

September 26 & October 3, 2021

The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

www.htelc.com

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

Christian Sympathy

Christian Sympathy to the family of Kim Clark, who passed away on September 16, 2021, surrounded by family. Kim Clark was a former member of Holy Trinity in the 1980s and 1990s, up until Kim and his first wife Connie, moved to Michigan. Sympathy cards can be sent to Kim Clark's children. Please ask the Church Office for their address, or search our directory for "Sara Clark Houghton" or "Peter Clark" for their newly updated addresses.



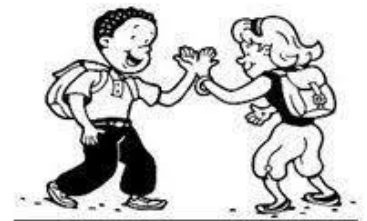
End 68 Hours of Hunger

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church has a team that packs food for the program 'End 68 Hours of Hunger' for the Portsmouth schools. This program provides food for children in need that sustains them for the weekend when school is not in session. Kathy McKenna and Lauren Gianino are the Team Coordinators for our church.

*Our team is responsible for packing food bags for children on 7 Thursdays throughout the school year. We pack at the **First United Methodist Church, 129 Miller Ave. Portsmouth** and **we meet at 6pm**. Depending on the number of volunteers, it takes between 45 minutes to an hour to pack 70-90 bags..*

End 68 HOH Scheduled Packing Dates for HTELC 2021-2022

Oct. 7	Mar. 10
Nov. 11	Apr. 14
Dec. 16	May 26
Jan. 27	



End 68 Hours of Hunger

*This school year we are welcoming back volunteers! If you are interested in joining our team please email us (mckenna.kathy.62@gmail.com) or Lauren Gianino(pqlg813@comcast.net).
***Due to covid safety concerns we are requiring that all volunteers be vaccinated and masked. Let us know if you have any questions. Kathy McKenna & Lauren Gianino*

Pastor Tim's Article: September 27, 2021

Every Monday and Thursday, Mark comes into my office and asks, "Are you going to have something for The Tidings today?" Some days when he asks, I have no trouble getting the words out. They seem to write themselves. Other days, I sit and stare at the screen and nothing comes out. When that happens, I try and write about upcoming events that I want to highlight, or I will just tell Mark, "Sorry, I have nothing for you today." Lately, I feel like I am having a harder and harder time trying to think of something to write. Ideas do not seem to be coming to me.

Maybe that isn't a bad thing and it is instigating something I would like to try. We all have something to give. We all have something to share. Instead of me trying to come up with something new to say each week, I would like to hear from all of you.

How about, each week (could be Monday or Thursday), instead of me writing a devotion, one of you writes it? It doesn't have to be fancy or theologically profound. It just has to be honest. Honest to what you are thinking or feeling. Honest to what faith means to you.

Here are some prompts that perhaps you could use.

- A meaningful verse and explanation of why
- A favorite memory from church growing up
- Tell about the person who has had the biggest impact on your faith and why
- A question you have always had about faith and how you struggle with it
- Explain what prayer means to you

When you have felt God's presence the most in your life If you want to write for The Tidings, all you have to do is contact me and let me know when you will submit something. It is easier to email me at pastortim@htelc.com. If you have questions or need a little guidance or help getting started, I would love to talk with you about it. I look forward to hearing what people share!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tim



God's Work Our Hands

This year HTELC will be assisting Ending 68 Hours of Hunger (E68HH) as our large project. For many children who receive free meals at school, the weekends are a time when meals become scarce. E68HH sends home packs of food on Fridays so that approximately 180 local children are sustained until they return to school on Mondays. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic continues to affect us all, and many of these families are also lacking the means to obtain supplies to keep themselves clean and healthy. We will be collecting hand sanitizer, hand soap, disinfecting wipes, and masks at HTELC until Sunday, October 17.

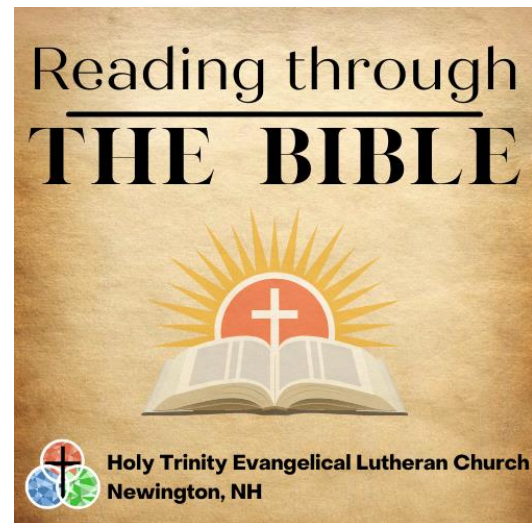


As part of God's Work, Our Hands, HTELC is scheduled to volunteer to help clean an area beach on Sunday, October 10 at 12:00 noon. We will be partnering with blueocean.org. They will notify us as to the location and will provide the necessary supplies for the effort. This is the ultimate example of "many hands making light work," in addition to being a fun time for everyone.

