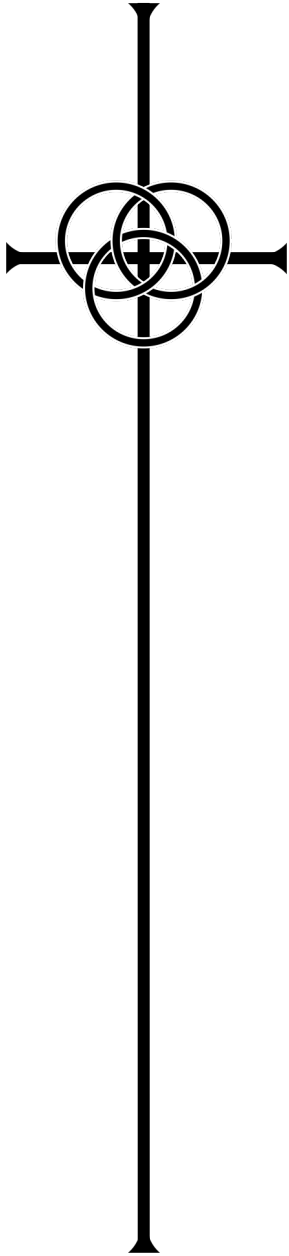


LIFE TOGETHER

RECEIVING GOD'S GIFTS ✝ SHARING GOD'S GIFTS



Dearest Saints of Holy Trinity,

My, how time flies. The last of summer is upon us already! Truly, days and seasons continue to run. How blessed it is to know that God is the One who directs it all.

This is the month that concludes the synodical convention. Remember to keep synod in your prayers as her appointed delegates strive to make pious decisions in directing our course together. But, also remember that the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church on earth is not a denomination.

Whatever happens, for better or for worse, in the denominations of this kingdom have little bearing on the eternal reality of God and of his truth and of his Church. These will always remain, even if the earthly institutions should fail. And, eventually, they all will in some degree. They are run by sinful men, after all.

May Jesus always be your source of hope and joy. Never look away from him. The moment you do is the moment you sink into the waves like Peter did. Simply look at Jesus. Things may be tempestuous around you, or they may be peaceful. Regardless, look to Jesus. Love him, thank him, and trust in him. Then, you will have joy in him come what may.

In Christ,

Pastor Ferguson

Knocking from the Inside

Pastor Ferguson

There is an illusion that we live our lives seeking after God, as if he were hidden that he needed to be found, or distant that his attention needed to be caught. His promise, *knock and the door will be opened to you* (Matt 7:7), is often seen as his invitation to us to begin the search. The parables of the unjust judge and of the midnight visitor are often seen as God's invitation to our work of clamoring until we finally make enough noise to catch his attention.

Why do we think of God as hidden or as far off? Elijah mocked the priests of Baal for those very same beliefs. Why do we not, instead, think of ourselves as blind to what is before us, deaf to what is pining after us, mute to answer the wedding vows repeated in our presence, or even too stubborn to let our attention be removed from the fleeting things of earth?

The truth is that the God whom we believe we are seeking is really rather obsessively seeking us. He is reckless, compulsive, relentless in his desire to be united to his beloved—to us.

Jesus says, *I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me* (Rev 3:20). Who is it that does not open while he knocks? Of Jesus, the Song of Solomon declares,

*I sleep, but my heart is awake;
It is the voice of my beloved!
He knocks, saying,
"Open for me, my sister, my love,
My dove, my perfect one;
For my head is covered with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night"*
(Song 5:2).

Jesus is in the open, on the doorstep. It is we who are hidden. Jesus is near, at the front door. It is we who are far off.

The sixteenth-century Spanish poet Lope de Vega articulates this well in his eighteenth sonnet:

What have I, that you'd seek me as a friend?
What interest draws you, Jesus, to my door,

All drenched with dew, as you have come before,
In winter's dark, the long night hours to spend?

O how unyielding was my heart, so hard,
To shut you out! How daft, if for my vice
Of cold ingratitude the freezing ice
Dried your pure feet, cut sore by many a shard!

How many times the Angel said to me,
"Soul, come, draw near, and see now through the pane
With what great love He calls persistently!"

How oft then, Sovereign Beauty, I'd explain,
"Tomorrow, we'll receive Him willingly."

But each tomorrow proved my vow was
vain!



"The Light of the World," William Holman Hunt, 1851–56, Manchester

The house wherein we dwell is our own heart—overgrown and unkempt and choked by piercing thorns and constricting ivy. We have made our heart to be a fortress of prideful solitude wherein we live in the accepting quiet of our own opinions—our own way—and rule from upon our own throne of icy stone as the master of our own domain. There is a kind of peace enjoyed in that place. We never fight for territory as did the ancient kings and kingdoms. But, that is only because we refuse in that fortress to acknowledge the existence of others. The door to that stony fortress has no external handle. None can enter unless we open from the outside.

Jesus stands on the step outside and knocks. If he chose, he could enter in without opening the door as he did in the upper room. But he is unwilling to do that. He knows that freedom is necessary for love to be true. He risks being rejected to preserve love in its purity. He stands outside and he knocks.

