

# COUNSELOR'S CORNER

## Learning from tradition

One of my members recently commented that she thought my preaching had been really good lately. The comment was appreciated, unexpected and, yet, it didn't surprise me.

The comment was appreciated and unexpected because I have been serving my congregation — Redeemer — in St. Cloud for 18 years. They know what to expect. They've heard the same old preacher for nearly two decades. Rarely does anyone comment on my preaching and that's fine.

The greatest joy I have in preaching is when people show up to hear God's Word. If you want your pastor to be a good preacher, be in church every Lord's day and pay attention. My greatest Sundays are when one member who has been long absent from God's house is present to hear His Word. That one member helps me to be a better preacher.

Yet the comment did not surprise me because I had recently changed my preaching. For the second time in my 30 years of being a pastor, I chose to use the historic one-year lectionary. Most LCMS congregations use a three-year series of readings developed in the 1970s. Your bulletins, reading inserts and pastor's sermons are based on those appointed readings.

The historic lectionary goes back to the early church. This is what I believe has changed my preaching for

the better. I am reading old sermons. I am reading the sermons of Martin Luther and Johann Gerhardt, and also sermons by the church fathers. They are great; they rarely use cute stories or illustrations to make a point; they use Scripture. I also believe that using the same readings every year will help teach us a solid set of biblical stories and accounts.

G.K. Chesterton wrote: "Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about." (*Orthodoxy*, p. 85)

This historic lectionary is the traditional lectionary of the Church. It predates the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Orthodox churches. I'm not sure if my preaching is better, but I have enjoyed being schooled by the dead and letting their sermons teach and guide me.

Encourage your pastor to look at the one-year lectionary. Advent is a great time to switch lectionaries because it begins a new church year. Whatever you do, don't say to your pastor: "Here's a suggestion to improve your preaching!" Instead, thank him for faithfully preaching Jesus to you.

**Rev. Bruce Timm**  
Arrowhead Region Pastoral Counselor



### LWML Retreat • Aug. 9-11 • Lutheran Island Camp

The facilitator is Rev. Bruce Timm. The topic is *Every One His Witness*, an LCMS evangelism program that teaches you to witness to friends, co-workers and any other non-churched people you may know. The program focuses on listening to those who are unsure about Christianity, asking questions that aren't accusatory and sharing the Good News about Jesus.

With the approach presented in this program, there's no bashing, no judgment and no forced imposition of beliefs. Instead, there's understanding, communication and honesty between friends. And *Every One His Witness* puts sound doctrine into practical action for sharing the faith with people in our everyday lives.

#### LWML RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Needs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Roommates \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Check	Before Aug. 1	After Aug. 1
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday-Sunday	\$120	\$130
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday-Saturday	\$70	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Only	\$50	\$60

**Special Offers:** Bring a "Retreat First Timer" and you both receive 25 percent off the registration price. Also, young women ages 12-18 receive a 25-percent discount.

Check here if a Young Woman   
 Check here if a Retreat First Timer   
 Name of person bringing you \_\_\_\_\_

Housing preference:  Cabin  Retreat Center

**The registration deadline is Aug. 1**

There is an additional \$10 fee for late registration. No refunds after Aug. 6.

Make check payable to: **LWML MN North District**  
 Send registration with check to: Corles Rainer,  
 8813 – 71 Street SE, Clear Lake, MN 55319