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Pastor Neville Otto
Address for: Christ the King
Preached: November 22nd 2026

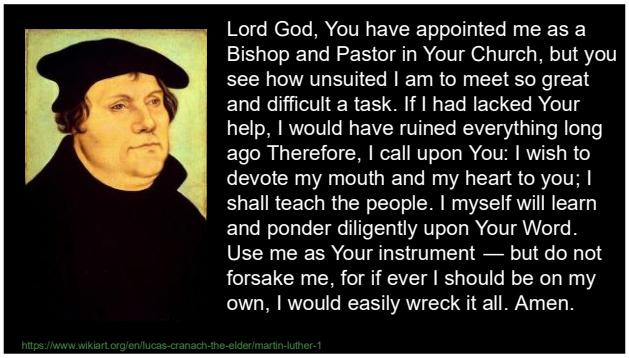
The ordinary church where God's extraordinary love comes to life

Bible reference for sermon: Ephesians 1:22-23

> *"And he (God the Father) has put all things under his (Jesus') feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

Good morning, Church.

I'm now going to pray a very special personal prayer of Martin Luther. It was his pastor prayer.



Lord God, You have appointed me as a Bishop and Pastor in Your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked Your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon You: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon Your Word. Use me as Your instrument — but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all. Amen.

Today is the Last Sunday of the Church Year: the time of fulfilment; the time of Christ the King

I love Luther's pastor prayer. If I can be so bold as to paraphrase Luther: "Lord, I'd bugger everything up if not for you. You can see how unsuited… how ordinary I am." Gee it speaks my language. Ordinary people called and prepared for very extraordinary callings.

That's the church! That's us! That's you and its me.

Paul says in Ephesians1:22 And he (God the Father), has put all things under his feet and has made him (Jesus the Christ) the head over all things for the church (look around…I mean it look around church), 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

In Papua New Guinea I was blessed to preach and lead worship and attend worship on many occasions when I was Secretary of the LCA. Every time I remember a vibrant spirituality among Christians in PNG. After worship every time in every place a Pastoral Assistant would come up the front and greet the congregation with the words

"Good morning, Church"



The church is not a mere structure, a building, an organisation.

The church is God's people gathered around the cross of Christ and gathered to receive God's grace and gathered to be sent as God's grace to the world. People...ordinary people like me and like you

How is the church the fullness of Christ for all? I mean we're ordinary after all to the human eye. Are we really the body of Christ really the fullness of him who fills all in all?

Well, the answer that one comes to may depend on whose eyes we're looking through.

Human eyes:

"Real power is being strong for one's own gain at the expense of others." Having power over people

"The church isn't much anymore and it seems more weak than strong."

"And it's getting even weaker. Whatever influence it had is now pretty much gone"



God's eyes see things very differently. He looks at his church as the gathering of his people to his Son. God views reality through his Son on the cross. Cosmic eternal reality.

As people who have come to faith through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our hearts in the message of the cross things look different too.

Paul prays for the Ephesians that, "with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power."

The power found in the love of God on the cross for us

This past week a fellow Christian who is doing it really tough and has been doing it really tough and who has struggled even to come out of their house and be among people reached out to me to ask how I was and how my wife Sue is with our cancer. It was a simple but such a timely and profound act of beautiful selfless love. I told the person how much their contact meant to me and to us.

And I spoke of this Ephesians reality of who we are as ordinary Christians extraordinarily filing the earth with grace and love and bringing in Christ's rule.

It seemed like a simple very ordinary act. But it was much more for us who received it. When I shared this with the person they wrote back

"This really means a lot when I'm stuck in the darkness of my thoughts and regrets. They can really take a toll and hold you captive. I will look over this message to remind me what others see in me, including you."

Don't ever, ever underestimate the power of God in your everyday acts of sacrificial love and grace.

You know sometimes in life we set ourselves up to be something we think is perfect… and so often when we all come to know that we aren't perfect, we think we're not even enough.

In Christ, by the power of God's love on the cross and in God the Father who raised Christ from the dead, and in the power of the Holy Spirit who worked faith in your heart through the gospel…you and me…we are enough…we are more than enough! You and I. We are the body of Christ who by living out our faith and pointing others to him that we are the fullness of him who fills all in all.

There's something extraordinary at work among us who may see ourselves as quite ordinary. Not ordinary at all! Christ the King, true God yet born as an ordinary human in very ordinary and poor surroundings but coming to bring the power of almighty God in sacrificial love on a cross, good news, hope for the hopeless, for all in need of a Saviour.

Through his ministry of preaching and healing and caring and forgiving and loving.

The powers of sin, death and the devil defeated. Look to the cross. God there takes on the punishment you and I deserve eternally. And in his love for you exchanges this with his suffering to bring you life and to bring his life through you to the world.

With ordinary human eyes we may get an inkling but with the eyes of faith. Our heart eyes we see Christ the King at work:

1. In us: in worship: provide your servant a hearing heart 1 Kings 8 Solomon asks the Lord to give him a heart to hear God. Pray for this heart to receive the extraordinary of God for us: Word. Human spoken word; Word with ordinary water (cosmic reality that a person's name is written in God's eternal heavenly book of life); word with bread and wine; word of blessing sending us. In our worship heaven meets earth.

In our worship we join the eternal heavenly worship.

2. Through us: Christ's rule over all things happens when we respond in faith.

Calling us to pray (Prayer Partners today)

Calling us to go and make disciples of all nations beginning where we are (Fete and Concert)

Calling us to go to the world (hungry, sick, stranger, naked, poor,) Advent Action! Humans as the body of Christ throughout the world tending those in need. Bringing a listening ear, noticing someone in need, opening our church doors and feeling somewhat out of our comfort zone through it. and what this means for voting in the state election

Following our Lord in his mission to the world (Fete and concert and CLC. Here is the kingdom of God in the people of faith ushering in new life creation

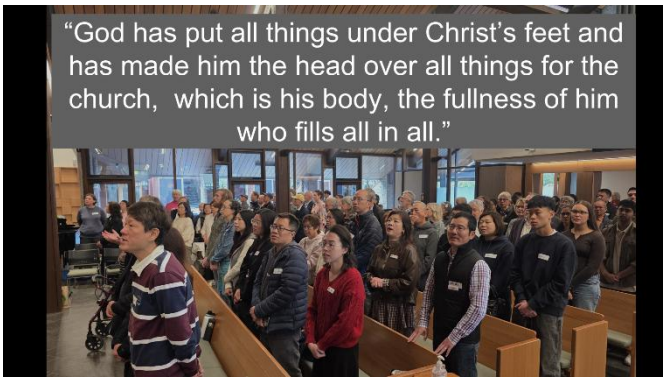


The power of Christ the king on the cross and raised from the dead for us and in us and through. Here is how the extraordinary power of God is made manifest in the world.

For you and I are the church. Be who you are! For you are enough!

Luther knew his limitations very well...sometimes he knew them too well and he focused too much on these limitations. And I'm no different. Perhaps we all struggle with this from time to time. Yet we know so well that that God did extraordinary things through Luther the ordinary human being. And it's no different in your life and in mine dear friends in Christ. Dear church where God places you.

It is a good morning church for God has put all things under Christ's feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.



The extraordinary power of God at work in ordinary people of amazing grace and faith. Amen.

Video of the service including the above address can be found on the St Paul's Lutheran Church Youtube page https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulslutheranchurchboxhi1133