



We Are Called to Walk in the Good Way

Considering a Message from Genesis 12:1-4
For the Week of October 14th, 2018

In our Services this week, our church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) observes the centennial of its reorganization. Although the synod was reorganized in June 1918, the date of October 14 bears special significance because of its importance to the Norwegian Synod.

The Norwegian Synod was organized in 1853. Six years later, the synod's first joint undertaking was the establishment of a professorship for the training of pastors. The position officially began on October 14. This date became known as "Founders' Day" and had such importance to the Norwegian Synod that it became the dedication date of many buildings for congregations and synodical institutions.

In 1918, the synod was reorganized as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to "continue in the old doctrine and practice." Since then, the synod has observed the dual anniversaries of 1853 and 1918. For many years after the synod's reorganization, the mid-October date continued to be observed as a public declaration that the ELS is the rightful successor to the teachings of the Norwegian Synod which held to the two fundamental principles of the Reformation: 1.) That the Bible is the inspired Word of God and 2.) That salvation is received by grace alone.

During this centennial year, the ELS follows this tradition by observing "Founders' Day" as a special opportunity to thank and praise God for one hundred years of His wonders and blessings. He has richly and daily provided for us. He has purchased and won us from all sin through His Son. He has sanctified and kept us in the one truth faith. May grateful hearts overflow with thanks and praise. Our service—and especially our sermon message— focuses us on how God has so richly blessed us and our church body these past 100 years. Glory be to Him!

Opening Prayer: We thank You Heavenly Father for bringing us together. Send Your Holy Spirit to help us grow in faith and love, especially as we gather together with our fellow Christians. Help us to appreciate the blessings that we have in our church and in our Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Keep us always focused on remaining true to Your Word, rejoicing in the message that we have Salvation coming from You by Grace alone. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

CONNECT to Each Other

For this first session, take a few moments to get to know each other better—especially anyone who might be new or unfamiliar to the people in your group. In @ a minute each, have every person introduce themselves with: first/last name, immediate family, where you work(ed) how long you've been a member of Mt. Olive, and one thing you like to help others remember you: *"I'm the guy or gal who likes to..."*

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to make a bold stand on something? Why did you feel so strongly about it? How did it turn out? **ANSWERS WILL VARY/SUBJECTIVE—PERHAPS A STRONG STAND THAT WAS TAKEN BECAUSE OF ONE'S FAITH OR A MORAL STANCE—MAYBE EVEN SIMPLY BECAUSE SOMEONE WAS STUBBORN. I.E. CHILD REFUSES TO EAT VEGETABLES—MAY BE A BOLD STAND, BUT NOT WISE, OR TURN OUT VERY WELL!**

CONNECT to the Word—Read the Bible text together (also consider its context): **Genesis 12:1-4**

2. What specific command did God give to Abraham? What made obeying that command so difficult? **GOD ASKED ABRAHAM TO LEAVE HIS HOME, HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY; HE ASKED ABRAHAM TO DEPART FOR AN UNKNOWN PLACE! ABRAHAM WOULD HAVE HAD SO MANY QUESTIONS THAT WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY ANSWERED—THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT TOOK TRUST AND FAITH IN GOD.**

3. How did Pastor Harstad describe the difficult situation he and the other synod founders were facing in 1918? (See the bold italicized section in the printed Sermon) **”...AROUND THE OLD BUILDING SITE WHICH IS STORM SWEEPED AND WASTE. A DESTRUCTIVE HURRICANE HAS SWEEPED AWAY THE DEAR OLD MANSION, EVEN TAKING WITH IT MOST OF THEM THAT DWELT THERE. DISCOURAGED, LOOKING AROUND, WE DISCOVER ONLY THE BARE GROUND WITH WRECKAGE AND DANGEROUS CROSSROADS. YET LET US NOT BE TOO MUCH ALARMED NOR DISCOURAGED. WORSE THINGS HAVE REPEATEDLY HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH BEFORE THIS, WITHOUT ITS BEING DESTROYED.” NEARLY WIPED OUT! BUT NOT WITHOUT HOPE!**
4. How did our Norwegian forefathers 100 years ago, apply Genesis 12:1-4 to themselves and to the situation they found themselves in? **THEY WANTED TO BOEY GOD’S WORD. SO THEY FOUND IT NECESSARY TO DEPART FROM THE MERGER CHURCH—EVEN WITH ITS FAMILY AND FRIENDS—DEFINITELY A DIFFICULT CROSSROADS!!!**



CONNECT to Life

5. In what ways does God as US to do as He asked Abraham to do—to depart from the familiar and comfortable? What makes it difficult to depart from the world, and from its norms and attitudes? **READ TOGETHER & DISCUSS: MATTHEW 16:24-26. OUR SINFUL FLESH, SATAN AND THE WORLD’S RICHES MAKE IT HARD TO DEPART FROM THE NORMS OF THE WORLD AROUND US.**
6. How do the promises that God gave to Abraham apply to us today? How do these promises comfort us and support us? **HE’S PROMISED US A SAVIOR WHO WOULD COME THROUGH ABRAHAM’S LINE, AND THROUGH JESUS HAS PROMISED TO CARE FOR US AS OUR FATHER. WE CAN FIND GREAT COMFORT IN APPLYING THESE PROMISES FIRST GIVEN TO ABRAHAM TO OURSELVES.**
7. What legacy from the ELS founders can and should we seek to pass on to future generations? **BOLD & STURDY RELIANCE ON GOD’S WORD AND A WILLINGNESS TO FACE THE WORLD’S SCORN AND DERISION.**
8. How did the hymns, other lessons, parts of the service, etc. fit together with the Sermon message and overall theme for the day? **VARIOUS ANSWERS—OBVIOUSLY THE WHOLE SERVICE IS DESIGNED TO BE A COHESIVE UNIT/SINGLE THEME.**

CONNECT in Prayer—In closing & throughout the week!

- PLEASE OFFER PRAYERS that God continues to guide US and our Church Body, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in all truth. That we might continue to stand upon God’s Word and rejoice in our Salvation by Grace alone—at ALL COSTS!
- PRAY for the ongoing work of our Building Project and for those working on our project.
- PRAY for our School children, faculty, and staff. Give thanks for the good year we’ve been having so far and for God’s continued blessings on our school.
- PRAY for Sig Lee’s family at the death of his Sister, Eunice; for Don Anderson who recovers from a broken neck.; Sandy Tessien who recovers from knee surgery.
- PRAY for the new babies of our congregation (Everly Saidler, Peyton Bode, Adam Sulzle, Ruby Bohlke, Tobias Gunderson, Wayne Weichmann, Alice Chapman, and Evelyn Roemhildt); And for the still expecting mothers of our congregation!

