



JOY

Lutheran Church

Bringing Joy to the Heart of Rockwall...

The 'Joyful Noise' Newsletter -September 4, 2026

"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!" (Psalm 100:1)

302 N. Goliad Street • Rockwall, Texas • (214) 716-7539 • www.joylutheranchurch.org

HELPING HANDS FOOD DONATION

is this Sunday, September 6th at 10:30 at the front of the sanctuary.

Current Food Needs:

Hamburger Helper
Canned Soups
Mac and Cheese Boxes
Canned Tuna/Chicken
Canned Chili
Canned Beans-all kinds
Canned Pasta
Rice
Peanut Butter (plastic)
Jelly (plastic)
Sugar
Flour

Non-Food Needs:

Shampoo
Bar Soap
Deodorant
Toothpaste
Toilet Paper
Laundry Soap
Dishwashing Liquid
Baby Wipes
Diapers sizes 3, 4, 5, 6
Pull-Ups sizes 2T - 5T
Feminine hygiene products



Our next **Young at Heart Luncheon** is on Wednesday, September 9th at 11:45 at *Oar House Seafood* in Rockwall. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall and invite a friend to come and share this great opportunity for fun and fellowship!



Contact Info:

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Jodi, Patty, Danielle, Lucy, Carol, Tommy & Laurie, Fred, Mary Kay & Mike, Brian & Kelli, Mary, Annette & Charles, Michael, Donnie, Sandy, Kassie, Justin, Weston, Will, Rich, Andrea, and Helen.



Sign-up Sheets are on the **BLESSINGS BOARD** in the Fellowship Hall. Please review these opportunities and see where God may be leading you to serve our church family.

Save These DATES

- Helping Hands Food Donation – Sunday, September 6th at 10:30 at the front of the sanctuary.
- Artists Gathering – Tuesday, September 8th at 10:00 am in the fellowship hall.
- Young at Heart Luncheon – Wednesday, September 9th at 11:45 at *Oar House Seafood* in Rockwall.
- Church Council Meeting – Wednesday, September 9th at 6:00 pm.
- Rally Day with Blaine Davis leading our worship! - Sunday, September 13th.
- Sunday School Resumes – Sunday, September 20th at 9:15 am.
- Congregational Potluck – Sunday, September 20th after our worship – sign-up sheet is posted.
- Ladies Bunco – Wednesday, September 30th at 6:30 pm – sign-up sheet is posted.
- Men's Gathering – Wednesday, September 30th.
- Oktoberfest – Sunday, October 18th after our worship.
- Reformation Sunday – October 25th at 10:30 am.

Ladies'
Bunco
Night for fun &
friendship!



LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THIS COMING SUNDAY –

First Reading- Ezekiel 33:7-9

Second Reading- Romans 13:1-10

Responsive Reading- Psalm 32:1-7

Gospel- Matthew 18:1-20

SUMMER SERMON SERIES:

“AND SO WE CAME TO ROME” (ACTS 28:14)

We are in Romans 13 this Sunday where Saint Paul addresses the question of our relationship with the state. **“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”** (Romans 13:1) This chapter provides a foundation for understanding the relationship between religion and politics. We might summarize Paul's teaching as, *One King, Two Kingdoms: Where Religion and Politics Connect*.

Luther thought long and hard about what God had revealed to Paul in Romans 13. The reformer needed all the resources he could get as he faced the overreach of the Roman Church and the murderous intentions of Emperor Charles V. In 1521, the emperor declared Luther an outlaw and heretic. He could be captured or killed by anyone without legal consequences. As if these twin issues were not enough, Luther also had to contend with the Peasant's Revolt as well as the Muslim invasion of Western Europe.

Luther came to see that God rules the world in two different ways; he called these The Two Kingdoms.

The Spiritual Kingdom

- **How it works:** God rules this kingdom through His grace and the Gospel (the good news of Jesus).
- **Where it happens:** In the church and the hearts of believers.
- **Its goal:** To give people forgiveness, peace, and eternal life.
- **The rule:** It uses no physical power, force, or laws. People belong to it through faith alone.

The Worldly Kingdom

- **How it works:** God rules this kingdom through law, reason, and the "sword" (government, police, and courts).
- **Where it happens:** In everyday society, public offices, and secular life.
- **Its goal:** To keep physical order, stop crime, and protect neighbors from harm.
- **The rule:** It uses physical force and rules to manage *how* people act, not *what* they believe.

What does this teaching have to say to America where politics is practiced with religious fervor and where religion has been co-opted by both sides of the aisle? It offers a healthy alternative by stopping both the left and the right from turning the government into a religion and every election into an apocalyptic event! The following chart (by an LCMS scholar) sums up how Paul's teaching from Romans 13, systematized by Luther, addresses these common errors.

