Justified by Faith

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

My Fellow Redeemed who, like me, are **Justified by Faith,**

When I served as the Iowa District West Chaplain to the Sioux City hospitals and nursing homes,as well as the speaker for the Good Shepherd Hour, I was called upon by the county courts to serve as a juror. This particular case was centered around an individual who was charged with the possession of drug paraphernalia with the intent to make and distribute drugs. So the stage is set.

The jurors have gathered. The judge make his grand entrance as the people rise. On one side of the room is the prosecutor prepared to present his case. On the other side we see the defense attorney with the accused perched in the chair next to him. I can only imagine the thoughts that were racing through this young man's head. Will I be convicted and spend the next several years confined to a 6' X 8' cell. Or will I be set free. Perhaps a lump existed in his throat and a tightness in his chest was present as he face this time of uncertainty and fear. His life, his future were in the hands of twelve individuals totally unknown to him. What will be the verdict? Will it be guilty as charged? Or will it be not guilty?

This court room scenario is indicative to us as Christians. On the last day when we stand before God our judge, we will have to give an account of the things we have done or perhaps of the things we have not done. The prosecuting attorney, also known as the accuser, Satan himself will level his charges against us. His argument will be quite compelling because it will be factual and true. All we will be able to do is to stand before our creator and judge filled with embarrassment, humiliation, shame and guilt. As we have confessed over and over again that rightfully we deserve His righteous wrath, condemnation and damnation. Left to ourselves we would have to admit – "Guilty as Charged." But remain steadfast and immovable, this part of the trial is only the accuser's argument of the charges. We are not a people without hope!

Now, up to the podium, the defense attorney and advocate of those accused comes to present our side. His argument is even more compelling and powerful for it focuses not on ourselves. Our defense attorney – Jesus – employs a strategy that no one could ever imagine. Our advocate does not focus on our shortcomings, our faults, our failures or disappointments. He doesn't draw attention to the times we have hurt others or withheld forgiveness from those who hurt us. Jesus doesn't shine a light on the laws we have broken, nor our times of selfishness and greed. Jesus doesn't rationalize our weaknesses by inciting flesh gives birth to flesh and plead for mercy on our behalf. Jesus does not even make excuses by claiming we are the victims of our society or culture.

Instead Jesus' strategy is to draw the attention to himself. He highlights his perfect obedience and adherence to the law as proclaimed in Scripture alone. The author of the book of Hebrews (4:16) states that we have this great high priest who is able to sympathize with us. He was tempted in every way just as we are tempted. Yet he was without sin! Unlike us He never fell prey to any temptation. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians which again is recorded in the Scriptures, that Jesus who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God. John the Baptist saw Jesus coming over the crest of the hill and said: Behold the Lamb of God (recalling that in the Old Testament the lamb of sacrifice had to be without stain or blemish of any kind) who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus, our defense attorney, then spoke of himself being the great high priest who offered himself the Lamb of Sacrifice on the altar of the cross in behalf of the sins of the world. This was only exhibit A of our defense attorney.

In Exhibit B Jesus begins to weave together His atoning work with our being brought to saving faith. He points out the truth of Luther's words in his small catechism that the Holy Spirit has called by the Gospel, enlightened us with His gifts, sanctified and kept us in the true faith. Jesus bolsters the argument that salvation is by grace through faith by peering into Ephesians 2:8-9 which says: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." It is abundantly clear in Holy Scripture that a man therefore is not justified by fulfilling the works of the law, but through faith. In God's inspired and inerrant Word it says simply – "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." Our defense attorney weaves us into these truths by speaking of our Baptism and how we have been adopted into His family and by which we have been made heirs of His eternal Kingdom.

The most impressive thing was His closing argument. It was clear, concise and nothing short of spectacular as He spoke about the only verdict that was possible was – NOT GUILTY! We have been justified through faith in His Redeeming sacrifice and blessed work of atonement.

Justified through Faith,

Pastor Steven K. Benson

Board of Education

October 7, 2026

Members: Jill Davis, Rhonda Waddell, Sue Macek, Pastor Benson

Pastor began the meeting with a devotion taken from John 14. The Holy Spirit will teach you all things. He ended with a prayer. September minutes were approved as written.

