

Agape

SEPTEMBER 2023

Rev. M. Zeuch



ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH
110 years proclaiming Christ in Bridgeland!

Autumn is my favorite season, though I don't think I'd want it to go on forever. There's something nostalgic about the scents of autumn, the foliage with rich changing colors, the foods and holidays, traditions like apple picking and leaf piles, and cooler weather after a hot summer. Joseph Rhea, director of ministries for Soma Church, has written an article for The Gospel Coalition reminding us of the promises of autumn, titled [Autumn: Dying Beautifully](#).

Rhea calls Christians to remember these 3 things about autumn:

1. Autumn Refreshes Us with New Wonder

Spring brings its own beauty to the world, and it's a relief to see green and new growth after a long, harsh winter. Then spring morphs into summer, and after a while green becomes the new normal. It's not necessarily that we get tired of green, but in a way we get used to it. Rhea explains,

"There's nothing wrong with the leaves. It's me: repetition inoculates me against wonder. Like [G. K. Chesterton](#) says, I don't have God's capacity to delight again and again at each new leaf. He keeps unfurling them—they even wave to get my attention!—but the eyes of my soul glaze over."

"In autumn, the creativity of God hollers. Look at these things! These paper-thin solar cells that convert sunlight into acorns! They're everywhere, and they're made by a God who, as [N. D. Wilson](#) reminds us, doesn't know how to stop creating. Autumn reminds us that there's a world of wonder."

2. Autumn Reminds Us of the Promise of Glory

In our culture, we see glory in youth and newness. Aging is looked upon with a

wary and skeptic eye. *"We are spring-and-summer,"* people as Rhea comments. But we can learn from change; Rhea shares, *"My parents' leaves are starting to change. Their color is silver rather than red, but the glory is the same. They may not have quite the same speed on the Frisbee field. But they have wisdom and grace and decades of joy that shine in their faces. They're taking on the beauty of autumn, showing dimensions of glory that my green summer-self doesn't display."*

3. Autumn Prepares Us for Winter's Coming

Inevitably, autumn's beauty and wonder fades into winter's chilled silence. Autumn doesn't stay; it fades and falls away just like the leaves on the trees. Rhea expounds, *"Autumn reminds us that our leaves too will die. The curse we inherited from our father-tree Adam means we have our seasons and then we go. Winter takes us all."*



This is a sobering thought. Just like autumn, I will not last forever on this earth. Winter is a stark reminder that there is a price for the curse we were born under...but there is hope. Rhea tells us,

"Autumn can draw our attention to the one man who broke through winter into an unending summer. The one who spent three days brown and dead in the dirt and came back in an indestructible green. The one who wasn't just a leaf; he was a whole new tree."

"Winter comes to us all. But winter isn't the end for Christians, because our lives are joined to a tree that winter cannot touch. Death has no sting; winter has no bite. We will fall from the tree of Adam; but we will flower again in a spring of eternal, glorious growth."

It's this truth, according to Rhea, that *"gives us the hope to die beautifully."* When I die, I don't want to be clinging to the edges of this earth, begging for one more tainted day. I want to die with grace falling back into the arms of my Savior, knowing that His beauty is greater than anything I could compare on this earth.

"The seasons come and go, so focus on the God who remains unchanged and unchanging. "LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before

the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psalm 90:1-2).

"There's a lot of unwelcome change in our world. Moral and societal changes bother us most when we turn on our television or glance at the magazines. ...But amid all the changes, one thing, one person, never changes—our eternal God. "

"...His children will enjoy His fellowship a million years from now. The world may fade, the stars may fall, the seasons may change, and winter may come. But the God who has been our help in ages past is our hope for years to come. In Him we have permanence, stability, joy unshakable, and life unending."

From crosswalk.com



Dear friend, brother, sister, member or non-member of our church. I'm glad to be back and ready to start a new and exciting church year (even though the "church year" doesn't start until Advent). September represents a new beginning, new school year for those who still have kids at home.

We still don't have much on our calendar because the boards haven't met yet. But I look forward to the upcoming celebration of our 110th anniversary next month!

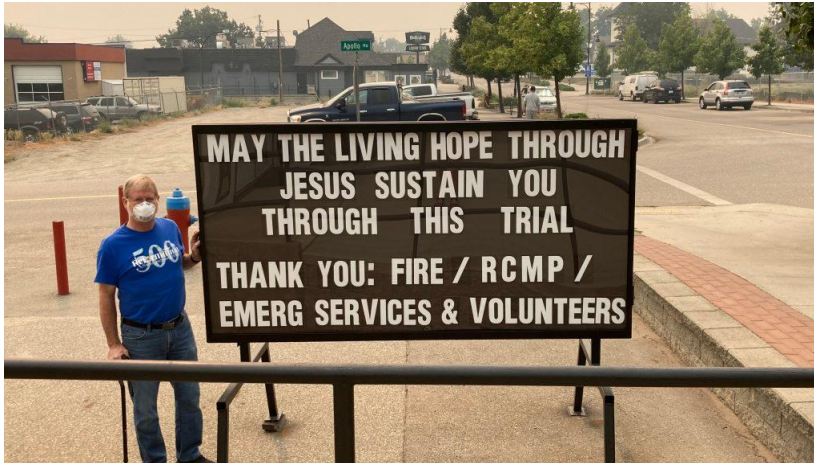
I do hope you've had a good and restful summer. Allow me to share with you some personal experiences, some of what this pastor's family has been doing. In July we took a beautiful road trip that can be called "a loop". We drove down south to Idaho to visit my cousin and her husband, then we went to Seattle, spent some time there. I loved the lush vegetation in that beautiful city! From Seattle, we went to Vancouver, then back to Alberta with a "pit stop" in Shuswap, before the sad and devastating wildfires that hit that whole area. My thoughts and prayers for all those affected by these fires – as well as Kelowna, Yellowknife, Maui and all other places, by the way.

