



August 2020

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Sacred Eating

Italy is a country where people are passionate about soccer and three-hour meals. Several years ago, in the context of a heated debate over the arrival of (American) fast-food chains in Italy, the Catholic newspaper *Avvenire* printed an article that was entitled, "Theologian Excommunicates the Hamburger."

Father Massimo Salani (not: salami), an Italian priest who wrote a book titled "*At the Table with the Religions*," argues that fast-food is the "fruit of a Protestant culture." He once told the Catholic newspaper, "The style of fast-food completely ignores the sacred dimensions of meals. At McDonald's you satisfy your hunger in a rushed way so that you can move on to other things. ... It lacks the communitarian or sharing aspect of a meal. Fast food is not Catholic. It is Protestant ... even atheist." And, adding grease to fire, Salani said that the fast-food mentality of eating quickly and alone would be better suited to the "Lutheran mentality of an individual relationship between man and God."

I guess, we have to re-write Reformation history: Was Luther excommunicated because he ate hamburgers? Or, in case you love healthy, nutritious slow-food meals, don't you wish you were Catholic? After all, it seems, the road to hell is paved with hamburgers and fries! ... Would you like to supersize your order?

Father Salani got quite a few points wrong about Luther, the Reformation and Protestantism. Let us dismantle this priest's false assumptions, views, and misconceptions.

As far as Luther himself is concerned, he enjoyed a good meal; he had regular table-fellowship with several of his students. During lengthy meals they reflected on all sorts of theological matters, which were collected in a volume of Luther's works, the so-called "*Table Talks*."

We can also claim that through the Lutheran Reformation, the people of God were re-introduced to some palate-enriching ingredients. With the translation of the Bible into vernacular language, the "common" people could now not only hear, but also "taste" and savour every single word of the Word of God.

Before the Protestant Reformation, the faithful church-goers had only received the bread in the Eucharist. As a result of the Reformation movement, the chalice (the cup) was placed back into their hands. The Meal was complete again: with bread *and* wine; a meal that needs to be celebrated with reverence and dignity, with joy and delight.

I think that Luther's Reformation cannot be blamed for having produced a generation of people who do not know how to eat well. In general, there is something redeeming, even sacramental, about eating together and sharing a meal with others. In particular, sharing the Eucharistic Meal is central to our Christian faith.

If you ask me, I can live with the excommunication of the hamburger. It is, on the other hand, a much more grievous matter that we, as members of different church bodies, exclude each other from having table-fellowship with one another on the grounds of differing theological, sacramental, and doctrinal views. As those, who belong to, and believe in, the same Lord Jesus Christ, we should be able (one might think) to gather together at the Lord's Table, where we eat from one bread and drink from one cup.

Surely, a festive Meal is yet to come, when we will feast at the same Table in the presence of Christ and in the unity of God. Until then, we still have to deal with the broken fellowship that has been caused by our sinfulness. Still, it is a brokenness that gives us hope: For in the Meal that Jesus has given us, we receive in our very own broken hands the body of Christ, which was “broken for you.” In the hands of sinners is placed the cup, the blood of Christ, which was “shed for you.” Both, the bread and the wine, are given to us for the forgiveness of our sins.

When the time of the Heavenly Meal comes, we have reason enough to eat very, very slowly and to savour every single bite and sip of that Meal; for we will have all eternity. Why not get used to it – here and now?

Yours in Christ,
Bjoern E. Meinhardt, Pastor

Important Update to the Congregation

Submitted by Barb Schott

We have been blessed, at St. Peter's, to be able to worship throughout Covid-19, in so many different ways: at one of our 3 live services (Thursday evening at 7:00 pm, Sunday 9:00 am in German, 11:00 am in English), following the on-line service posted to the website, or reading the service that is sent out. It's been a great effort and collaboration by Pastor, Gudrun, Jordan and Michael. As well, we continue to monitor and adjust to the Provincial conditions and recommendations as they evolve. To date, we have not come close to reaching the maximum number of people allowed indoors, which at present is 50.

The Sunday services have had modest attendance and those of you who have been coming have expressed that you are pleased and comfortable with coming to worship. The Thursday evening service will continue through to the end of August and we encourage those of you who are out of town on weekends to consider this alternative. We assure you that we have done everything possible with spacing and distancing, hand sanitizer station on arrival, the provision of masks, sign-in sheet for contact tracing, to ensure your safety. The washrooms are available, and we encourage people to follow the guidelines we've posted. If you have concerns about coming and if there's anything we can do to alleviate those concerns, please contact Gudrun in the church office: 204-775-6477 or Barbara Schott at 204-257-3531.

