Trivia on the book of Zephaniah not Habakkuk, my apologies.

> Jake Zabel will be taking a L/R and preaching at Lowood on the 30th of July while Pastor is going to Tin Can Bay for further talks with the Sekman's and will be taking HC to our members.

> New re printed copies of God's Eternal Word Bibles are now available for purchase at \$65 each. Please see Pastor.

> For those who have asked for a bank account to place their offerings electronically:

Trinity Marburg BSB: 633000. Account No: 146106893.

St John's Minden BSB: 633000. Account No: 135053577.

Our Saviour Lowood BSB 633000. Account No: 159171487.

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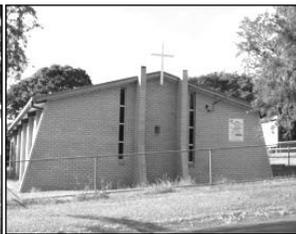
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