



The BANNER

January 2019

### **“Baptism and the Dead”**

Wanted: Dead and Alive! Baptism for some folks is just a symbolic gesture, a personal decision, a photo op, or a cute ceremony. But for born again Christians, baptism is a sacrament, a means of grace, and a sentence of death & resurrection. St. Paul reminds us that baptism is our union with Jesus in Good Friday & Easter. St. Paul writes, “God who is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him” (Ephesians 2:4-6).

I Corinthians 15 is known as the “Resurrection Chapter”. In this Chapter, St. Paul proclaims the certainty of the resurrection of the body. The resurrection of Jesus is not an idle tale. Hundreds of eye witnesses, including St. Paul himself, provide testimony to the Truth. Jesus’ resurrection guarantees of our own promised resurrection. St. Paul reminds us that if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then we will not be raised from the dead. Which means that we are still in our sins and doomed to die; our faith is a joke, and our preaching of Jesus is nonsense. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

If in this life only we hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. St. Paul asks, “Why would people suffer for the name of Jesus, or be ‘baptized on behalf of the dead,’ if there is no resurrection of the dead?” What exactly does St. Paul mean by “being baptized for, or on behalf of, the dead” (I Corinthians 15:29)? This verse of Scripture has prompted much speculation and not a little superstition. In the middle ages, for example, it is reported that a believer might lay under the bed of an unbeliever who had recently died. A priest would ask the dead person if they desired to be baptized and forgiven of sins. The living believer would answer in the affirmative from under the bed and the dead person would be baptized. St. Paul is not advocating for the practice of baptizing corpses. Nor is he encouraging people to get baptized, vicariously, by proxy, in the place of a deceased person. Baptism is for the living, not the dead; unless by “dead” we mean

“dead in our trespasses”. “Baptism for the dead” is most likely a reference to discipleship, cross-bearing, and martyrdom. One of the meanings of baptism is identification. In baptism, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. In baptism, a Christian is identified with those who are persecuted for the faith of Jesus; the martyrs, who are willing to die for Christ, because they believe in the resurrection.

Consider the following illustration provided by Mark Van Bebber. “The strength of Alexander the Great's army was ‘the Greek phalanx’. The way the phalanx would work is as follows: the soldiers would make several long lines. The men in the front would carry a large shield that would cover the soldiers from head to foot. Each of the men lined up behind the shield would carry long spears, which they would rest on the shoulders of the men in front of them. Thus, they would approach their enemies in unison and virtually walk right over them. If the man in the front of the line should be killed, the second man would simply drop his spear, pick up the shield and the lines would continue on their march. That second man would pick up the shield ‘on behalf of (or in the place of) the dead soldier who once carried it.’”

Dead in our sins, we are baptized into the promise of Easter. Convinced of the resurrection, we too suffer and die for the name of Jesus. Convinced of the resurrection, and our future life in heaven with Christ, we too take up the shield of those who have been persecuted and martyred for the faith. Since the resurrection is true, we have nothing to lose and everything to gain. In Christ, we are dead and alive. Jesus was baptized for the dead, and so are we.

**ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL**  
**WEEKLY 9:15 LUTHER'S**  
**SMALL CATECHISM DVD STUDY**  
**ALL WELCOME!**



**Request to Provide Altar Flowers for 2018**

If you wish to provide altar flowers for church during 2018, please complete this form. Please place it in the offering plate or mail it to: Bertha Olson, 521 E. Main St. #108, Laurens, IA 50554 Thank you.

Name of person providing flowers: \_\_\_\_\_

Date desired: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to provide flowers on this same date from year to year? yes no

Information needed for Sunday bulletin:

Altar Flowers in Loving Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

*Or* Altar Flowers

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact Bertha Olson, 841-4394, if you have any questions.

**Thank You for donating poinsettias for our Advent and Christmas Season:**

Bertha Olson in memory of loved ones

Jean Swanson in Memory of Frank Swanson and Dennis Oxenreider

Kurt and Machelle Sunner in honor of the Schmidt and Sunner Family

Carol Schmidt in honor of the Schmidt Family

Mike & Pam Kemp in memory of Judith Knauber, Ed Kemp and Elizabeth Anderson

Ron & Jan Hersom in memory of loved ones

Kyle Wenell Family

Congregational Meeting 12-23-2018  
Bethany Lutheran Church

Following Services at approximately 11:30 AM, President Sheldon Bieri called the meeting to order, after determining there was a quorum. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the recommendation of the Call Committee to call Reverend David Klappenbach to be our next pastor. Sheldon explained the call process and the activities of the call committee in selecting Reverend David Klappenbach.

Sheldon opened discussion to the congregation, several questions were asked and discussion followed. Thereafter a motion was made and seconded to offer the call to Reverend David Klappenbach. A written ballot was circulated, collected and tallied. The vote was 25 affirmative to 2 no.

Sheldon indicated he would notify Reverend Klappenbach of the call and notify Dr Wendel and Dean Hahn of the decision.

The details of the compensation package and the formal call documentation will be complied with accordingly. The meeting was adjourned.

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Recording Secretary

# January 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Fellowship- Rich & Marilyn Ehlers, Bertha Olson, Gail Olson 7:00-Youth Group (HS) @BLC	7 4:00-W&M Mtg	8	9 7:00-Council Mtg	10	11	12
13 Fellowship- Rich & Marilyn E, Bertha Olson, Linda & Sheldon B. 7:00-Youth Group (JH) @ BLC	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Fellowship- POT LUCK- Rich & Marilyn E, Bertha Olson, Ron & Jan Hersom 7:00-Youth Group (HS) @BLC	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 Fellowship- Rich & Marilyn Ehlers, Bertha Olson, Becky Braesch 7:00-Youth Group (JH) @ BLC	28	29	30	31	Bethany Lutheran Church Fellowship/Coffee- 9:30 Adult SS- 9:15 Youth SS- 9:30 Worship-10:30	