

***“But concerning that day and hour no one knows,  
not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son,  
but the Father only.”***

Matthew 24:36

Recently there’s been an incredible amount of publicity about radio broadcaster Harold Camping and his prediction that the “rapture/end of the world” would occur on May 21, 2011. Needless to say, it didn’t happen – we’re still here.

Harold Camping is the president of Family Radio, a California-based religious broadcasting network heard on more than 150 radio stations in the United States. Almost two decades ago he predicted that Jesus would return to the earth on September 6, 1994, but that day came and went unnoticed by few except Camping’s disappointed followers. Most recently he predicted that the so-called “Christian rapture” (more about that later) would take place at 6:00 p.m. Eastern time on Saturday, May 21, 2011, followed by six months of “hell on earth” for those who were left behind. Many of his followers quit their jobs, sold their homes, maxed out credit cards and cashed in savings and even retirement accounts to pay for millions of dollars of broadcasts, billboards and other campaign vehicles to publicize the prediction.

Camping bases his calculations on a complex (and entirely faulty) belief that May 21 was exactly 7,000 years since God closed Noah and his family in the ark prior to the Great Flood. Genesis 7:4 reads: *“For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.”* He then focuses on these words from 2 Peter 3:8: *“But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”* According to Camping’s logic, this proves that judgment day would occur exactly 7,000 years from the start of the flood. He also throws in factors based on his calculation that Jesus died on the cross on April 1, 33 AD.

Got that? Of course not – because it’s all a lot of nonsense. For starters, the Bible does not give us dates. We don’t know (and never can know) exactly when the Flood took place. It is impossible to know exactly when Jesus was born or when He died or when He rose from the dead. We know – because the Bible tells us so – that these events happened. But we don’t know when, and Harold Camping doesn’t know, either. And as for the 2 Peter reference, a study of the original text makes it clear that Peter is not saying that one day is equivalent to a thousand years. Instead, what this and other similar Biblical references mean is that what seems to be a very long time for us is not very long for our eternal God.

Camping’s prediction of the rapture and “hell on earth” for unbelievers obviously did not come true on May 21. When the predicted hour came and went, nothing had changed. Believers in Christ are still here. Camping later said that he felt so terrible that he took refuge in a hotel room, and announced that he was sorry for not having the dates “worked out as accurately as I could have.” He said that he had made an error in his mathematical calculations, and *now* he is confident that the end of the world will occur on October 21, 2011.

Now you may be wondering: can I categorically say that the world will not end – that Jesus will not return in judgment – on October 21, 2011? No, I can’t. But Camping can’t guarantee that it will happen then, either.

*(continued on page 2)*

In its simplest terms, the “rapture” is a belief – a false belief – taught by many Christian denominations and church leaders. It is based on these words of St. Paul from 1 Thessalonians 4:17: *“Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”* As commonly taught, this being “caught up together with them in the clouds” takes place a thousand years (or more) before the actual judgment day. But rapture theology conveniently omits the immediately preceding verse, when Paul writes: *“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.”* When you study both verses together (as God obviously intended), Paul is clearly writing about the true judgment day, when all believers will be gathered together – the dead as well as the living.

Even more to the point, Harold Camping cannot predict a false “rapture” or end of the world or return of Christ in judgment because Jesus Himself said that no one can predict His return. In Matthew chapter 24 we read that Jesus told His disciples: *“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*

Do you ever wonder why people so often find it impossible to believe what God says? Why can’t people simply take God at His Word? Why have so many people over the past 2,000 years felt that they need to tell us “what God really means” when His Word is perfectly clear? The short answer to that question can be given by one word: sin. When Satan appeared in Eden to tempt Adam and Eve, he began by planting doubts in their minds – getting them to question if what God said was really true.

But whatever God says is most certainly true! The unknown writer of the New Testament book Hebrews says that *“it is impossible for God to lie,”* and in Numbers 23:19 we read: *“God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?”*

Jesus warned of *“false prophets”* who would *“lead many astray.”* There simply is no other way to describe Harold Camping than to label him a false prophet. Under the cloak of self-righteousness and professed good intentions he has led people to false beliefs and continues to do so.

One final thought. Prominent Lutheran writer Paul McCain recently wrote that Camping “has made it possible for non-believers to do what they have always done: scoff and laugh and make fun ... he has subjected the entire Christian church to scorn and ridicule because of fanciful predictions, which are all grounded in a common false teaching of many evangelical Christians. All these teachings subject the Church and all Christians to ridicule. When we suffer persecution, it must be persecution for the truth, not because of a nut making crazy predictions.”

What *is* the truth is that at a time unknown to anyone other than the Father, Jesus will return in glory to judge the living and the dead. He will come visibly, and all people will see Him surrounded in glory by His angels. A bodily resurrection of all the dead will take place, and in the final judgment by Christ all believers will receive eternal salvation and unbelievers will be sent to eternal damnation.

When will this happen? We do not know and we cannot know. That’s why Jesus tells us to be ready. And we are to be ready with joy and hope. In Revelation 22:20, Jesus says: *“Surely I am coming soon.”* And we join with Christians of all ages in proclaiming: *“Amen. Come, LORD Jesus!”*

In Christ,

Pastor O’Brien

# Congratulations

... to all members of St. Paul Lutheran Church who are celebrating birthdays or wedding anniversaries during the month of June. Please send any additions or correction to Barb Turner in the Church Office.