Reading Through the Bible

Pastor Tim's sermons during Tuesday Worship is now called "Reading Through the Bible". Please join us for Tuesday Worship at 6:30 PM for the discussion on the grand narrative of The Bible, and how those passages connect to our everyday lives.

All sermons are recorded and put on our webpage on Wednesdays. Please visit htelc.com/reading-through-the-bible to watch or listen to the previous sermons. Sermons will be posted in Podcast form, too. Go to your podcast app on your phone and search for "Reading Through the Bible".



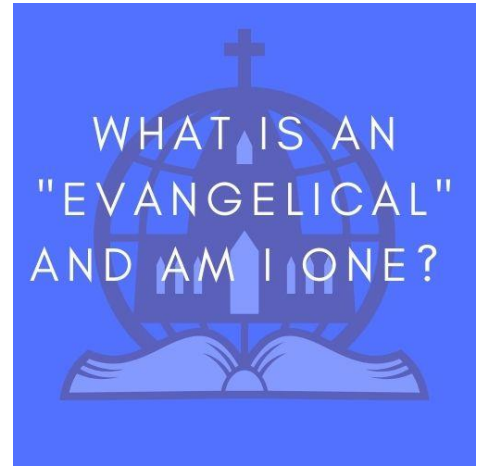
“What is an Evangelical and am I one?”, Article 1

Written by Dr. Mark Edwards

Holy Trinity's full name is Holy Trinity **Evangelical** Lutheran Church. Its parent body is the **Evangelical** Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Yet both the ELCA's and Holy Trinity's confession of faith and religious practices may strike the careful thinker as not overly "evangelical" as we in America understand the term.

How do we make sense of this?

For the next several *Tidings* I'll be doing a series on what the term "evangelical" means. These little articles are meant to serve as setups for a series of adult forums on this topic. The forums are scheduled for September 26, October 17, November 15.



I begin the Tidings series with a brief historical overview of the origin of the term in the 16th century (which you're now reading). Over the course of three more short Tidings articles, we'll jump about four centuries forward to sketch what the label "evangelical" generally means in today's America.

The Greek "Evangelion" and the German "Evangelisch"

The word "evangelical" comes from the Greek *evangelion*, which means "good news" or "gospel." It is in this sense—being gospel-centered—that Luther and his co-religionists called and still call themselves *evangelisch* (in German) or "evangelical" in English. The Lutheran church in Germany is still called *Die evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*.

Consider that Luther's dispute with Rome was often fought out over questions of authority. Was Scripture the sole authority or did it need to be interpreted and, if necessary, elaborated by the authority of the Pope?

For Luther it was scripture alone as the only authority, *sola scriptura* in Latin. In this famous confrontation at Worms in 1521 Luther clearly stated the principle, that in matters of faith Scripture was the sole authority. "I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God," he said when he declined to recant his teachings.

But for Luther, "Scripture alone" meant something different than we'll see in later American evangelicals insistence on the sole authority of the Bible. The authority of Scripture rested for Luther on its gospel content, not on its being divinely inspired Scripture. That is, Luther distinguished between the Word of God and the Holy Scriptures. The one was contained in the other. For Luther, Scripture and the Word are not identical and, as a result, he felt free to

criticize parts of Scripture that did not “promote Christ.” In this Luther differed from later evangelical claims that the "whole bible" is inerrant and authoritative for Christian belief and practice. We'll look at this crucial distinction more closely when we look at how contemporary evangelicals tend to understand and interpret the Bible.

"Lutheran"

Nowadays we call ourselves "Lutheran" or "Lutheran Christians" or just "Christians." Luther himself did not want his evangelical followers called "Lutheran" but only Christian. As he insisted in his 1521 *A sincere admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to guard themselves against insurrection and rebellion*,

I ask that people not mention my name and not call themselves Lutheran but only Christian. Who is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine. Nor was I crucified for anyone! ...How does it happen to me, a poor sinking sack of maggots, that the children of Christ should be named with my wretched name? Not so, dear friends, let us abolish all party names and be called Christians, whose teaching we follow!



But with time the name "Lutheran" stuck, especially as 16th century "evangelicals" increasingly splintered into different groupings including Reformed and Anabaptists. This is often true of names that are meant to belittle or undermine but come to be adopted as a badge of pride by those so stigmatized!

With time the gospel-centered "evangelicals" called Lutherans and the gospel-centered "evangelicals" called Reformed (or sometimes Calvinist) came to be called, and sometimes called themselves, "Protestants." Why? Because their representative governments "protested" a 1529 decision by the Holy Roman Emperor that took away their freedom of religious choice.

"Lutherans" then are named after a man; "Protestants" are named after an obscure 1529 political-religious protest of a group of princes and city states!

In the next *Tidings* we will jump four centuries forward to explore what modern American "evangelicals" may mean when they claim this label, and we'll sketch the history of their development into the present.

Some discussion questions

1. Are we Lutherans truly “gospel-centered”? In what ways?
2. Why do we also call ourselves “Lutheran”?
3. Can we think of other examples of names that we give to others that are meant to belittle or criticize them? Can we think of examples where people have adopted the stigmatizing term and made it a badge of pride?