Our Worship & Music Committee met this past week to reevaluate and do some planning for the months ahead. Please see the “save the dates” posted in this newsletter. As we planned, we all expressed how much we miss being together as a church family as fully as we were pre-Covid. We encourage and welcome your participation now and in the weeks ahead. We also encourage you to keep in touch and reaching out to our church friends. Where God guides, God provides.



Updates

Submitted by Jerry Roehr

Congregation's Sponsors. This is the time of the year the 15 sponsors in our congregation have started to remit their \$ 1,2000.00 scholarship for the 2020/2021 school year. It would be nice to add to that list of sponsors. If someone else would like to sponsor a student, please contact Jerry Roehr at 204-981-4239 or roehr@mymts.net.

School Opening. As reported earlier, it was hoped that the Kuwala Christian Girls School would open again in August. The new government (more about it later), in light of the Covid19 virus, has indicated that the previous announcement to open schools on July 13, 2020 is being delayed. A further announcement will be made when available.

Covid19. Malawi has a population of about 18 Million people, and there are about 54 hospitals. As last reported there were 3045 reported Coronavirus cases, 1,769 active cases, 557 recovered and 64 reported deaths. In Malawi only 20 people a day can be tested for the virus, and there are just 25 intensive care unit beds and seven ventilators in the country.

Travel Restrictions. International Travel is not recommended and travelers may have to quarantine, but can't do it in hotels. Of course Canada has its own travel restrictions.

Malawi Federal Elections. Presidential elections were held on June 23, 2020, having originally been scheduled for May 19, and later July 2. That followed the annulment of the results of the [2019 presidential elections](#), in which [Peter Mutharika](#) of the [Democratic Progressive Party](#) had received the most votes. A May 21, 2019 election was overturned by the Constitutional Court. The result of the re-run elections was a victory for [Lazarus Chakwera](#) of the [Malawi Congress Party](#), who defeated Mutharika by margin of 59% to 40%.

Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, born 5 April 1955, is a [Malawian](#) theologian and politician who is now [President of Malawi](#).. He has been leader of the [Malawi Congress Party](#) since 2013 and was previously Leader of the Opposition in the [National Assembly](#). He was President of the Malawi [Assemblies of God](#) from 1989 to 14 May 2013. We were told that President Chakwera is from the district in which the Kuwala school is located. Given his Christian background, would he accept an invitation to visit the school?



Here is some good news. The tomatoes were ready for engineer Henry Midzetseni's water systems and Kuwala teacher McSensio Raphae's (picture) marketing plan. It is hoped that 600 kg of tomatoes can be sold. It should also be noted that it is hoped that growing tomatoes and other crop will teach farming to the students and bring some revenue to the school.



Every year, during the summer months, our monthly donations do not meet our monthly expenses. This year, it is not any different. At the end of June, our treasurer Ralf Oppitz, had to report that we are continuing to have a shortfall. Compared to last year, our donations were reduced by \$ 12,688.61. Luckily our expenses, compared to last year, were also reduced by \$16,074.95. For the first six months of this year, our shortfall resulted in \$ 13,594.88. We know that gifts around Thanksgiving will provide extra income, but we also know that in July and August our income is not all that strong. We ask our members to review their gifts to our congregation, to catch up on missed donations and perhaps also to give a little extra.

Office Hours for the Summer

Just a reminder: office hours for the summer, July / August are as listed:

- Monday: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
- Tuesday: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Wednesday: closed
- Thursday: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Friday: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Important: The Secretary/Office Administrator will be away on holidays August 24th to September 7th.

SAVE THE DATE

- A 90th Anniversary Celebration of the St. Peter's congregation is being planned for September 13.
- The annual Thanksgiving/Stewardship Sunday is planned for October 18.

Details to appear in the September newsletter.

Any submissions to the September 2020 edition of the St. Peter's Newsletter should be made 10 days prior to the first Sunday in September. So, submissions for the September Newsletter should be made by noon Thursday August 27, 2020. Submissions should be sent to Ortrud Oellermann at stpetersnews1@gmail.com

Congratulations to our High School Graduates!!

- **Erik Goddard** graduated in June from Grant Park High School.
- **Emily Lange** graduated this June from Shaftesbury High School and received the following awards:



- Gold medal for Band 40S
- Shaftesbury Band Director's Award
- Queen Elizabeth II Entrance Scholarship
- Ed Werbowski Memorial Scholarship

Emily plans to attend the University of Manitoba in the coming year.

- **Solveig Meinhardt** graduated from St. James Collegiate.



Her plan is to continue there in the fall for the next 3 years, according to the provincial program that allows persons with disabilities to continue their studies.

We wish them the Lord's blessings for the next chapter in their lives.