



SEA NOTES

A Monthly Publication of Shepherd of the Sea

201 East Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512 www.soselca.org

OCTOBER 2020



John answered, "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. (John 3:27)

Remember back in March when we thought that the coronavirus would impact our lives for a few weeks or maybe even a month? For most of us, we recognize that this has been one of the most, if not the most difficult years of our lives.

It is in this difficulty that the world has seen the importance of the church and our message of grace more clearly than at any time during my lifetime. It has also been through the ways in which our church has responded in these last months that I have had a tremendous sense of awe in the giftedness of our leaders here.

First, let me say thank you for the ways in which you stepped up to continue to worship, to care for one another, and to look for opportunities to share the Gospel when our community so clearly needed the Gospel.

Now, let me encourage you that I believe what God has shown us through this crisis is our need to walk together, continue to innovate, and step up the ways in which we share God's love to a world that still so desperately needs to recognize God's love.

Your generosity this year is as important as it has ever been to not just keep our congregation healthy, but to also help us develop the church to continue to impact the world in significant ways.

In the coming weeks, you will be hearing more about our stewardship drive: *Beginning A Culture of Generosity*. As we enter into our stewardship drive this year, let's think about all the ways that we have seen generosity this year.

In the meantime, I've included in the SeaNotes my own generosity story, and I am looking for other's generosity stories as well to encourage the congregation.

Grace + Peace,
Pastor Scott

CHURCH HAPPENINGS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us on the Web!

Join Pastor Scott for worship on either our Facebook page or on our YouTube channel. Simply search for ‘Shepherd of the Sea Lutheran Church Atlantic Beach NC’ within Facebook or YouTube. New videos post on Sundays at 9 am.

Collection Items

The Campbell Soup Company has ended their labels for education program after 43 years. Shepherd of the Sea will no longer be collecting soup labels. Thank you to everyone for supporting this program over the years!

September Financials

Income	\$10,957.32
Expenses	12,997.36
Shortfall	\$ 2,040.05

Holy Communion

Feeling strange, like you haven’t had communion in a while? Jesus is calling! We are currently offering two different communion services and times.

- Oct 20 – 6 pm
- Oct 21 – 2 pm
- Oct 27 – 6 pm
- Oct 28 – 2pm

We are asking that you sign up at:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0c4cadaf2ba75-communion>

Or, you can call the church office and let us know you plan on attending.

Social Media Outreach—Last Month

People reached through our Facebook page	733	YouTube Channel	203
Facebook likes, comments, and shares	448		
Visits to our website	105		

LECTIONARY READINGS for: October 2020

Color of the Day	Oct 4 Pentecost 18	Oct 11 Pentecost 19	Oct 18 Pentecost 20	Oct 25 Pentecost 21	Color of the Day
First Reading	Isaiah 5:1-7	Isaiah 25:1-9	Isaiah 45:1-7	Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18	First Reading
Psalm	80:7-15	23	96:1-13	1	Psalm
Second Reading	Philippians 3:4b-14	Philippians 4:1-9	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	1 Thessalonians 2:1-8	Second Reading
Gospel	Matt 21:33-46	Matt 22:1-14	Matt 22:15-22	Matt 22:34-46	Gospel

Picture Perfect



- Sept. 14

Shepherd of the Sea delivers much needed items to Martha's Mission



- Oct. 3

Blessing of the Animals

Generosity Story from Pastor Scott

I grew up in a family that didn't talk much about money. While we would attend church regularly, I never was aware of our family giving any money to the church. Maybe I was just too distracted by my own thing as a teenager, but as I grew older, the idea of giving to the church simply wasn't on my radar.

Then, I married Emily, and she introduced me to the idea of giving money to church. At first, I was resistant - why should I give up some of my hard-earned money? But as time went on, it slowly dawned on me that the church cannot function without the generosity of its members.

The funny thing was, the more we gave on a regular basis, the easier it was to give. And what I found is that giving money to the church didn't rob me of having money to still do whatever I wanted!

When I was in seminary, I would sometimes receive a check in the mail from friends for \$100 to help out "with my studies." A couple of friends ended up donating more – a lot more – to help with my seminary education. I was able to graduation without any student loan debt which today allows me to be even more generous.

Nowadays, Emily and I try to live a life of generosity, not just in church, but in everything we do. It doesn't always happen, but sometimes we go out to eat and for no particular reason (other than we are just feeling generous) we will tip our server up to 50% of the bill or more. We have found if you do this once or twice, the servers quickly get to know you! But more importantly, it just feels good to be generous.

