

AMERICAN LUTHERAN NEWS - JULY 2024

American Lutheran Church, 500 Church Drive, Rantoul, IL 61866

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PONDERINGS ON THE WEDDING BANQUET

(written by Sally Bauer)

The parable of the wedding banquet is found in Matthew 22:1-14.

In recent devotions, I kept coming across the wedding banquet parable. I began to ponder it from the different participants perspective. My questions are not all answered, but I am continuing to search my heart and the Scriptures with prayer to determine what God is saying to me through this parable. I pray you may also do the same.

This parable told by Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven being filled with people who were on the "B" list of guests, so to speak. The invited "A" list guests were not able to attend the wedding banquet because they chose to do something else. Their excuses were many – probably some didn't feel well or the weather wasn't just right, or there was a chariot race, or you get the idea. A feast was prepared in the kingdom. The invited guests ignored the call to attend because they were tending to their business and livelihood. At least one went to work ground and one went to sell his wares or collect taxes. Some invitees went so far as to kill the master's servants when the call to the feast came. The king sent his army to destroy the murderers and their cities. He was angry.

Then the king sent more servants out to invite guests from off the streets to come to the banquet. The guests may not have all been "nice" people since the Scripture says some were evil. But, one key requirement of the king was that they don wedding clothes which were provided by the king. This is evidenced by the king's notice of the one man not wearing wedding clothes. The king had him tossed out of the banquet.

Much has been written about the correlation to the Father, the Son, the servants or prophets, and the bride of Christ in regard to this parable. But my focus is upon what this story says to us today? Why is this parable relevant in 2024? The custom of the time was to invite guests to the wedding banquet. When the feast was prepared and the wedding was to occur, those invited would be called to come.

As I thought of myself in the role of the "A" list - those first invited and residents of the kingdom who then declined to attend - I asked where have I failed God by not paying attention to His call to be His hands and feet to the brokenhearted, the downtrodden, and the suffering? Have I ignored His invitation to experience the joy of the feast of His Kingdom? His invitation doesn't depend on anything I have done or not done or whether I am among the good or the evil. The invitation is extended because Jesus died and paid the price for our sin (John 3:16) – it is the promise of God. The parable doesn't say directly what happened to those who were too busy to come. It does say that those who murdered the servants announcing the feast were killed by the king's troops. Were any of them a part of "many" who were called but few who were chosen indicating they weren't allowed to feast at the king's table. Were they "bound hand and foot" and thrown into the outer darkness like the unqualified guest?

If I am in the servant group, have I invited people to come hear the good news of Jesus the Christ regardless of their appearance or their infirmities or their reputation in the community? Jesus came to save the lost, least and last in the world, starting with me! (See Matt. 18:14 & John 3:17) He wants people of all tongues, tribes, and nations to hear of Him and have the opportunity to receive His salvation, His everlasting life, and to know the One who offers living waters and abundant life to all people.

If I am one of the guests from the street (and if that is a reference to the Gentiles, then I am), what are the wedding clothes provided by the host which I need to put on? Is it first Baptism? Is it faith in Jesus that He is the Savior, the only-begotten Son of God, the One who rose from the dead so that I, too, may have life eternal? Is it the full armor of God, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the gospel of peace and loins girded with truth spoken of in Paul's letter to the Ephesians that are my wedding clothes as part of the Bride of Christ?

If I am the unqualified guest, the one who has chosen to still try to enter under my own direction and without proper wedding clothes, why was I speechless, with no explanation as to how I entered the banquet hall? Have I been a hearer but not a doer? Was I just in awe of seeing the king? The king called this guest a friend and he gave this guest an opportunity to speak up. Perhaps he even offered time for the friend to change his clothing before having him removed from the banquet. Is this an indication that as long as we have breath given to us by God, that we have opportunity to call upon Him, to acknowledge that He is who He says He is, and receive the eternal and abundant life he offers? I like to think so.

There are many questions that each of us should ask ourselves daily about our service to the Lord. Am I, are we, completely committed to serving Christ in the purpose to which He has called us individually and as a congregation? As I journeyed with my dear Mom through her comfort care under hospice last fall, I realized utilizing hospice required a complete commitment to what "comfort care only" means. One can't be wishy-washy about foregoing certain standard medical practices which are intended to maintain life when one enters hospice. Hospice is designed to allow a person to let nature take its course maintaining dignity, receiving love and comfort care, accepting that his or her final days in this life have arrived. Neither can we serve God half-heartedly picking and choosing which parts of the Gospel of Christ we will honor and respect. Our God said we can't serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). I hope and pray that I will respond to God's purpose for my life, to heed His request to come to the banquet and all that entails.

