

St. John's Monthly Newsletter

April 2019

Clothes Matter

If you have ever read through the Old Testament, you might have noticed how much attention is given to clothing. The subject comes up time and time again, almost from the very beginning of the Bible. There are regulations on what type of material should be worn, what to do with soiled or moldy garments, and even great attention given to the color of garments all through the Old Testament. So why do clothes matter? Because they are the outward manifestation of our person.

Think about it for a minute and you'll know it to be true. Our clothing is the closest thing to us for the vast majority of our day, and it is the single most visible thing in our day-to-day lives that express our personality. We make swift judgments about people by just observing what they are wearing. We choose our clothes based on what people have said about them or maybe what they have left unsaid about them. You might go as far as to say that our clothing is our second skin. For that reason, it gets a lot of attention in the Bible.

From the beginning, we were created unclothed and in perfect harmony with nature and our environment (Gen. 2:25). As we have seen over and over again, this state of existence didn't last for very long. As soon as Adam and Eve had eaten of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil they set about trying to clothe themselves (Gen. 3:7). They tried to cover up their first layer of skin in the hopes that it wouldn't get seen or consumed by God's righteous anger. The problem was that it didn't work.

So after God had pronounced the curses on the world for our failures, He went about setting things to right. If you look closely at the end of Genesis 3 you will note that God used skins to clothe Adam and Eve from that point forward. The message was clear, Adam and Eve deserved death, so something had to give up their skin (i.e., their life) and save Adam's skin. From that moment onward, there would be a constant theme of life being given up for life; substitution and redemption.

Further on down the story of salvation, we would hear of a young man by the name of Joseph (Gen. 37-50). You might remember him for having the famous "Technicolor Dreamcoat," or the coat of many colors. This lavish garment showed off a mother and father's love for their child, and it also showed the greatness of who Joseph was and would become. Joseph's brothers hated it. When they finally decided to get rid of Joseph and sell him into slavery they would take that very garment, tear it up, and soaked it in goat's blood to convince their father that Joseph was dead (Gen. 37:31). Their treachery was an act that cost an animal its life and a father his pride and joy.

Joseph had other dealings with garments in the house of Potiphar (Gen. 39), and would even use garments to disguise himself from his brothers when they later met in the land of Egypt (Gen. 42). Unfortunately, space will not allow me to go into detail on these instances, but note that they are there in the Bible. One of the next areas in the Holy Scripture that we should look at is in Leviticus 14-17 and 19.

Leviticus is confusing to many of us because it sounds so strange to our modern ears. Rules, sacrifices, odd cultural prohibitions, and norms all sound strangely eerie to our modern sensibilities. Other sections like Leviticus 19:19 concerning clothes of mixed fabric sound burdensome. Yet if we remember why God gave clothing in the first place, these rules and regulations seem to make more sense. If garments are of mixed fabric or if they are moldy and decaying it represents imperfection and death which cannot abide in God's presence. Thus, the Old Testament's strange obsession with clothing is of great spiritual significance.

As with all Old Testament themes, the theme of clothing is very much present in the New Testament, especially within the Gospels. The first is a reference to Jesus birth. At the very beginning of the greatest story ever told is Jesus birthed as an every-day, naked, baby. Here He is! The God of all the universe, the one who had brought all things into existence, and he's a helpless naked child. Here he's wrapped up in strips of linen swaddling clothes more reminiscent of a mummy's bandages than our cute modern baby onesies (Lk. 2:7). It's no coincidence then that when Jesus is taken off the cross, they wrap him again in linen and place him in a tomb (Lk. 23:53). From a manger to a cave your Lord goes for you.

Of course, the big event in Jesus life is not when he is clothed, but when he is stripped down. The soldiers crucify Jesus completely naked (Jn. 19:23-24). It was to shame him, but we really should see and remember our shame in

Jesus. Here the Son of Man is returned to the natural state that we were created in and took the place that Adam should have been placed in on the cross. Here the wrath that God should have let loose on Adam was let loose on Jesus. Yes, clothing matters.

With the death of Christ on the cross, the creation had started to be restored. Now there were no longer prohibitions on the types of fabric a person wore or the condition of the garments that they wore; now there was a new garment that we needed. It was a garment not made by human hands, but one that was given to us by Christ. The one whose clothes were removed now gives out the robe of righteousness to all who believe in Him (Matt. 22:1-14, Romans 6:1-4, Rev. 3:5, 7:13). It's a symbol we see in many of our baptisms as people come dressed in white robes, or as a pastor stands before us in white robes to remind us of our eternal inheritance. Now our spiritual garments are all that matter; the blood of Christ is what now covers us and that my brothers and sisters in Christ is the piece of clothing that matters most.

