



JOY

Lutheran Church

Bringing Joy to the Heart of Rockwall...

The 'Joyful Noise' Newsletter –September 11, 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



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES SUNDAY THE 20TH

Adult Class: "THE FINAL APOLOGETIC" - *studies in Christian community* at 9:15 in the fellowship hall. Class notes are on the welcome table.

Youth Class: "GIFTED AND CALLED" - *Who Is the Holy Spirit? What Is My Talent? What Is My Calling?* 9:30-10:15 on the 3rd and 4th Sundays.

SUMMER SERMON SERIES:

"And So We Came To Rome" (ACTS 28:14)

Blaine Davis closes out our summer series this Sunday as he preaches through Romans 14:1-12. Here is a helpful summary of the letter from The Bible Project to help reinforce what we have learned this summer:

We know from Acts 18:1-2 that the church in Rome had existed for some time and was made up of both Jewish and non-Jewish followers. The crisis for this church began when the Roman emperor Claudius expelled all of the Jewish people from Rome. About five years later, all those Jews, including many who followed Jesus, were allowed to return. When they did, they found a church that had become non-Jewish in its customs and practice. This culture clash created lots of tension, and by Paul's day, the Roman church was divided. They disagreed about how to follow Jesus, debating about whether or not non-Jewish Christians should observe the Sabbath, eat kosher, be circumcised, and so on.

Paul wrote this letter to accomplish a few things. He wanted this divided community to become unified once again. For a practical purpose, he hoped that the Roman church could become a staging ground for his mission to go even further west, reaching to Spain. These tense circumstances motivated Paul to write out his fullest explanation of the Gospel, the good news that announces Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. While the letter is designed to have four main movements, it is also unified as one long, flowing exploration of the Gospel, which "reveals God's righteousness" (Rom. 1-4), "creates a new humanity" (Rom. 5-8), and "fulfills God's promise to Israel" (Rom. 9-11). As a result, it is this Gospel alone that can "unify the Church" (Rom. 12-16).

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THIS COMING SUNDAY –

First Reading- Genesis 50:15-21

Second Reading- Romans 14:1-12

Responsive Reading- Psalm 103:1-12

Gospel- Matthew 18:21-35

Save These DATES

- Rally Day with Blaine Davis leading our worship! - Sunday, September 13th.
- Artists Gathering - Tuesday, September 15th at 10:00 am in the fellowship hall.
- Sunday School Resumes - Sunday, September 20th at 9:15 (adult) and 9:30 (youth).
- Congregational Potluck - Sunday, September 20th after our worship - sign-up sheet is posted.
- Worship & Music Team meeting - Tuesday, September 22nd at 5:30 pm.
- Ladies Bunco - Wednesday, September 30th at 6:30 pm - sign-up sheet is posted.
- Men's Gathering - Wednesday, September 30th.
- Young at Heart Luncheon - Wednesday, October 14th at 11:45 at *Onassis* in Rockwall.
- Octoberfest - Sunday, October 18th after our worship.
- Church Council Meeting - Wednesday, October 21st at 6:00 pm.
- Reformation Sunday - October 25th at 10:30 am.
- NALC North Texas/Oklahoma Convocation - December 12th at San Miguel Lutheran in Ft. Worth.

HELPING HANDS FOOD DONATION

September Offering: 63 pounds of food and \$30 dollars.

Year-to-date Offering: 538 pounds of food and \$533.07.



Leon, Sharon, Jodi, Patty, Danielle, Tommy & Laurie, Fred, Mary Kay & Mike, Mary, Annette & Charles, Bonnie, 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.



9/11 TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ON...

Being outside America during the September 11 attacks felt surreal. Denise and I were on the Elbe River, 56 miles southwest of Berlin, celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary when 19 Islamic terrorists turned four commercial airliners into weapons, killing 2,977 people.

That morning, we visited Wittenberg's All Saints' Church, commonly known as *Schlosskirche* (Castle Church), the birthplace of the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon are buried beneath its raised pulpit. Afterward, we walked to the historic market square, dominated by a statue of Luther, had a traditional lunch at Tante Emma's Bier & Cafe Haus, and then jumped on the autobahn headed to Nuremberg.

It was 2:46 in the afternoon in Saxony-Anhalt when the first plane hit the World Trade Towers. We knew enough German to understand from the car radio that something had happened back in New York. That night we were glued to CNN's world news channel as the horrifying images replayed repeatedly. The next morning, under a threatening sky, we drove to Munich, just over 100 miles from Nuremberg. Reports were still patchy, and the scope of the attacks remained unclear. U.S. military personnel were being advised not to speak English in public and to report to base, so we decided to continue on to Salzburg, Austria, some 90 miles east of Munich.