As we begin our stewardship campaign *Beginning a Culture of Generosity*, I am looking for your generosity stories. They don't have to be long, just a paragraph will do. Please send them to me via email (soselca.pastor@gmail.com) so that we can share them with our congregation.

I look forward to hearing more of your stories of generosity as we begin this generosity journey together.

In Peace,
Pastor Scott



This comes from Bishop Tim. I wanted to share it with you—Pr. Scott

Church & State 101

A month from now, the 2020 election will be over. As with every election before and yet to come, some will be satisfied, and some will be disappointed. Truthfully, with the extreme polarization that marks our day, some will be ecstatic, and some will be devastated. So it goes in the democratic election process.

Part of what I observe across the spectrum from extreme left to extreme right is that we're losing the middle. Losing subtlety and nuance. Losing the possibility that there can be such things as moderates, as compromise, as working together for the sake of the common good of the country rather than a slash-and-burn, winner-takes-all, fight to the death. Sometimes it seems dismissal of the "other side" is more important than passion and plans for governing. There may be no platform at all other than destruction of "those others" of whom we must be very afraid and with whom we must be thoroughly disgusted.

I know this world personally all too well. Make people afraid. Discredit "the other." Convince folks that in order for me to be right, you must be wrong, in order for me to be saved you must be damned, in order for me to live, you must die. That's religious fundamentalism. And, in my opinion, and drawing from the same playbook, the false dichotomies and extremes in the political realm today draw those all-or-nothing lines. The left and the right seem to me both to be succumbing to this being the only way it can be. Conciliation is seen on either side as weakness or complicity with the enemy. Like our children fighting in the backseat on a long trip years ago, it's eye for an eye, always waiting to pounce, discredit, and destroy, even justifying preemptive strikes with "But he was going to hit me!"

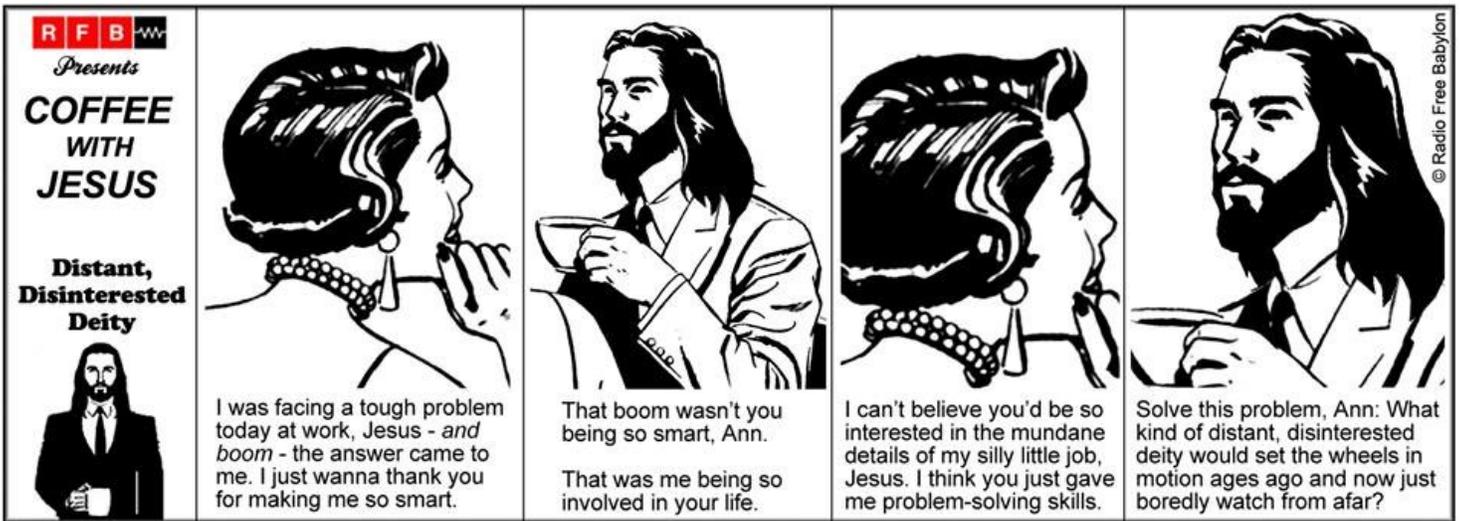
I spent many hours pleading with those bickering children and inviting one if not both to break the endless cycle. Like the quote attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, "An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind." Someone has to be the bigger person and not insist on winning at any cost. Democracy depends on some sense of civility, of trust that the people will choose rightly or at least that even if they don't, there will be other votes. Our founders weren't sure we were capable of it and often referred to it as an "experiment." The jury is still out.