Political Tendency	The Theological Error	The Two Kingdoms Correction
The Political Left (Often associated with Mainline/Liberal Protestantism)	Theologizing the Left-Hand Kingdom. This perspective frequently tries to turn secular government policies (like social programs) into the direct realization of God's Kingdom on earth, risking the replacement of the Gospel of Christ with a social gospel.	Limits the Scope of Government. The Left-Hand Kingdom cannot save souls or create true spiritual righteousness; its primary purpose is simply to maintain external order, justice, and peace.
The Political Right (Often associated with Christian Fundamentalism/Nationalism)	Moralizing or Christianizing the State. This perspective often attempts to build an earthly theocracy or enforce the spiritual Kingdom through coercive political power and civil laws, conflating national identity with divine election.	Rejects Coercion in Faith. God's Right-Hand Kingdom is entirely free from temporal law and cannot be built using "the sword." Faith must be produced only by the Holy Spirit through the Word and Sacraments.

The Two Kingdoms doctrine ensures that the Church remains the place where the unconditional forgiveness of sins is proclaimed. It leaves the wielding of earthly power to civil institutions, ensuring the Gospel remains unadulterated by partisan politics. Does this mean that Christians have nothing to say about the issues of the day? No! Instead of withdrawing from the culture, Christians enter the political sphere through their earthly vocations (as citizens, voters, public servants, parents, and neighbors) out of love and service to their neighbor.

In *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis brilliantly exposes the spiritual danger of turning the Christian faith into a political tool. Writing from the perspective of a senior demon instructing his apprentice, Lewis outlines the diabolical strategy of "Christianity AND." The 'And' represents any secondary worldly cause, movement, or philosophy attached to the faith.

"The real trouble about the set your patient is living is that it is *merely* Christianity. . . . What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of mind I call 'Christianity AND.' You know – Christianity and the Crisis, Christianity and the New Psychology, Christianity and the New Order, Christianity and Faith Healing, Christianity and Psychical Research, Christianity and Vegetarianism, Christianity and Spelling Reform. If they must be Christians let them at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for faith itself some Fashion with a Christian coloring."

Lewis published this book in 1942... during the Second World War. Read this next snippet from another letter with that in mind. Lewis has the senior devil Screwtape write to his nephew Wormwood:

"I had not forgotten my promise to consider whether we should make the patient an extreme patriot or an extreme pacifist. All extremes, except extreme devotion to the Enemy, are to be encouraged. Not always, of course, but at this period. Some ages are lukewarm and complacent, and then it is our business to soothe them yet faster asleep. Other ages, of which the present is one, are unbalanced and prone to faction, and it is our business to inflame them..."

Lewis notes that the devil does not care if the worldly cause is inherently good – such as social justice or global warming. The trap lies in the subtle shift where the 'And' becomes the ultimate master, and faith becomes nothing more than a vehicle to drive it. In another letter, Screwtape says:

"We do want, and want very much, to make men treat Christianity as a means; preferably, of course, as a means to their own advancement, but, failing that, as a means to anything – even to social justice. The thing to do is to get a man at first to value social justice as a thing which the Enemy [God] demands, and then work him on to the stage at which he values Christianity because it may produce social justice. For the Enemy [God] will not be used as a convenience.

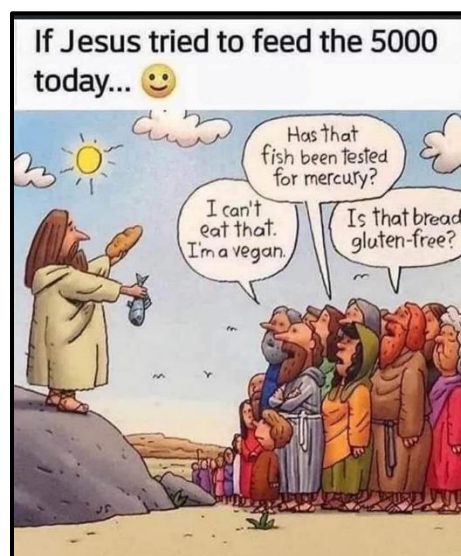
Screwtape describes the success of this "Christianity AND" strategy in chilling detail:

"Once you have made the world an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing. Provided that meetings, pamphlets, policies, movements, causes, and crusades, matter more to him than prayers and sacraments and charity, he is ours."

See you Sunday!

Pastor Martin

And now for something completely different...



"A joyful heart is good medicine, but depression drains one's strength."

(Proverbs 17:22, God's Word Translation)