## June Birthdays

- |    |                 |    |                   |
|----|-----------------|----|-------------------|
| 1  | Betty Grotts    | 13 | Julie Vest        |
| 2  | Patty Schnarr   | 15 | Pastor O'Brien    |
| 4  | Braydon Koons   | 16 | Carol Schramm     |
| 6  | Rob Amling      | 18 | Diane Hildebrand  |
| 6  | Troy Livesay    | 18 | Kay Miller        |
| 6  | Jason Matthews  | 19 | Sharon Ambrose    |
| 6  | Jerry Stone     | 21 | Roaran Lees       |
| 7  | Irma Waddington | 23 | Christa Bingaman  |
| 8  | Wanda Mansfield | 23 | Mary Ellen Kresin |
| 9  | Ethan Law       | 24 | Morgan Bockewitz  |
| 11 | Ryann Ambrose   | 25 | Jason Simac       |
| 13 | Pam Daley       | 25 | Jim Turner        |



## June Anniversaries

- |    |   |    |   |
|----|---|----|---|
| 8  | Ronald and Lori Ambrose (9 <sup>th</sup> )      | 17 | Bill and Georgette Merrifield (45 <sup>th</sup> ) |
| 8  | Raymond and Ila Kly (65 <sup>th</sup> )         | 22 | Zach and Tara Hicks (9 <sup>th</sup> )            |
| 15 | Rev. Roger and Carolyn Eden (48 <sup>th</sup> ) | 24 | Rich and Barbara Amling (24 <sup>th</sup> )       |
| 16 | Dan and Dorothy Lees (27 <sup>th</sup> )        | 30 | Dave and Susan Matthews (32 <sup>nd</sup> )       |



## Serving Our Lord in His House during June

**Communion Assistant:** Rob Amling  
**Elder on Duty:** Lee Eilers

**Altar Guild:** Nancy Ashcraft, Cindy Schmitz

### Ushers:

Adam Cross, Head Usher  
June 2: Todd Bockewitz, Rick Wilcox  
June 5: Jeff Bockewitz, Tim Karbach  
June 12: Vern Benson, Larry Durbin  
June 19: Wally Bingaman, Dick McGee  
June 26: Dan Lees, Wayne Miller

### Greeters:

June 5: Jerry and Bev Stone  
June 12: Roger and Irma Waddington  
June 19: John and Sonna Livesay  
June 26: Rob and Debbie Amling

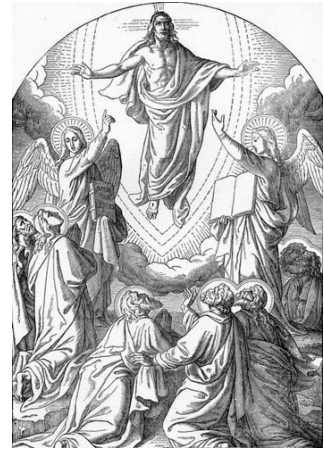
# June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 9:00 Bible Class  6:30 Adult Instruction Class	2 7:00 Ascension Day Divine Service	3	4
5 9:00 Sunday School/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service	6	7 6:30 Bible Class  7:30 Adult Instruction Class	8 9:00 Bible Class  6:30 Adult Instruction Class	9	10	11
12 9:00 Sunday School/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service  4:00 Ice Cream Social	13 6:30 Elders Meeting 7:30 Church Council Meeting	14 6:30 Bible Class  7:30 Adult Instruction Class	15 9:00 Bible Class  6:30 Adult Instruction Class	16	17	18
19 9:00 Sunday School/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service	20	21 6:30 Bible Class  7:30 Adult Instruction Class	22 9:00 Bible Class  6:30 Adult Instruction Class	23 LWML Convention	24 LWML Convention	25 LWML Convention
26 9:00 Sunday School/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service  LWML Convention	27	28 6:30 Bible Class  7:30 Adult Instruction Class	29 9:00 Bible Class  6:30 Adult Instruction Class	30		

## *Looking ahead ...*

### **The tradition of an Ascension Day Service returns to St. Paul on Thursday, June 2.**

For many centuries, Ascension Day – marking the day that our LORD ascended into heaven which took place 40 days following His Easter resurrection – was a revered day of the Church’s liturgical year. Throughout Christendom, Ascension Day was celebrated with special worship services pointing back to the day that Jesus ascended and looking forward to the day that He will return in glory to judge the living and the dead. Today, however, some denominations pay little if any attention to Ascension Day. And while most Lutheran churches do reference it in some manner, many have discontinued the tradition of holding an Ascension Day service.



On Thursday, June 2, members of St. Paul Lutheran Church are invited to gather together and renew this ancient practice at 7:00 p.m. This will be a full Divine Service with the LORD’s Supper.



### **Join us for the St. Paul old-fashioned “ice cream social” on Sunday, June 12.**

There’s no better way to enjoy a hot summer night than by eating a delicious bowl of cold, refreshing ice cream. And there’s no better way to enjoy that delicious ice cream than by enjoying it with your friends at St. Paul Lutheran Church! The fun begins at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday June 12 at the Church. See you then!

### **The “River of Life” Vacation Bible School is coming to St. Paul Lutheran Church beginning on Monday, July 11.**

The “River of Life” VBS is an exciting new program produced by The Lutheran Heritage Foundation. It has two main areas of focus – Christian baptism and overseas missions – and each child’s “passport” will lead to Biblically-based learning adventures in the Caribbean, the Baltics, Russia, Africa and Asia. In addition, the daily chapel offerings brought by the attendees will be used to support the creation and distribution of a new Lutheran Sunday School program for children living in Southeast Asia, for every two dollars collected will support one child with an entire year of Sunday School materials!