Next time you run across a reference to clothing in your Bible take a moment to consider this great theme. More often than not you will find some connection back to Jesus and our robes of righteousness. Also, pay attention to this theme in our hymns and psalms, and you will gain a new found appreciation for clothing. God bless you this Easter Season.

In Christ,
Pastor Jacobsen

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod April 2019 Newsletter Article

“Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out” (Deut 28:3-6).

This is God’s promise to the Israelites as they stood beyond the Jordan outside of the Promised Land. He promises blessing to His people. He will make them prosper, whether they are in the city or the field. He will make their fruit of their work to prosper, whether from the ground or their wombs, their flocks or their herds. He will make them to prosper in all things, whether upon their coming in or their going out.

But there’s a catch. He would do this for Israel only “if you obey the voice of the Lord your God” (Deut 28:2b). If they did that, He would cause that “all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you” (Deut 28:2a).

If they didn’t obey the voice of the Lord, if they didn’t keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in His ways (Deut 28:9), they would be met with curse and woe. The blessings would be replaced with curses. Everything that the Lord promised to prosper and bless would be cursed and fail.

Thanks be to God that our Lord Jesus Christ has come into our flesh, fulfilled the law for us – in our place and for our benefit; died for us – in our place and for our benefit; and is risen from the dead for us – in our place and for our benefit.

By this we have justification before God. We are forgiven, clean, holy, and righteous. The blessing of God is promised to us in Christ Jesus. It depends upon His work and not ours.

All this is ours in Holy Baptism. For in Holy Baptism, God claims us as His own, makes us His children, His heirs, His holy people. And so it is that the work of our hands and its fruit is holy because we are holy in Christ. It is pressed into His service, and thereby it becomes a blessing to us and to our neighbor.

For this great gift, our reception of the blessings of God because of Christ Jesus our Lord, it is our duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is not in order to receive blessings but because in Christ we already have.

It is with this in mind that we sit down on the first day of the week and set aside as He has prospered us to give to His church for His work of blessing in our midst (1 Cor. 16:2).

Serving this March:

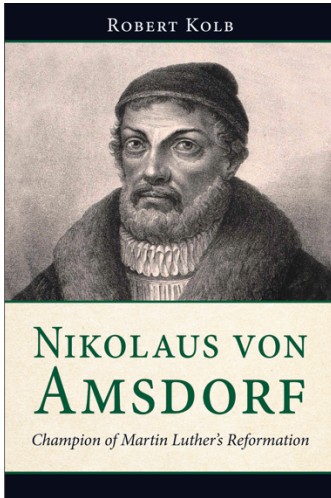
Elders: Collin Richey & Mark Ewald
Ushers: 8:00 am: Volunteer(s) Needed
10:30 am: Alan Severson & Austin Stortzum
Altar Guild: Jane Roth & Christine Adair

The Acolyte 3-month schedule is on the ledge outside the church office.

Book of the Month:

Nikolaus von Amsdorf: Champion of Martin Luther's Reformation

by Kolb, Robert



Martin Luther called him “a theologian by nature.” He was Luther’s close friend and contemporary—born three weeks after Luther but living two decades longer. He was the only nobleman in Luther’s inner circle and one of the first Evangelical bishops. Known by his colleagues as a “fierce enemy of all corruption and adulteration of true Lutheran, Evangelical truth,” his contributions during the theological controversies after Luther’s death shaped numerous articles of the Formula of Concord. Yet few people today have ever heard of Nikolaus von Amsdorf, let alone his influence on Lutheran theology.

In this thoroughly revised and updated edition of the 1978 book *Nikolaus von Amsdorf: Popular Polemics in the Preservation of Luther’s Legacy*,

Robert Kolb opens the life and work of Amsdorf to readers of all experiences and backgrounds. Dr. Kolb reveals how this mostly unknown champion of Luther’s Reformation helped set the future of Lutheran theology on its course, prioritizing above all the radically simple and clear Gospel Luther proclaimed: salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ alone.

About the Author

Robert Kolb is a professor emeritus of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri; author of numerous publications on the Reformation, systematic theology, and evangelism, including *Luther’s Wittenberg World* (2018) and *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God* (2016); and coeditor of *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology* (2014).