Library: Our new book is written by Dr. Nathaniel T. Jeanson, titled, "A New Way to Win". Creation science is turning the tide in the origins debate. Dr. Jeanson uncovers a revolutionary new way to reverse statistics - a way quietly brewing for 15 years. He gives believers a bold new way to turn the tide in the battle for truth.

St. Paul: Fourth grade field trip to the Grotto is Oct 1st, First grade field trip to the Science Center on 10/6, flu shot clinic and pictures on 10/13, field trip to the fire station on 10/22, end of the first Quarter is 10/28, Fall Fest is 10/30, and Saints VB Tournament in Boone on 10/31.

Catechism & Sunday School report: Our October Bible stories cover Isaac and Rebekah, Esau and Jacob, Jacob's Family, and Joseph. In October we will be learning the second through the fifth petition to the Lord's Prayer.

Family Fellowship report: The Board will set up for the fellowship on Saturday, October 17th at 9:00 am.. A sign-up sheet is on the office bulletin board.

Wednesday Bible Study: Will start on Wednesday, October 14th . The title of the lessons will be "Myth or Faith". Class begins at 9:00 am.

Cradle Roll: None

Old Business: None

New business: None

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm. Next meeting is November 4, 2026 at 5:15 pm.

Sue Macek
Chairman

Lutheran Women's Fellowship

October 1, 2026

The Lutheran Women's Fellowship met on October 1 at 1:00 p.m. Nine members attended the meeting. Pastor Benson began the meeting with prayer. Sally Zuspann called the October meeting to order. Jean Martinson presented the mites devotion with Mites Prayer and devotion "Lord, Who Gives Me Counsel" from Portals of Prayer. The minutes of September 3 were given out in the meeting, were read and approved.

Treasurer Report: $147.05 in checking, $1,812.32 in regular savings, and $2,226.29 in the Extension Fund.
Card Counter Report: checking balance: $631.94.
Funeral Fund: Savings balance: $2,808.56.
Reports all approved.

Old Business

Rally St. Paul Luhtheran. Four attended; Nancy Herzzberg, Sue Macek, LaVonne Peters, and Sally Zuspann from Prince of Peace and guest speaker, Julie Mann.

New Business

Welcomed Pastor Benson: Women's Fellowship welcomed Pastor Benson.
October 5 LWML will be serving refreshments after Faye Hanson visitation.
October 9 Set up time for Quilt/ Craft/Bake Sale: 10 AM. Vicki Escobedo handed out signup sheet for Quilt/Craft/Bake sale. Baked and craft items need to be priced when bringing them on Friday.
October 10 – Quilt/Craft/Bake Sale. Time: 10:00 AM. – 2:00 PM. Mission: OBRIA, SALT Cemter and Home Missions
Lunch menu: Sloopy Joes, chips, bars, coffee and water. Items not sold at sale will be in church basement to purchase after church service.
October 18 LWML Sunday.
Invitation from Lutheran Family Service. Dates to attend November 10, 11, 12. LWML will attend November 10 9:30 Brunch. Ingathering donations; diapers, wipes, dish soap, money donations.
October Mission: D/SAOC.
October Funeral Committee: Vicki Escobedo, Nancy Herzberg
Shut-ins birthday: Mary Escobedo
Birthdays: Sue Macek
October Hostess: Jean Martinson, Connie Tyrrell.

Sally Zuspann closed meeting with devotion; "Beatitudes For Friend Of The Aged", Lord's Prayer and table prayer at 1:45 PM. All in favor of adjourning meeting.

LaVonne Peters
Secretary

ORGAN FUND UPDATE

Received in 2024	$28,453.15
Received in 2025	$ 6,505.00
2026 YTD Received	$ 2,620.00
Reimbursed to Foundation	$31,000.00
Organ Fund	$ 6,578.15

Justified by Faith

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

My Fellow Redeemed who, like me, are **Justified by Faith,**

When I served as the Iowa District West Chaplain to the Sioux City hospitals and nursing homes,as well as the speaker for the Good Shepherd Hour, I was called upon by the county courts to serve as a juror. This particular case was centered around an individual who was charged with the possession of drug paraphernalia with the intent to make and distribute drugs. So the stage is set.