It may seem odd, but I think this parable is about love. The king wanted to show his love for his son and his people by hosting a lavish feast. The king wanted to receive love from the people as indicated by his pursuit of guests to respond to his invitation and attend the banquet. He provided everything that was needed. I think this is about love because later in that same day, Jesus was asked what commandment is the greatest. He replied "you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matt. 22:37). He added that the second is similar, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself". (Matt. 22:39). Jesus says we should love one another as He loves us (John 15:14). I pray we all will seek Him and His kingdom first and that we will be strong and courageous under all circumstances so that, along with Joshua who challenged the Israelites to choose which god they would serve, we can declare "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15).

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CHURCH OFFICE will be closed on Thursday, July 4th, and Friday, July 5th, in observance of Independence Day.

50+ POTLUCK will be held on Tuesday, July 9th, at 11:30 a.m. in the ALC Youth Hall. Please bring a dish to share and come and enjoy this time of food and fellowship.



LEMONADE STAND The ALC Summer Camp kids are once again having a lemonade stand each Friday afternoon during summer camp from 2-4:00 p.m. (weather permitting) right outside the preschool entrance. If you are in the area during those times, please come by for a refreshing cup of lemonade. Proceeds will be going to the Humane Society.

USHERS NEEDED We are still in need of more ushers! Please consider helping if you can! Call Shirley Friemel at 217-766-4111 to volunteer or with any questions.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYER SERVICE for the call of a pastor continues to be held in the Chapel at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday evening. (Please note that the Prayer Service will NOT be held on Wednesday, July 3rd.) This time of prayer is devoted to all aspects related to the call of a pastor - praying for our call committee, congregation, Mission District Dean, the pastor (& family) to be called, and any other related needs as the call process continues. A time of fellowship with a light meal begins at 5:45 p.m. prior to the prayer service. All are invited and welcome to attend!

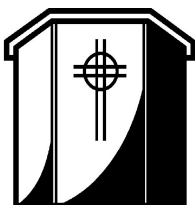


Funeral Meals

FUNERAL MEALS We are still collecting names of those who would like to be on the list of people that are called to provide salads and desserts for funeral meals. Please call Nikki in the church office if you would like your name added to our list.

PORTALS OF PRAYER for the 3rd Quarter (July-September) are still available to pick-up in the Narthex and in the entryway outside of the church office.

SAVE THE DATE for Christ Lutheran High School's 20th Annual Knight for Christ Benefit Auction to be held on Saturday, August 24th, at the Ford County Fairgrounds in Melvin. Strolling Food Stations by Nelson's Catering. More information will be in the August newsletter.



JULY PULPIT SCHEDULE

July 7th – Pr. Jim Lehmann (Communion)
July 14th – Pr. Jay Johnson (Communion)
July 21st – Deanne Rosenbeck
July 28th – Pr. Carl Rasmussen (Communion)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGES



People tend to have strong opinions about Children's Messages both for and against them. I would like to take a moment to share why I am in favor of Children's Messages.

The first thing I believe we would all agree upon is that children should be in Worship Services. So, when we incorporate a message specially designed for them as a part of the service it sends children a message that they are an integral part of the congregation.

The Children's Message contributes to faith formation. While the whole service is for everyone a Children's Message is meant to meet a child where they are at. When done well it is designed to meet both their cognitive and spiritual developmental stage. While most sermons rely primarily on auditory learning, the Children's Message often appeals to other senses as well. They sometimes use visual, textual, or auditory props, that engage multiple senses, which can be beneficial for all ages.

In truth, the children's message is for the grown-ups, too. Several adults have told me that the Children's Message deeply engages them and prepares them for the sermon.

I have heard different complaints about Children's Messages over the years.

- The kids don't want to come to the front of the church. – Why do they have to? The person delivering the Children's Message can do it from the front or step down into the pews and deliver the message to everyone.
- They take too much time. – They don't have to. They can be short and to the point. If they are done for the whole congregation, that saves the time of the kids going up and down. If they are delivered by the pastor, they can go right at the start of the main sermon.
- They are often object lessons that go over the kids' heads, they are corny, and they often teach non-Lutheran doctrine. – Write your own or use a good resource. One good resource can be found on the Sola Publishing Sower subscription, look at the Weekly Worship links.