Our daughters were enrolled at Abilene Christian University here in Texas on 9/11. We wrote them a letter to allay their concerns and to try to give them guidance in the wake of the horrendous events of the previous day. Below is a portion of that letter.

A Letter to Our Daughters • September 12, 2001 • Nuremberg, Germany

Dear Renae and Sarah,

It is the dawn of a new day - both literally and figuratively. Yesterday morning we visited the grave of Martin Luther within the sanctuary where the Protestant Reformation was born. Today, *Witten-Berg* (White Hill) is a fair-sized city of 55,000. But it was made up of some 2,000 souls when Luther moved here as an Augustinian monk in 1511. We shared an umbrella as we joined a group of Germans before the famous doors of the old Castle Church. St. Paul's words came to mind as we thought how God used the little hammer of an unknown monk to reshape the Body of Christ throughout the world: **"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him."** 1 Corinthians 1:27-29

Because Germany is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time we were finishing a late lunch in Wittenberg, unaware of the devastation reigning down on America. We first learned of the attack yesterday while driving through the rain-softened countryside between Wittenberg and Nuremberg. You were in our prayers as warnings and updates flooded in. The irony of the moment was not lost on us; we were learning of the attacks while traveling from Wittenberg (the symbol of Germany's unity and pride) to Nuremberg (the symbol of her chaos and dishonor). We share our initial thoughts with you in the hope that God will comfort you in this time of confusion and uncertainty. We want to say two things as plainly as we know how: *"Don't hold on to hatred and don't let go of hope."*

Such acts of brutality and terror remind us of the darkness present in each heart. If the initial reports prove accurate, the motives behind these attacks were draped in robes of religion. Remember what we have always taught you. If someone tells you that your religion demands that you hate another human being, reject both the doctrine and person as false. For, as John teaches with such profound simplicity and brevity, **"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."** 1 John 4:8

But what of the terrorists? Is it wrong to harbor hatred in your heart for such people? Yes, it is wrong. It is also all-too-human to react with hatred toward those who have brought such pain to so many. Such acts can only be understood, absorbed and countered by love. **"Hate the sin, but love the sinner"** was how Augustine summed up the demands of Christian love. Is such love humanly possible? No. Love for one's enemy is not based on an act of will, but on the gift of grace. As John wrote, **"We love because he first loved us."** 1 John 4:19

The world will scoff and say this is foolish - true. By the world's standard it *is* foolish to love your enemy. But we do not live by the world's standard but by God's standard. The world will sneer and say such love is wasted. But that is to ignore the achievement of the Cross of Christ. But how can we accept such a heavy chore? By the same method we use each morning as we seek forgiveness for our own sins: we pray as our Lord has taught: "**Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.**" Matthew 6:12 The world will shrink back in horror and will defend itself; the Christian has no need for such pretense. For only believers can face the reality of their own sinfulness without defense and argument because Jesus Christ is our defender and His Cross our sole argument! The person who is unable to forgive others is blind to the darkness within his own heart. As Solzhenitsyn wrote: "... **the line separating good and evil passes, not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either, but right through every human heart, and through all human hearts.**"

Such acts of brutality and terror remind us that life is fragile. Our prayers are with the men and women entombed within the smoldering rubble of the World Trade Center. What fills their thoughts? What ideas, hopes and fears dominate as they lay dying beneath the ruins? I suspect the images flickering upon their pain-dulled minds are the very ones that should fill our thoughts each day: *God...eternity...family*. But the concerns of the day and unworthy desires often crowd out these images. Please take to heart the words of Scripture: "... **you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.**" Colossians 3:1-2

Renae and Sarah, we are so very proud of you as you follow Jesus. We know you are prepared to enter eternity as faithful children of God. Never allow *anyone* to come into your life and snatch that love from your heart! Never allow a mate to make you feel ashamed to follow God! Never let him take away your joy in serving others and worshiping the Lord! For on the Day of Judgment, it will be Christ who stands beside you – not your parents, nor your mate, nor your children.

How can we keep hope alive in a world without justice; a world where the insane acts of the few can bring so much pain and injustice? Southeast of here are the beer halls of Munich where Hitler first spewed forth his hatred. The first Nazi concentration camp opened in 1933 on the outskirts of Munich. Like the World Trade Center, Dachau will always carry the stain of the horror perpetrated there. But think of what the name of the city from which this letter is being written signifies: Nuremberg (site of the war crimes trials). Again, the very name cannot be spoken without bearing silent witness that judgment is a reality; if not in this life surely in the life to come. "**Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord.... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**" Romans 12:18

Looking at this lush, green land and at the well-ordered lives of her people, we realize that war and destruction can never destroy what makes a nation great – for her greatness rests in the quiet faith of her people. Germany is a living reminder of the power of hope and the grace of God. So again, please – *don't hold on to hatred and don't let go of hope.*