The jurors have gathered. The judge make his grand entrance as the people rise. On one side of the room is the prosecutor prepared to present his case. On the other side we see the defense attorney with the accused perched in the chair next to him. I can only imagine the thoughts that were racing through this young man's head. Will I be convicted and spend the next several years confined to a 6' X 8' cell. Or will I be set free. Perhaps a lump existed in his throat and a tightness in his chest was present as he face this time of uncertainty and fear. His life, his future were in the hands of twelve individuals totally unknown to him. What will be the verdict? Will it be guilty as charged? Or will it be not guilty?

This court room scenario is indicative to us as Christians. On the last day when we stand before God our judge, we will have to give an account of the things we have done or perhaps of the things we have not done. The prosecuting attorney, also known as the accuser, Satan himself will level his charges against us. His argument will be quite compelling because it will be factual and true. All we will be able to do is to stand before our creator and judge filled with embarrassment, humiliation, shame and guilt. As we have confessed over and over again that rightfully we deserve His righteous wrath, condemnation and damnation. Left to ourselves we would have to admit – "Guilty as Charged." But remain steadfast and immovable, this part of the trial is only the accuser's argument of the charges. We are not a people without hope!

Now, up to the podium, the defense attorney and advocate of those accused comes to present our side. His argument is even more compelling and powerful for it focuses not on ourselves. Our defense attorney – Jesus – employs a strategy that no one could ever imagine. Our advocate does not focus on our shortcomings, our faults, our failures or disappointments. He doesn't draw attention to the times we have hurt others or withheld forgiveness from those who hurt us. Jesus doesn't shine a light on the laws we have broken, nor our times of selfishness and greed. Jesus doesn't rationalize our weaknesses by inciting flesh gives birth to flesh and plead for mercy on our behalf. Jesus does not even make excuses by claiming we are the victims of our society or culture.

Instead Jesus' strategy is to draw the attention to himself. He highlights his perfect obedience and adherence to the law as proclaimed in Scripture alone. The author of the book of Hebrews (4:16) states that we have this great high priest who is able to sympathize with us. He was tempted in every way just as we are tempted. Yet he was without sin! Unlike us He never fell prey to any temptation. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians which again is recorded in the Scriptures, that Jesus who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God. John the Baptist saw Jesus coming over the crest of the hill and said: Behold the Lamb of God (recalling that in the Old Testament the lamb of sacrifice had to be without stain or blemish of any kind) who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus, our defense attorney, then spoke of himself being the great high priest who offered himself the Lamb of Sacrifice on the altar of the cross in behalf of the sins of the world. This was only exhibit A of our defense attorney.

In Exhibit B Jesus begins to weave together His atoning work with our being brought to saving faith. He points out the truth of Luther's words in his small catechism that the Holy Spirit has called by the Gospel, enlightened us with His gifts, sanctified and kept us in the true faith. Jesus bolsters the argument that salvation is by grace through faith by peering into Ephesians 2:8-9 which says: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." It is abundantly clear in Holy Scripture that a man therefore is not justified by fulfilling the works of the law, but through faith. In God's inspired and inerrant Word it says simply – "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." Our defense attorney weaves us into these truths by speaking of our Baptism and how we have been adopted into His family and by which we have been made heirs of His eternal Kingdom.

The most impressive thing was His closing argument. It was clear, concise and nothing short of spectacular as He spoke about the only verdict that was possible was – NOT GUILTY! We have been justified through faith in His Redeeming sacrifice and blessed work of atonement.

Justified through Faith,

Pastor Steven K. Benson

Board of Education

October 7, 2026

Members: Jill Davis, Rhonda Waddell, Sue Macek, Pastor Benson

Pastor began the meeting with a devotion taken from John 14. The Holy Spirit will teach you all things. He ended with a prayer. September minutes were approved as written.