"Separation of Church and State." "Religion and politics don't mix. It's unconstitutional." These are phrases I (and virtually any preacher) hear often in these troubled times. In fact, the Bill of Rights in 1791 states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." In the 1966 the LCA adopted a Church and State Social Statement that described the relationship between church and government as "institutional separation and functional interaction."

Our Christian convictions are formed by our faith in Jesus, and those convictions inform how we functionally interact in governmental matters as a part of our baptismal vocation in the world. In our Affirmation of Baptism service, we each vow to "strive for justice and peace in all the earth." Jesus makes it clear (Luke 10, Parable of the Good Samaritan) that our neighbor is anyone in need, and in Matthew 25, Jesus insists that as we serve "the least of these," we serve him. Christian functional political interaction, then, is a deliberation and pursuit of love of neighbor. The one thing, it seems to me, Christian political engagement must not be about is pursuing ultimate self-interest. Such curved-in-on-selfness for Lutherans is the essence of sin.

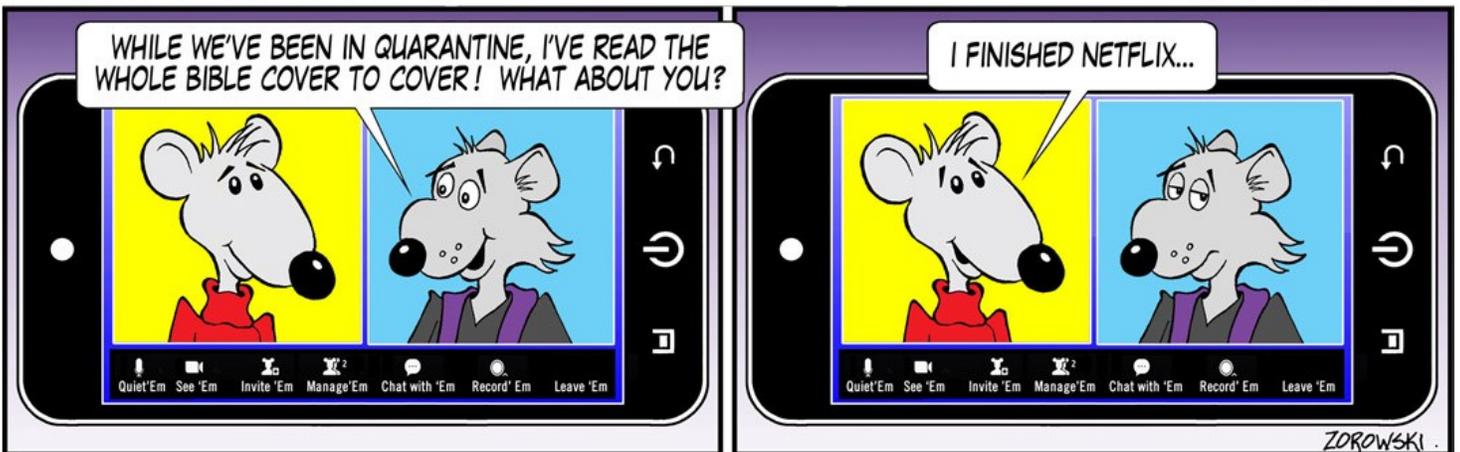
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CHURCH FUNNIES



Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



CHURCH COUNCIL

Danny Collins, President	(252) 499-9949	dcollins1193@gmail.com
Tony Piccini	(602) 513-3320	tony@pitcherofnectar.com
Virginia Federer	(252) 723-7879	Virginia@LarryFederer.com
Sue Fulcher, Secretary	(252) 726-8367	w8koqs1st@gmail.com
Pastor Scott Berry	(252) 777-3067	soselca.pastor@gmail.com
cell	(336) 312-6276	

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At the August 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA commissioned a new Social Statement on Church and Civic/Political Engagement. Such statements generally take 6 years. Since the question seemed more urgent than that, concurrently the ELCA commissioned a “social message” on the same topic. In June this year the ELCA Church Council adopted “Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy.” You can find that document (in English and Spanish) along with a study guide and leader guide on the ELCA website. Also, the October issue of *Living Lutheran* (available online as well as in print) has a synopsis of this issue as its cover story, titled “Discipleship in a Democracy.” I encourage you to read and study it, and—regardless of your political affiliations and leanings or lack thereof—that you ponder anew how, through interaction with government and politics, we might best advocate for and serve our neighbor.

Walking with you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tim".

Bishop Tim Smith