

Of the Christian buzzwords we'll discuss, the word "spiritual" perhaps has the widest range of meaning. Today, more and more people identify as "spiritual but not religious." They want to pick and choose what they think are spiritual ideals without necessarily putting those ideals to practice in traditional religious forms. On the one hand, it is helpful for preaching the Gospel that people consider themselves "spiritual" rather than thoroughgoing materialists. If a person understands there is more to reality than what meets the eye, then a major hurdle has already been overcome. On the other hand, the separation of what is spiritual from what is religious can confuse how we approach those who need to hear God's Word. We can confuse the myriad forms of "spirituality" with what is truly of the Spirit of God, i.e., Christianity.

So much confusion comes from misapplication of the term "spiritual." In one sense, "spiritual" is the opposite of "physical." That's how most

**Christian
Buzzwords:
"Spiritual"**
By Pastor Jensen

people think of it intuitively. Think about spiritual places, like heaven and hell, or spiritual beings, like God, the angels, demons, souls, etc. Spirit is defined by what it is not: physical. On the other hand, "spiritual" is the opposite of "worldly." This is the sense the Apostle Paul often uses when he speaks about the spirit being opposed to the flesh: "the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh" (Gal 5:17).

Many issues arise in Christianity by equating what is physical with what is worldly, since both, at times, stand in contrast to what is spiritual. Just because something is spiritual doesn't

mean it is automatically holy. And just because something is physical doesn't mean it is automatically unholy, or evil. The truth of the matter is that what is deemed "spiritual" or "non-physical" can often be opposed to the Spirit of God (thus becoming worldly), and what is physical can often be quite spiritual, that is, having to do with the Spirit of God (e.g. the Word and the Sacraments). In fact, some of the worst sins of the flesh are non-physical, such as pride, jealousy, and covetousness. These sins run much deeper than physical actions.

In the person of Jesus and in means of grace, we see that what is physical can have great spiritual significance. The fact that God became man, taking on our human flesh and blood, means that our physical reality has been sanctified. In every human being, body and spirit are united. It is a spiritual truth that man was created to be physical and to live in a physical reality. The fact that we so often desire to break free of our physical limitations and

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

—John 4:23

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

—Romans 12:1

constraints reveals a sinful desire to be like God. True spirituality means living life according to the way God created us. When God became man, He showed once and for all that the physical and spiritual belong together.

In the means of grace, the Word of God and the Sacraments, we see yet again where the physical is endowed with the Spirit. The Bible is God's Holy Book, breathed out by the Holy Spirit through the writings of the apostles and prophets. It is a physical word, yet spiritual at the same time. In Holy Baptism, we have water united with the Word of God in a way that it recreates us. In the Absolution, we hear the word of forgiveness with our physical ears. In the Lord's Supper, the body and blood of Christ, united with the bread and wine, are received for the forgiveness of sins. When you begin to see that there is not much distinction in God's order

between the physical and the spiritual, you begin to see how what we might think of as mere physical reality is indeed spiritual. The lines are more porous than we like to make them.

So when you read Bible verses using the terms "spirit"/ "spiritual," or "flesh"/ "fleshly," look carefully at the context to determine in what sense they are being used. Don't immediately assume that spiritual means non-physical or disembodied; it is more likely referring to that which is of the

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.

—John 6:63

Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, as in John 4:23 and Romans 12:1. Remember the distinction between "flesh" as in our old, sinful flesh, and "flesh" as in our physical bodies (compare John 6:63 and 2 John 7). And if something is physical, don't immediately assume there is no connection to the spiritual. God always works Spiritual blessings in, with, and under physical means. So when someone tells you they are "spiritual but not religious," trying to separate the work of the Spirit from the physical ways God comes to us, remember that "spiritual" is not some pie-in-the-sky, ethereal existence, or an otherworldly experience. "Organized religion" can look unappealing from the outside, but God has promised to be present with His Holy Spirit in physical ways and in physical locations. That's why we show up to church to eagerly hear God's Word and receive His Sacraments.