Then, on the weekend of August 27 we were getting ready to go tent camping, a new experience for our family! Little did we know that we would end up not going camping at all and spending that weekend at home. As that weekend was upon us, on that Friday, I decided to stop by a dollar store to get something quickly. My daughter wanted to wait in the car and I insisted that she should come with me. It took us less than 10 minutes when we got out of the store, just to stare at our minivan completely destroyed! A father was teaching his 17-year-old daughter how to drive and the girl stepped on gas instead of the break and went speeding into my car head-on, causing a real violent collision! The result: it was a total loss.

If my daughter Melissa had stayed in the car as she asked to, she would have most probably been injured! I thank our dear God Almighty for having protected her on that day. Nobody was hurt, including that girl and her dad. Material things can vanish in a fraction of a second, but it was just that: material damage. I guess the Lord didn't want us to go camping, after all!

WILDFIRES 2023

As we watch in the news what's happening in the world, we think of our Lutheran family in Kelowna, BC. The Canadian Lutheran is a magazine for Lutheran families. You can pick it up at our church or read it online. The last edition tells us about our church in Kelowna, BC. If you read this Agape electronically, you can click on the picture to read the article called "LCC congregations offer support amidst BC wildfires".



Also, from the Lutheran Church-Canada we have these prayer requests for you to use in your devotion time:

Prayer for Ukraine:

Please continue to remember in prayer our brothers and sisters of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine (SELCU).

Prayer for those affected by wildfire:

Almighty and everlasting God, we bring before Your throne of mercy and grace the residents of Yellowknife who have been forced to evacuate their homes due to wildfires, as well as those in West Kelowna, Kelowna, and other parts of our nation

similarly afflicted. Protect them from harm and danger, and protect also those on the frontlines fighting these fires. Give strength and comfort also to those who have lost homes and loved ones, including in the recent devastating fire in Hawaii. Restore by Your blessing what the flames have devoured and reduced to ashes. Raise up compassionate hearts to provide help and assistance for those afflicted. And according to Your power and in Your mercy, bring an end to these fires; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

A FEW ANNOUNCEMENTS



PARKING LOT STAIRS REPLACEMENT: Parking lot stairs project began on August 21/23. Due to construction, access to **the basement and the lift** will not be available during this time. Side and front entry doors are not affected. The project cost is \$70,000. If you would like to support this project, please designate your contribution to the "Building Fund". Thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please contact Koreen Graumann at 403-461-2114 or kgraumann@shaw.ca

READING SERVICES: A big thank-you to all elders and volunteers who helped to lead the worship services during the three Sundays while pastor was away this summer.

BIBLE STUDY: We plan to restart our weekly online Bible Studies on September 20th and meet every Wednesday. This is an opportunity to study God's Word, grow in our faith and in fellowship with one another. Please consider in your heart to commit to these one-hour meetings. You will be blessed!



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, ST. MATTHEW! OUR 110th ANNIVERSARY



St. Matthew Lutheran Church is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year with thanksgiving to our God. We are so thankful to our Lord for his presence, His providence, and His blessings, nourishing His people with Word and Sacraments all over those years!

We had an anniversary picnic on June 10 at North Glenmore Park with a great attendance and good fellowship!

Our next anniversary event will take place in October (next month). We will keep you posted.

In the 90th anniversary's booklet (2003), Lorraine Reppon writes:

“This year, 2003, marks the 90th Anniversary of our Congregation. We, along with the church building, have stood firm throughout the years. St. Matthew sits majestically on the brow of the lower escarpment of the Bow River; The church can be seen for miles in several directions. At night, the lighted cross glows on the Calgary skyline reminding us of Our Saviour and His sacrifice for us.”



WHAT'S PLANNED FOR THE NEXT WEEKS?

September 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Sept 3 (Sun): Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Worship services: In German @ 9:30 a.m. In English @ 11 a.m.

Sept 4 (Mon): Labor Day – office closed.

Sept 7 (Thurs): Board of Elders meeting (online).

Sept 10 (Sun): Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Worship services: In German @ 9:30 a.m. In English @ 11 a.m. Baptism of Caden Harvey.

Sept 12 to 14: Pastor attends the Alberta Pastors and Deacons Conference in Edmonton, AB

Sept 17 (Sun): Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Worship services: In German @ 9:30 a.m. In English @ 11 a.m.

Sept 19 (Tues): Pastor holds worship service at Bethany Riverside Senior Home.

Sept 20 (Wed): Online Bible Study at 7 p.m.

Sept 21 (Thurs): Special Board of Elders meeting at 7 p.m.

Sept 24 (Sun): Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. Worship services: In German @ 9:30 a.m. In English @ 11 a.m.

Sept 24 (Sun): Bible Study in Portuguese @ 6 p.m. (online).

Sept 27 (Wed): Online Bible Study at 7 p.m.

Sept 28 (Thurs): PPC meeting (online) at 7 p.m.

UNSERE DEUTSCHE ECKE

Wussten Sie, dass der 10. September der Tag der Großeltern ist? Wenn Sie Oma oder Opa sind, möchte ich Ihnen gratulieren und wünsche Ihnen viel Freude, Spaß und Gottes Segen für diesen Beruf. Hier ist ein Gedicht für Sie:

Eins, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, sechs, sieben!

Wo ist nur die Zeit geblieben?

Oma wird 70 – ei der Daus!

Sieht aber viel, viel jünger aus.



I hope you enjoyed our September edition of the Agape. Happy Labour Day!
May God's amazing and unconditional love (*agape*) reach you and your family during this autumn!

In His service,
Rev. Markus Zeuch
Calgary, on Sept 3, 2023

