



The Sign of the Cross



I first saw the Cross of Lorraine (†) in New Orleans in 2009 on the steeples of St. Louis Cathedral. I wondered why this iconic church had, what appeared to me to be, Orthodox crosses (✙). The Cross of Lorraine has an extra crossbar, which looks kind of like the Orthodox cross which features three of them, one being slanted at the bottom. The western church usually uses a Latin cross (†), which has a single crossbar. I later learned that the cathedral's crosses were reflective of its French origins, as well as being the seat of a bishop.

There are many different historical usages for this particular cross, but I am mostly intrigued by its use during World War II. Charles de Gaulle picked this symbol, under which the Free French would fight the Nazis. The world is full of symbols, and the Nazis, under Joseph Goebbels, relied heavily upon imagery to reinforce a particular environment and spirit. The swastika (卐) was chosen to unite the German people. The Free French chose a cross. Fighting evil is easier with a good symbol. What better symbol with which to fight and resist evil than the cross?

The Free French adorned their ships and flags with the cross. Perhaps we should view our churches as being part of the resistance beneath the sign of the cross. Maybe you even have a cross displayed in your home as you fight evil. The Catechism even teaches us to make this sign when we wake up and go to bed. Why? There is no magic in the making of the sign or displaying it on a flag. The symbol of the cross points us to Jesus Christ. When we see the cross, we are saying, and believing, that Jesus died for me. This is the most important thing in the world, and the only message that the church has to give. Jesus died for you. The cross is goodness, truth, and beauty. This is everything that the devil hates. This is the Gospel; that we would know nothing but Christ and Him crucified.

We will fight evil today under the sign of the cross. Our world is filled with modern Nazis who insist on lockstep uniform adoption of a new moral code. This movement wants to rob you of the joys of a life lived in the freedom and love of Jesus Christ. Hermann Sasse, (1895-1976) a German Lutheran theologian, was the first to publicly write against the Nazis. He wrote before they'd even come to ultimate power, that their system simply did not permit the Gospel to flourish, because it was based on the utter supremacy of the German race. It was not that the Jewish people were inferior, but that all people were born sinful! No one is righteous on account of their birth or ancestry, but only on the account of Jesus Christ! He boldly spoke out against Hitler and the Nazis, and was exiled to Australia as a consequence. And yet, Sasse did so with great joy and

confidence, all under the sign of the cross of Christ. May the sign of the cross be for us a sign of truth. May we all believe and speak truth, shining light into a world of growing darkness.

+Pastor Kyle Mietzner

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CHURCH NOTES

Christian Education Opportunities

Children's Sunday School—Sundays @ 11am
 Adult Bible Study—Sundays @ 11am
 Wednesdays @ 7pm

Helping Hands Meal Prep

Our outreach program to help feed residents at Brother Francis Shelter and Clare House has resumed at a reduced level. Due to social distancing guidelines, Helping Hands are recruited as needed.

Offerings

You are welcome to mail your offerings to the church to be presented during the next Sunday worship service. This can also be done through your financial institution's BillPay service.

Church Contacts

Church Office: 338-3838
 Pastor's cell phone: (336)944-2394
 Church address: 2100 Boniface Pkwy
 Anchorage, AK 99504

Birthdays

Levi Thomas Rawlins 8/1
 Ina Mueller 8/2
 Jahna Pollock 8/4
 Cayre Saden 8/4
 Rawlin Mascelli 8/5
 Christie Mascelli 8/7
 Cheryl Erickson 8/10
 Cheryl Hopkins 8/16
 Aaron Wisroth 8/17
 Sid Anderson 8/18
 Joe Pollock 8/18
 Darrell Lampert 8/19
 Todd Nichols 8/23
 Anita Hunsucker 8/28



Anniversaries

Sam & Debby Dickey 8/22
 Aaron & Nicole Wisroth 8/28



Offering Contributions

Here's a look at Zion's contributions to date:

Last Sunday:	8/1/2021	Attendance: 44
<u>8/1 Offerings</u>	<u>Weekly Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Difference</u>
\$ 2,771.61	\$ 2,680.00	\$ 91.61
<u>August Offerings</u>	<u>Monthly Budget</u>	<u>Monthly Difference</u>
\$ 2,771.61	\$ 13,400.00	— \$ 10,628.39
<u>YTD Offerings</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>YTD Difference</u>
\$ 65,417.88	\$ 99,580.00	— \$ 34,162.12
Total 2021 Contribution Budget:		\$170,550.00

FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Janet McCullough

zionlcmsmusic@yahoo.com

I'd like to update you on the subject of adult choir resumption following the 'Year of COVID' interruptions. As of this writing, we will begin choir rehearsal on Wednesday, September 8. The Wednesday schedule, (with some adjustments for Wednesday evening worship services), will be:

4pm – Confirmation

6pm – Bible Study

7 to 8:30pm – Choir Practice

The adult choir is open to all singers who are able to match pitch. A rudimentary knowledge of musical notation is a plus, but the ability to navigate a printed choral score can be learned. We – both I and the choir members who already possess this knowledge – will help. The most important requirement for choir members is faithful commitment to rehearsal. I've learned, (at times, painfully!), that the level of musical quality is directly related to regular rehearsal attendance.