“What is an Evangelical and am I one?”, Article 2

Written by Dr. Mark Edwards

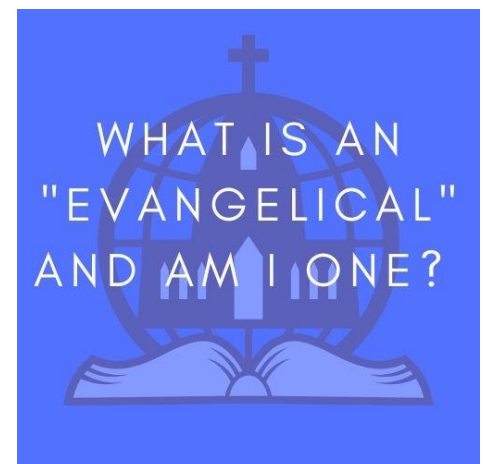
In the first *Tidings* in this four-piece series, I sketched what Luther and many Lutherans mean when they call themselves "evangelicals." In this piece we're going to jump four centuries forward to explore what modern "evangelicals" may mean when they claim this label and sketch the history of their development into the present.

Modern self-identified evangelicals are actually a highly diverse group and difficult to categorize. Historians often point to four traits or inclinations shared by many evangelicals but by no means all. These “Pattern of convictions and attitudes” were identified by the historian David Bebbington. They are,

- Bible or Biblicism – reliance on the Bible as the ultimate religious authority (“bible-believer”) [“the Bible is the inspired word of God” or “the Bible is God’s word, and is to be taken literally, word for word”]
- Cross or Crucicentism – a focus on Christ’s redeeming work on the cross, (normally) the only way to salvation [“through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God provided a way for the forgiveness of my sins”]
- Conversion or Conversionism – emphasis on the “new birth” and its life-transforming implications (often, but not always, “born again”) [“I have committed my life to Christ and consider myself to be a converted Christian”]
- Activism – a concern for sharing the faith (concern for evangelizing, saving souls for Christ, etc.) [“it is important to encourage non-Christians to become Christians”]

We can roughly trace this set of convictions back to European pietists in the 17th century. Again, this was a diverse group in England and on the continent that, with the rapid rise of literacy among the common people, showed great zeal for private Bible study and for personal holiness. They were inclined toward a religion of the "heart" rather than the "head," that is, toward an experiential religion.

We find similar concerns in the two Great Awakenings of American history, the first in the late eighteenth century and the second in the decades following the American Revolution. Evangelical Protestants thereafter dominated American culture and politics in the 19th century, but divided among themselves



on a variety of issues, most importantly slavery and, later in the 19th century, Darwinian evolution and German biblical criticism.

On the matter of slavery, evangelically inclined churches divided into northern and southern denominations. On evolution and biblical criticism, a group called "fundamentalists" calved off from the more "liberal" or "modernist" evangelically inclined denominations. The fundamentalists shared various beliefs in addition to the four "evangelical inclinations" listed above, two of which are important for this series:

1. Insistence that every word of the Bible was "inerrant," that is, absolutely and literally word for word true, and
2. That civilization was in decline and heading towards Armageddon and the turn of Christ to restore his kingdom.

After its apparent defeat in the Scopes "monkey" trial, fundamentalism nonetheless continued to spread in American society but was not much in the national news. That changed when Billy Graham, originally a fundamentalist, began his revivals after World War II and became an important public figure. He broke with the fundamentalists and called himself "evangelical." The term "evangelical" came in the next several decades to be applied to a variety of still quite conservative Protestant institutions associated with Graham and his supporters.

Another strand of "evangelicalism" arose out of Pentecostalism and various charismatic movements beginning in the early 20th century. These movements put special emphasis on the Holy Spirit and advocated various spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues. Many African-American religious movements shared the concerns of white evangelicals and Pentecostals, but they tended not to call themselves "evangelical" and generally remained separate from white evangelicals, not the least because of racial discrimination and segregation.

Beginning in the 1970s more militant and conservative evangelicals began re-asserting themselves. They took over the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest evangelically-inclined denomination, and some took to national politics forming the so-called "Christian Right." As a political movement, these activists and their organizations such as Falwell's Moral Majority or Robertson's Christian Coalition or Dobson's Focus on the Family combined the theme of civilizational decline with exhortations to take back "our Christian nation" and return to "traditional values" in opposition to feminism, abortion, homosexuality and, later, same-sex marriage. From the 1990s onward, self-identified evangelicals were a large and reliable source of support for Republican politicians and policies.

Summary

Evangelicals in America vary greatly among themselves, but for convenience they may be said to share four distinctive impulses or convictions summarized by cross, bible, conversion, and activism. Some also share deep concern for what they see as the decline of "Christian America" and the need to "take back their country" as part of God's plan for the world. Not all evangelicals share these four or five convictions, and some who share all four or five do not call themselves "evangelical." So be wary of generalizations, including these!

This crib-notes history is meant to serve as background to what follows in subsequent Tidings pieces. Not much to discuss, but questions for clarification are fully in order!

In the concluding two Tidings piece we'll examine briefly two to the four (or five) characteristically "evangelical" impulses--biblicism and civilizational decline.