



THE SERVANT

The monthly newsletter of Servants of Christ Lutheran Church, a congregation of The North American Lutheran Church serving the Cedar Rapids area

Meeting at Robins City Hall Community Room, 265 South Second St., Robins, Iowa 52328
Worship: 9:00 am; Fellowship & Coffee: 10:00;
Bible Class and Sunday School: 10:15
Ron Voss, Pastor

*****July 2020

Dear servant of Christ,

I always loved going to church . . . even as a teenager! And I loved singing the hymns (I know, too bad, given my musical ability). And, I sort of paid attention to the words of the hymns. But, to be honest, the words did not always impact me. Now, with decades under my belt and a lot of “living” behind me, that has changed. Big time!



In recent weeks I have been thinking about “This is My Father’s World.” I always viewed this as a happy hymn: nature sings; morning light; lily white; rocks, trees, skies, seas; God shining in all that’s fair. Gardens are growing, colorful flowers are increasingly appearing, the outdoor grill emits mouth-watering aromas. So nice. And yet, these enticing sights, sounds, and smells are being over-shadowed, even obliterated by events in our country and around the world. The ~~virus~~ hit, killing and locking us down, unraveling our economy. Then came the horrific killing of George Floyd, visible to the entire world. The resulting riots, destruction, and take-over of cities like Seattle leave us stunned. Bird, trees, skies are erased from our minds. For me, *this* is where Christian hymnody uplifts and upholds me. *This* is where it is important to look at *all* the words of a hymn. The final verse of “This is My Father’s World” says this:



This is my father’s world; oh, let me not forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet!

I cling to these words, I revel in these words. My “woe is me, woe is this world” becomes “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:57) Psalm 46 reminds us of God’s power and rule: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.” Notice the verb tense: God IS. Notice also the words “present help.” Present help! There is no mention of a magic

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wand to eliminate problems and pain. There is no sprinkling of fairy dust to make the “monsters” disappear. God does better (doesn't He always??). He provides us His presence, His strength, His power, His hope. Jesus said it plainly, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) Do you hear the hymn in the background “that though the wrong seems off so *strong*, God is the ruler yet!!”



I read an inspiring article this week about “Dabo” Swinney, head coach of the Clemson University football team (#1 in the nation). He is a committed Christian. Responding to the current racial unrest in America, he stated, “The problem is not racial unrest; the problem is sin.” A seminary professor could not have said it better. We need to be constantly reminded that we live in a sinful world that manifests itself in many ways. But the root problem is not a history or a race of people or inequality or whatever; it is sin. And sin is defeating; sin and guilt bring us low. For Christians our battle cry must be JESUS HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD! GOD IS THE RULER YET!

I began with, “This is My Father’s World.” I end with another hymn, the third verse of “A Mighty Fortress,” (yeh, another goodie!).



And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God has willed His truth to triumph through us.
In life it guides our way, in death it is our stay.
Lord, grant while time shall last, your church may hold it fast
Throughout all generations.

We have come through difficult times. Undoubtedly there will be dark days ahead. It will be so easy to cry out like the psalmist, “How long, O Lord?” (Ps. 13); “Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?” (Ps. 10) But as we struggle, in our confusion, in our pain, stop and listen. Hear it? Hear that hymn? “This is my father’s world He is the ruler yet!”

Cling to Christ! Be faithful! Share the hope that is in you!

In Christ’s victory,
Ron

**Nothing can separate us from the love
of God in Christ Jesus.**

Romans 8:38-39



For centuries a farmer would, each spring, plow his field for planting. He would hitch up horses or perhaps oxen, then walk behind them to guide them as wood or metal made furrows for planting. Then came the tractor. The farmer still did the guiding, but now he could at least sit! With each, the farmer had to keep his eyes on the field, doing his best to keep rows straight, keep them from overlapping. Even the best, most-experienced farmers made errors, and by the end of the day they were fatigued, often with aching hands. But now there's the autosteer: GPS-based technology. It's incredibly efficient and hands-free. Instead of gripping a plow or a wheel, the farmer can grip a sandwich!

King Josiah began his reign in 640 BC. He was eight years old (yep, 8). He ruled the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 40 years. When he became king, Judah was a mess; full of idolatry, ignorant of the word of God and God's covenant with His people. But Josiah set the people on the right path, the "straight and narrow." 2 Kings 22:2 states, "He (Josiah) did what was right in the eyes of the Lord . . . , *not turning aside to the right or to the left*. When we read the story of this young king, we are tempted to think he had GPS centuries before modern farmers. Except for Josiah it was not a Global Positioning System but a GOD Positioning System. Listening to and following the word of the Lord, Josiah was able to keep his "planting" (i.e., his kingdom) on a productive path. Taking his hands "off the wheel" and allowing the Lord to do the steering, the kingdom of Judah prospered.

Not everyone has Global Positioning in their car, but each of us CAN access God's Positioning System for our daily lives. So, put God at the wheel . . . and enjoy a sandwich.

It's Not About Me by Max Lucado
study continues in July

It's all about being #1, top dog, the best, a winner. In this culture that concept is drummed into our heads almost from birth. Even sports for elementary school children no longer award a trophy to the best team/player. Instead everyone gets a trophy. Everyone is a winner, no matter what their skill. From childhood through our adult lives, we walk around cocooned in the cloak, "It's all about me!"

Best-selling author Max Lucado turns this lie on its head . . . the one that says, "It's all about me." Instead he sets our sights on a greater goal, a goal outside ourselves. A God-centered life works. And it rescues us from a life that doesn't.

Join us on Sundays following worship as we study, grow, and refocus.

July Mission Giving

\$500: The North American
Lutheran Church General

**Wearing a mask, sitting apart
It's almost enough to break a
heart.**

**But we're still Christ's body,
knowing we need
To worship our Lord, in word
and in deed.**

Thank you for your faithfulness