I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

—2 John 7

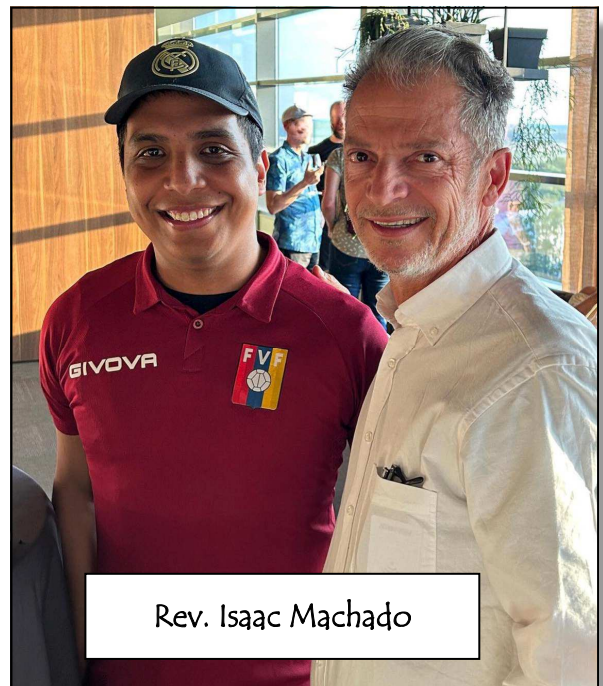


A Letter from the Mission Field Pastor Christian Tiews

"I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). Last week Lula and I attended the annual retreat for LCMS Eurasia missionaries—this year held in Jūrmala, Latvia. I had the privilege of chatting with Rev. Isaac Machado, one of our first Lutheran pastors in Spain. I asked him what attracts Roman Catholics to the Lutheran Church most. Interestingly, he replied, "The liturgy." (Some people unfortunately believe that liturgy is "Roman Catholic." This is historically incorrect because the historic liturgy—meaning a clearly defined church service that includes Confession and Absolution, the Readings, the Creed, the sermon, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of the Altar, etc.—goes back to earliest Christianity and thus predates the official formation

of the Roman Catholic Church in the Council of Trent by over 1,000 years). In other words, what Pr. Isaac was saying is that many people seem to be naturally drawn to the transcendentals (truth, goodness, and beauty) of early Christianity as they are revealed in the historic liturgy, which in Lutheranism revolves around Christ alone. I also asked him what the greatest difficulty is for Roman Catholics as they move over to Lutheranism. "Three things," he replied. "Their devotion to the Virgin Mary; having to leave some aspects of Roman Catholic culture behind plus the ensuing tensions with some of their Catholic family members." I can very much relate to these points, as I remember my dear mother who converted from Roman

Catholicism to Lutheranism in her early 90s and had difficulty in these same areas. His observation of leaving the "old culture" also reminded me of our Iranian immigrants who likewise pay a huge price when they leave key aspects of Muslim culture and are often shunned by their Muslim family members for converting to the true faith of Jesus Christ. God bless you, Pr. Isaac, as you bring the ancient and faithful teachings of Christianity to the people of Spain—in Word, Sacrament, and faithful liturgy!



Rev. Isaac Machado



Elder's Corner

Insights, thoughts, and inspirational messages

Spotlight Verse

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19

Finding Fellowship Further Away

We are all very blessed here in Germany. I am certain like me that you are often reminded of how special this place is. The ease of travel to places we may have dreamt of seeing with our own eyes. Meeting people who warmly greet us as new friends and are generous to share their culture. We regularly gather to celebrate our blessings. Every Sunday is a celebration of our thanksgivings, we share our petitions in prayer, our burdens in our worship as well as in our fellowship. But what if all of that were suddenly taken away from us?

Earlier this year I had the good fortune to meet Nabi Zabardast. I was excited to hear his story of how he fled Afghanistan and religious persecution. Nabi's story reminded me of the timelessness of the word of God. Our Epistles are full of brave converts who through discipleship were able to spread the gospel throughout the known world. As twenty-first-century Americans, we tend to think of religious liberties as a global right. Unfortunately, this is not the case in all parts of the world and certainly not the case in Afghanistan under the control of the Taliban.

The friendships that I have formed with these Christians remind me that the Great Commission is still not fulfilled. (Matt. 28:19) We have a responsibility to Christ to carry out this commission. Certainly, there are

places in the world that have not heard the Gospel and do not know the bible. But here is an example of how the seeds were planted in hostile soil. So, to share in this fellowship, I am asking all of my brothers and sisters here at Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church to remember some people in your prayers. The following are just the first names of these Christians. Mohamad, his wife Qudsia, and their daughter Mahir. They are recent converts to Christianity. Mohammad Hazrat is the leader of this small group. Ahmad and his wife Marzia and their children Khadija, Mohammad Yousef, Mohammad Omar, Mohammad Edris, and Husna; Fahim Shaw who is also a recent convert and a single man. Sayed Ghyas who we know as Andrew, his wife Mehar Negar, and their two girls Maryam and Moqadas. Najibuliah who is also a single person and Rohullah and his wife Mastora, their daughter Hawa, and their son Rabi. Rohullah often goes away from his family for two-week evangelism tours. Rohullah is carrying Christ's message to others in darkness.