Call or email the church office if you want us to order for you!

Prayer Requests:

Those In Need of Comfort, Health, & Recovery (Recently Added):

Paul Welton
Tara Stortzum
Howard Nelms
Janice Wienke – Cousin of Bareither & Schamann families

Imogene Tilford
Debbie Albin
Jules Martin – Brother of Michael Martin

For those Serving Our Nation:

Jason Wetzel - stationed in Iraq

Those Who Need Our Ongoing Prayers:

Alan Phelps
Richard Grice
Ava Gass
Kevin Shaffer – 2nd Grade Teacher’s Husband
Bob Pierce – Father of Tina Smith

Howard Diepholz
John Kendall
Bob Zschau

Chuck Cookson
Shirley Donnell

Church & School News & Announcements:

St. John's Wall of Giving: Located in the Fellowship Hall you will find our Wall of Giving. Pick a card from our wall with the donation amount you would like to give. Simply return your donation with the card to the church or school office. Your name will then be listed on our Donor Wall located at the school! ALL FUNDS RAISED GO DIRECTLY TO RETIRE THE DEBT!

Easter Breakfast: The sign up for breakfast is in the hallway! Please consider donating! Easter breakfast will be served after the sunrise service until 10:15 am.

Ushers: We are in need of an usher or 2 for the 8:00 am April services. Please contact Mark Ewald or the church office if you are interested.

In the mood to clean out your closets, basement, garage, attic? The Ladies Aid rummage sale will be **Saturday June 1st** so start collecting your items. More details at a later date on when to bring your items to the church and where to put them. Thanks and good luck!

Our future pastors are now students at Concordia Seminary. We invite you to bring in canned and boxed food, as well as clothes of all sizes/any age. Donations will go to help students at the seminary. There are labeled boxes in the fellowship hall for donations. Thank you!

Ladies Aid would like to extend a welcome to all ladies to attend our monthly meeting on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 1:00 pm. We have devotion, prayer, business meeting (treasurers report, discuss future fundraisers, funeral dinners, etc), and occasionally finish the meeting with a dessert and coffee. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you're welcome to assist with our events (rummage sales, funeral dinners, etc). Please contact Christi Diepholz 217-254-5437 or any member of Ladies Aid if you have questions. Hope you will join us.

Lent & Easter Worship Schedule:

Wednesday Lent Services

Wednesday, April 3, 10

8:30 am & 6:30 pm

Maundy Thursday, Thursday, April 18

12:30 pm & 6:30 pm

w/Holy Communion

Good Friday, Friday, April 19

12:30 pm & 6:30 pm

Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 20

5:00 pm

w/Holy Communion

Easter Sunday, Sunday, April 21

6:00 am (no communion)

8:00 & 10:30 am

w/Holy Communion

Birthdays:

- 2- Michael Martin
- 3- Kallie Harris, Arlyne Jones, Warren Moody , Harrison Wetzel
- 6- Alaina Por
- 7- Katie Thoman, Alex Hagen, John Dixon
- 8- Jill Ferree
- 10- Karen Stoll, Jill Bell
- 11- Amy Sweeney, Robert Fears
- 12- Jack Thompson
- 13- Richard Fanelli, Cole DuFrain
- 14- Norma Ferree, Mya Cobb, Emalee Anne Shepard
- 15- Barbara Moran, Brian Packer
- 16- Ainsley Thompson, Terry Reel
- 17- Cliff Fairchild, Curt Niemeyer, Anna Vadakin, Chandler Nunez
- 18- Toni Miller, Lana Cordes
- 19- John McCain, Polly Quick
- 20- Heather Long, Dorothy Roling
- 22- Kara Salmon, Cason Vadakin, Edwin Cole, William Rasmussen
- 23- Dale VonBehrens
- 25- Christa Packer, Myron Salmon
- 26- Stephanie Upton
- 28- Kyle Packer, Christopher Martin, Tara Stortzum, Peggy Kepp
- 29- Ava Larson
- 30- Michael Schaljo, Susan Love

Anniversaries:

- Toni & Randy Peadro April 2, 1988
- Therese & Charles Miller April 7, 1973
- Rebecca & Stephen Wetzel April 8, 1972
- Shirley & William Donnell April 9, 1994
- Deborah & John Schaljo April 17, 1993

- Charlotte & Arthur ZuHone April 18, 1954
- Penny & H. A. Youngblood April 22,1988
- Polly & David Quick April 22, 1989
- Kim & Randy Ervin April 25, 1992