The strange thing about this picture is that while he stands outside, Jesus miraculously turns our heart inside out. He makes the out, in, and the in, out. He wants us to come out of our own hearts and into his great, wonderful, outside world. So he knocks to wake us, to rouse us, to bring us to open the door and leave the fortress of solitude. Yet, as we approach the door, we begin to knock as if we were on the

outside, because, apart from Jesus, we are. We knock from the inside, forgetting that we are inside. Roused from a sleep imposed, increased, induced by subtle poisons, we see the inside for what it is: not a fortress, but a prison. We knock that the door might be opened, because we want to get out to be with Jesus so that he can enter in and warm the cold stone of our heart.

The handle on the inside is inside out. Our hand moves to open the door, but it become Jesus' hand. He opens the door we have knocked at from the inside. He frees us from the prison of our domain, liberating us into his domain.

He lets us out into in. He frees us from ourselves and brings us into him. At the same time, the door opened in love pours the person of love into our heart, and he makes them new. He makes warm homes of cold fortresses. He must only enter into us, and we must only enter into him. Poet George Herbert describes this mystical scene of love beautifully:

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
 If I lacked anything.

“A guest,” I answered, “worthy to be here”:
 Love said, “You shall be he.”
“I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
 I cannot look on thee.”
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
 “Who made the eyes but I?”

“Truth, Lord; but I have marred them; let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.”
“And know you not,” says Love, “who bore the blame?”
 “My dear, then I will serve.”
“You must sit down,” says Love, “and taste my meat.”
 So I did sit and eat.

As long as Jesus is not admitted, he will pine. He will raise a raucous cry. He will throw rocks at the window from the garden and serenade until the dogs howl and the neighbors scowl. He will knock from the outside, until we knock from the inside. And then he will turn us inside out, and he will bring us love, and doors once closed will remain open: to us, to him, to heaven.

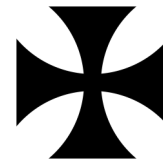
THIS MONTH AT HOLY TRINITY

Food Pantry Donations

Please help to provide for our hungry neighbors in need by donating goods to the food pantry. This is an easy addition to your regular monthly alms.

Food pantry needs for the month of August include crackers, chili, tuna, canned chicken and hamburger helper.

For more information contact Debbie Ohlensehlen



Anniversaries of Baptism

- 1 Debbie Ohlensehlen
- 1 Billy Paul Sharp
- 3 Tayden Cook
- 3 Amy Tally
- 7 Jennifer Voltmer
- 12 Johannah Biermann
- 12 Luke Oswald
- 17 Emilye Krueger
- 19 Martha Ideker
- 20 Jessica Johnson
- 21 Barb Hanlon
- 24 Dana Zembles
- 24 Aubre Biermann
- 25 Gregory Biermann
- 29 Jan Lewis
- 30 Henry Waigand

Birthdays

- 2 Mayson White
- 4 Rev. Eamonn Ferguson
- 7 Bill Heitman
- 8 Dana Zembles
- 9 Ronnie Haer
- 11 Susan Biermann
- 11 Martha Ideker
- 12 Johannah Biermann
- 16 Gayle Crawford
- 23 Becky Livengood
- 25 Barb Heitman
- 26 Lynn Thurnau
- 27 Dusty Livengood
- 28 Tina Robbins
- 31 Heath Biermann
- 31 Becky Livengood

Anniversaries of Marriage

- 4 Rev. Eamonn & Carolyn Ferguson
- 7 Jeff & Christy Livengood
- 9 Chris & Jordan Krueger
- 9 Gayle & Sharon Crawford
- 27 Greg & Susan Biermann
- 31 Douglas & Trula White



Saints' Days and Commemorations

- 3 Joanna, Mary, and Salome, *Myrrhbearers*
- 10 Lawrence, *Deacon and Martyr*
- 15 St. Mary, *Mother of Our Lord*
- 16 Isaac
- 17 Johann Gerhard, *Theologian*
- 19 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Hymnwriter and Theologian*
- 20 Samuel
- 24 St. Bartholomew, *Apostle*
- 27 Monica, *Mother of Augustine*
- 28 Augustine of Hippo, *Pastor and Theologian*
- 29 The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist

Serving This Month

Worship Preparation: Marla Voltmer

Ushers: Dennis Thurnau, Bill Thurnau

Acolytes:

- 6 Memphis Mick
- 13 Sophie Biermann
- 20 Mayson White
- 27 Cameron Biermann

Refreshments:

- 6 Marla Voltmer
- 13 Carolyn Ferguson
- 20 Wilma Windhorst
- 27 Gail Heitman

AUGUST 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
			1 Driver's License Testing	2 Council items due to Secretary's office		4 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 2:00–6:00 p.m.—Food Pantry Open	5
6 9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service Board of Education Meeting	7	8 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	9 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	10 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	11 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 2:00–6:00 p.m.—Food Pantry Open	12	
13 9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service Council Meeting	14 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	15 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 1:00 p.m.—Ladies Guild	16 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Driver's License Testing	17 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	18 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Pastor Gone to Conception Abbey	19	
20 9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service 12:00 p.m.—Potluck	21 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	22 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	23 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	24 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	25 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 2:00–6:00 p.m.—Food Pantry Open	26	
27 9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service Board of Elders Meeting 5:00 p.m.—Youth Group	28 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	29 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	30 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Driver's License Testing	31 7:30 a.m.—Matsins			