Every week we send the link to our weekly worship over a secure messenger service. These faithful Christians pray every day for rescue from religious persecution and the threat of death for their beliefs.

In Christ, Rob Tuttle



Please join us in praying for the important work of the Kaiserslautern Military Resiliency Center in Landstuhl, Germany.

CONFESSIONS STUDY



On Thursday nights
at
St. Michael's

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK & MESSENGER

Kaiserslautern
Evangelical Lutheran
Church (KELC)

For news, worship sign-ups
and fellowship events.

KELC Volunteer Schedule

9/3/23: 1st Sunday

Usher: Mason Westphal

Greeter/Elder: Rob Tuttle

Altar Guild: Emily & Eloise Ponziano

Acolyte: James Hester

9/17/23: 3rd Sunday

Usher: Stephen Guzik

Greeter/Elder: Jeff Peterson

Altar Guild: Lorraine Hester

Acolyte: Jonathan Ponziano

9/10/23: 2nd Sunday

Usher: Jared Anderson

Greeter/Elder: Paul Hester

Altar Guild: Christina Peterson

Acolyte: Mark Hester

9/24/23: 4th Sunday

Usher: Jeff Peterson

Greeter/Elder: Stephen Guzik

Altar Guild: Annie Shelton

Acolyte: Dylan Worley

9/14/23: Holy Cross Day

9/29/23: St. Michael & All Angels Day



Thank you to all who came out and helped with the Lutheran Potluck dinner on August 25th for the Ukrainian refugees and the victims of the apartment fire in Kaiserslautern.

Please join us again at the end of September. Date and Signup Genius coming soon.



September Birthdays



2nd Johannes Schnackenberg
10th Mason Westphal
17th Emily Ponziano
18th Dylan Worley
24th Tucker Paulsen
30th Sebastian Blank

Special Services

Holy Cross Day

Divine Service, Sept. 14th @ 7:00 PM

St. Michael & All Angels Day

Divine Service, Sept. 29th @ 7:00 PM

Goose Roast and traditional
St. Michael's Day food.

Weekly Divine Service

Sunday Mornings 8:30-9:30 AM

Fellowship Time

Sunday Mornings 9:30-10:15 AM

Sun. School & Bible Study

at Kirche Mittendrin 10:15-11:15 AM

Sunday Catechesis

St. Michael's Basement 11:30 -12:30

Hail & Farewell

God's richest blessings to
Joanna Nongiesser
as she moves to Vienna,
Austria. May God keep you
in His care and bring us
together again someday.

A warm welcome to
The Hewes Family
Daniel & Meg
with sons **Luke & Logan**
Joining us from Enid,
Oklahoma

It is a joy to have you all
with us.

September Wedding Anniversaries

Happy 8th Anniversary to
Sebastian & Kristen Blank on the 5th.

Happy 13th Anniversary to
Sven & Mindy Malenius on the 17th

Happy 4th Anniversary to
Sol & Tierney Grosskopf on the 21st





CONGRATULATIONS!



God's blessings to LTC Heidi Worley and her family on the occasion of her retirement from The United States Air Force. Peace be with you as you begin the next chapter of life.



KELC Men's Group

I am a young man. It is not necessarily a very easy world out there to be a young man today. There are a lot of pulls in a lot of worldly directions.

When I attend Church, I am amazed to see the vibrant families and individuals navigating this world in a Christ like manner. I want to soak up the wisdom of the wonderful fathers, husbands, and men of our congregation. That is why I suggested to Pastor Jensen that it would be good if we could start a men's group. This group can help us grow closer as a congregation and provide support when one of us is struggling in life.

Stephen Guzik graciously offered to host the first event. It was fruitful to learn the background of the great group of guys that joined us. The plan is to have monthly meetings going forward.

I hope to see you there!



Next Meeting:

Tuesday,
Sept. 26th
At 7:00 PM.

At The Green Dragon
in Nanzdietschweiler

The Guzik's House
Hauptstrasse 68
66909 Nanzdietschweiler