Pastor has asked that the choir's initial focus be on portions of the Divine Service such as introits, graduals, responsorials and etc. This is a different style of singing than traditional choral anthem preparation. But, since we already have the basic background in the psalm and liturgy parts we sing every Sunday, we will quickly be proficient in this type of choral singing. There will also be anthem preparation, so those of you who love the classic sacred choral form will not be disappointed.

We will begin singing in Divine Service September 12, the Sunday following our first rehearsal. We will not routinely sit in a separate choir area, so choir members will be with their families for the majority of the service. There will be adjustments to that pattern for feast days.

If you have questions or comments, my email address is listed above. Or you can see me on Sundays after the postlude. I am very happy that we, hopefully, are at the point that choral singing can resume. For those of us who love singing in choirs, this has been a year of musical starvation. I'll see all choir members on September 8 at 7pm as we begin to enjoy the feast of sacred music again.



SOLI DEO GLORIA

STEWARDSHIP

When it comes to stewardship, a favorite Bible verse is the account of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1–4). It's a moving account. Our Lord praises the seemingly small gift of two copper coins given by a poor widow above the abundance of gifts given by the rich, saying, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them" (Luke 21:3). And that is usually where we stop. But the text goes on. "For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on" (Luke 21:4).

"She ... put in all she had to live on." She gave everything. She held nothing back. She trusted that the Lord who made her and all creatures; who gave her everything she had; who redeemed her from her own sin, from death, and the power of the devil; who called her by the gospel and enlightened her with His gifts of Word and Sacrament; would continue to do this. He would provide her with all that she needed for this body and life because that is the character of the God she had.

But this is not why we give small gifts. Her gift, though it appeared small, was actually large. When we are tempted to give small gifts, it is precisely because we want them to be small! We don't trust the Lord to provide for us. We give small gifts because we lack faith in the One who created us, redeemed us, sanctifies and keeps us in the one true faith. We give small gifts because we doubt that God will really give us what we need and desire. We give small gifts because we are not content with what God has already given.

We are not slaves, children of the slave woman, under the Old Covenant (Galatians 4). We are adopted sons of the free woman. And since we are sons, we are also heirs. And heirs receive the inheritance. For everything is already ours in Christ. And thus, moved by the willing spirit of adoption, we do the will of God in financial matters far beyond all that done by those under the Old Covenant who were forced by legal demands.

So, what have you decided to give? How do I decide what to give? Let the Scriptures be your guide.

We are to give proportionally to what we have received from God's giving to us (Luke 12:48; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2, 2 Corinthians 8:12). But you have not been set free to give nothing. See that you excel in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7)!

We are not free to live selfishly outside the Gospel, without regard for God who gives us all good gifts, without generosity for our neighbor who needs us and our gifts, without supporting the community of faith in which we live, without care for our spiritual fathers and those who teach and help raise our children in the faith, and without resources for the poor and needy.

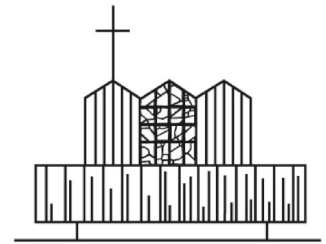
In short, we are not free to live unto ourselves, hoarding what God has given us only for us. For love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). And the sum of the law is this: Love God and love your neighbor (Matthew 22:34–40). We love because He first loved us. We give because He has given to us.

Luther once said, "Possessions belong in your hands, not in your heart" (LW 14:240). There is a reason your 10 fingers spread apart. With your hands you catch God's gifts for what you need and let the rest fall through your fingers to your neighbors – your family, your friends, your community, your church.

lcms.org



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AUGUST

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1-Aug 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study & Sunday School	2	3	4 7pm Bible Study	5	6	7
8 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study & Sunday School 4pm VBS	9 4pm VBS	10 4pm VBS 7pm Council Meeting	11 4pm VBS 7pm Bible Study	12 4pm VBS	13	14
15 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study & Sunday School	16	17	18 7pm Bible Study	19	20	21
22 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study & Sunday School	23	24	25 7pm Bible Study	26	27	28
29 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study & Sunday School	30	31	1-Sep 7pm Bible Study	2	3	4