In this post-Christian era where many people don't feel a need for church, it is part of our responsibility to make all people, young and old feel like they belong. Children's Messages can play a part in doing this for our youngest members.

Written by Pastor Teresa Peters
NALC Director of Youth and Family Ministry

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS



2024 Council

President...*John Lux*
Vice President...*J.R. Sipes*
Secretary...*Mitch Suits*

Devin Cox-Building;
Marleen Peavler-Preschool;
Deanne Rosenbeck-
Chairman/Outreach;
Shirley Friemel-
Ushers/Worship Stewards;
Linda Kirk-HR;
Ann Price-Sunday School;
Joyce Holland-
Youth/Confirmation;
Ron Howe-Worship/Music;
Lois Sjoken-Grounds.

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

MAY 21, 2024

Call to Order with opening prayer led by DeAnn McMorris. Guest Speaker Sally Bauer gave an update for summer scheduling. Guest pastors for summer services: Carl Rasmussen, Jay Johnson, & Aaron Dawson. Shout out to Sally for volunteering to do this. It is a great service for our church. Approval of Last Month's Minutes – Motion to accept last month's minutes was made by Ron Howe, second by Devin Cox. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report/Financial Committee

Signature cards are done. All budget items are in line. Walked through possible mortgage payoff and what account the money would come from. Discussed a new server and firewall for internet service.

Pastoral Acts

Funerals: Dorothy Bunten (4/18); Bonnie Henderson (4/27)

Ministry Team Reports

Reports available upon request.

Disaster Response Committee Report

In restocking mode.

Old Business

a. Tabling floor construction in youth hall until the fall.

New Business

- a. Bathroom remodeling project going well.
- b. Website needs to have some updated names as far as people serving.
- c. Inspection report reviewed. Devin Cox and Mitch Suits will prioritize the list of things that need to be done.

Adjournment and Closing

Motion to adjourn at 9:11 p.m. by Ron Howe, second by Devin Cox. Motion carried.

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!

PRAYER
list

FROM:

Len & Mary Stocks - Thank you for the cards following the passing of my sister, Sue Selby, on May 12th.

Joyce Williamson - I wanted to thank you all for keeping my daughter, Kelly Williamson, safe all these years as you kept her in your prayers while she served our country. As of June 1st, she retired with a 20 year career. She, Kelly Williams, and her family of 4 (Brooke-17; Caleb-9; and twins-almost 2) now reside in South Carolina. Again, thank you all for your prayers that kept her safe on her many deployments and state side.

**PRAYERS TO THOSE
SERVING IN THE MILITARY**

Jon Stiebner (son/Synda Miller); Alex Short; Brandon Elrod (grandson/Elfrieda West); Kasey Fenimore (nephew/Bill & Jody Schlueter); Brian Griswold (son/Phillip Griswold); Levi Loschen (grandson/Luella Loschen); Ryan Falletti; Riley Falletti.



Steen Bjerre; Maddy & Leah Graves; Debbi Dietz; Carla Adkins (friend/Joyce Williamson); Kim Wyre; Jessica Hawn (daughter/Rob & Kim Wyre); Loretta Overholt; Jennifer Birkey (friend/Terri Kirby); Earl Smith; Cindy Williams (sister/Scott James); Gabbi Reynolds (friend/Tome's); Ben Moser; Denny Doyle; William Benton (father/Phillip Benton); Steve Ritchie (friend/J.R. & Sondra Sipes); Sharon Loeh (friend/Paul & Linda Keith); Marla Osterbur (friend/Sue Coffin); Mary Mallicoat (mother-in-law/Earl Smith); Nick Shepherd (brother/Rhonda Keith); Joyce Keith; Bob & Jenny Hobby (cousins/Keith Family); Bob Selby (brother-in-law/Mary Stocks); Merrill Wattjes; Michael Markarian (brother/Joyce Williamson); Joan Percival; Joyce Williamson.

NURSING HOMES/ASSISTED LIVING: *Bridle Brook*: Keith Dohleman. *Country Health*: Shorty & LouAnn Baugher; Mildred Flessner. *Goldwater Care (Gibson City)*: Ruth Lutz. *Holly Brook (Rantoul)*: Genet Dixon; Joan Mathis; Janet Withers. *Piatt Co. Nursing Home (Monticello)*: Rita Buenting. *Prairie Winds of Urbana*: Ilene Ackerman.

SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED TO:

...Family & friends of Darrel Meuser who passed away on May 30th.

...Family & friends of Ron Stonestreet who passed away on June 15th.

IN OUR
Thoughts and Prayers



| | | | | | |
|--------------------|------|----------------|------|-----------------|------|
| Arlen Ackerman | 7/3 | Alec Board | 7/11 | Kelly Graves | 7/23 |
| Loretta Overholt | 7/3 | Rita Buenting | 7/11 | Denise Madden | 7/24 |
| Elfriede West | 7/4 | Sonia Harris | 7/12 | Annie Minch | 7/24 |
| Casey Roelfs | 7/5 | John Sherman | 7/12 | Jaxston Sahy | 7/26 |
| Jim Finger | 7/6 | Sheila Sherman | 7/12 | Sue Coffin | 7/27 |
| Kathy Hadler | 7/6 | Loretta Chaney | 7/15 | Debbie Keith | 7/27 |
| Cory Roelfs | 7/6 | Libby Buhr | 7/16 | Terry Madden | 7/27 |
| Nick Hanson | 7/7 | Aubrey White | 7/16 | Milo Schluter | 7/27 |
| Victoria Alexander | 7/8 | Maddy Graves | 7/17 | Jennifer Smith | 7/29 |
| Andrew Benton | 7/8 | Lindsey Ehler | 7/20 | Jody Schlueter | 7/30 |
| Shirley Friemel | 7/8 | Patsy Franzen | 7/20 | Kylie Sleigh | 7/30 |
| Betty Bruns | 7/10 | Scott James | 7/20 | Lois Hesterberg | 7/31 |
| | | Monica Carico | 7/23 | | |



| | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
| Ben & Brenna Schluter | 7/1 | Ron & Janie Howe | 7/23 |
| Matt & Kellie Schluter | 7/2 | Pat & Christie Fiedler | 7/24 |
| Jacob & Emily White | 7/10 | John & Lindsey Ehler | 7/25 |
| Steve & Becky Schluter | 7/12 | Steve & Jan Jeffers | 7/25 |
| Stephen & Lindalou Hauersperger | 7/13 | John & Phyllis Colwell | 7/27 |
| Marvin & Pam Ideus | 7/17 | Gary & Charly Hein | 7/31 |
| Ben & Allison Moser | 7/20 | | |

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Rantoul, IL 61866

Return Service Requested

Permit No. 17

TO:



Youtube Channel: Rantoul, IL - American
Lutheran Church (ALC)

Nikki Foss

Office Manager - (217) 893-4550
amluthoffice@gmail.com

Logan Bushman

Preschool Director - (217) 893-8773
preschoolatalc@gmail.com

Worship Service -
Sunday Mornings at 9:00 a.m.
followed by Sunday School
and Women's Bible Study.

**ALC is Christ-centered by emphasizing teaching, worship and prayer
as we strive toward spiritual growth.**

JULY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS SCHEDULE

| | Worship Stewards | Offering Communion | Table Guild | Greeters | Bulletin Greeters | Lectors | Prayers | Acolytes |
|----------------|---------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 7/7/24 | DeAnn McMorris | Rod & Sandy Heiser Carson McClain | Terri Kirby Emily Deal | Sue Coffin Karen Derges | Patsy Franzen Shirley Barnes | Dennis Albers | Monica Carico | Aubrie Albers Kyndall Cox |
| 7/14/24 | Ron Howe | Wendy Watkins Jack & Brenda Spitz | | Loretta Elliott Shirley Friemel | Nikky & Jack Flesner | Lorraine McElwain | Jim Cheek | Owen Schluter Ella Schluter |
| 7/21/24 | Sheila Sherman | Sue Coffin David & Debbie Keith | | Linda Kirk DeAnn McMorris | Tina & Joshua James | Terry Doyle | Deanne Rosenbeck | Liam Kaiser Andrew Benton |
| 7/28/24 | Lloyd Schluter | Emily Deal John Lux Deanne Rosenbeck | | Lois Madden Bill Schlueter | Emily Deal Lindalou Hauersperger | Aubrie Albers | Joyce Holland | Carson McClain Daphnie Albers |