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Jesus says:
“I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me
will never go hungry,
and whoever believes in me
will never be thirsty.”
John 6:35

“One-Nation Under God”

Happy 4th of July!
The Four Principles of the Church

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42 NIV).

Dear Calvin Synod Congregations,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

How should a local church function? Our text, from the Book of Acts 2:42, is an immense help for us to answer the question.

In the text we find four principles and practices that should characterize any local churches and are important to function properly. The four practices are:

1. Apostles’ teaching.
2. Fellowship.
3. Breaking of bread, the Lord’s Supper.
4. Prayer.

Evangelist Luke, the author of the book of Acts, tells us that the early church continued steadfastly in these four important areas that made them a dynamic, living community. They devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the life in Jesus Christ. They were enthusiastic to listen to the apostles’ teachings. Additionally, the members of the early church continued steadfastly in koinonia, in the fellowship and they grew in their relationships with each other. The way they expressed this fellowship in Christ was by breaking of bread, basically partaking in the Holy Supper, and through prayer.

Let us look at these four principles and especially what fellowship combined with the “breaking of bread” means and why corporate prayer is so important in the life of the local church.

1. The first is the apostles’ teaching. In the life of the first believers the apostles’ teaching basically meant and referred to the continuous spiritual food based on the Holy Scriptures and the teachings and stories of Jesus shared and given by the apostles, the leaders of the church. Praise be to God for our Protestant Reformed Church, for its pure and Bible-based teachings.

2. The second is fellowship or koinonia.

A church member took a survey in his congregation. He asked, “Why did you join this church?” 93 percent of the members said, “I joined because of the pastor.” He then asked, “What if the
pastor leaves? Will you leave, too?” 93 percent said, “No.” When he asked why they wouldn’t leave, the response was, “Because I have friends here!”

In another survey 400 church dropouts were asked why they left their churches. Over 75 percent of the respondents said, “I didn’t feel anyone cared whether I was there or not.”

The fellowship itself is extremely important in the local church. Why? “The more friendships a person has in a congregation, the less likely he or she is to become inactive or leave.”

The members of the early church enjoyed being with one another. As part of the fellowship they participated in a common or agape meal. In the early church the table fellowship meant an important expression of their strong relationships. Their entire lives centered around this close relationship, so they would glorify God by it. The Word of Lord says this, “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1Cor.10:31).

3. The most important expression of their fellowship with the Lord and with each other was when they broke the bread. This was the third key element of the early church that determined their lives. The breaking of bread meant the Holy Supper and was done in remembrance of Jesus Christ.

There is nothing we do that portrays so dramatically the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made. There is nothing that can make us understand any better the truth that we are all sinners and in need of a Savior. There is nothing that can teach us koinonia, fellowship more wonderfully than the Lord’s Supper in which we remember the sacrifice Christ made on Calvary’s cross and offered His life for us. When we eat of the bread of life, and drink the wine, as a symbol of His blood, our loving relationship grows with the Father in heaven and with one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus.

In the Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer 75, we find this description about the Lord’s Supper:

Q. How does the holy supper remind and assure you that you share in Christ’s one sacrifice on the cross and in all his benefits?

A. In this way: Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat this broken bread and to drink this cup in remembrance of him. With this command come these promises:

First, as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup shared with me, so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross.

Second, as surely as I receive from the hand of the one who serves, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, given me as sure signs of Christ’s body and blood, so surely he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured-out blood.2

4. The last, fourth key element and practice of the early church was prayer. For the members of the first congregation prayer meant: communication with God in the presence of other believers. There are two basic words used for prayer in the New Testament. The first is the Greek word deomai which means: to ask or beseech. This is the kind of prayer we know best, because most of our praying is taken up with asking things from God. There is nothing wrong with asking. The Bible tells us to ask. The truth is that the majority of our asking in our prayers is good and proper. We ask for healing, for those who mourn, for our nation, for strength, for work, for blessing our ministries, we ask God to meet our needs.

The word, however, that is used in Acts chapter 2 is not ask or beseech. The early church used another meaning of prayer that was more than asking. The Greek word that is used here is proseuchê. It means: calling on God, but not to ask but to vow and to dedicate.

This kind of prayer is important. It prevents pride. It wipes out apathy. It leads us to the point of total humility and it calls us to unity. This kind of prayer was praises to God and thanksgiving for His goodness.

What a great and dynamic church the first congregation was. It was with full of life! They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42), says the Word of God. May God bless us as we also practice these principles and elements in our churches’ lives. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
Rt. Rev. Dr. Csaba Krasznai
Bishop

Source:
1Rick Warren: The Purpose Driven Church, p. 324.
2https://www.rca.org/resources/communion/heidelberg-catechism-holy-supper-jesus-christ
A Short Commencement Address from the Apostle Paul


We congratulate our young graduated brethren, we are proud of them. Those who do not continue their studies but start to work as professionals; we welcome them into our greater families, our congregations. We do not talk to our graduating friends in an instructive way, much rather we learn together and walk together on the way of life remembering that once we also started and good-hearted people helped and supported us.

FIVE (MILITARY) INSTRUCTIONS AND THEIR DIRECT, ORIGINAL MEANINGS.

“Be watchful.” Jesus and Apostle Paul liked to use this exhortation: “Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.” Matthew 24:42 and “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 26:41. See also Matthew 25:13, Mark 13:37, Acts of Apostles 20:31.

When Apostle Paul said, “Stand firm in your faith”, he had in his mind is to be stationary, unmoving, and to persevere. The parallel verses are: “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1. See also Philippians 4:1 and 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

“Be courageous.” Here the Greek language emphasizes the behavior of a strong man who finishes the task set before him, as a soldier who carries out his officer’s order.

“Be strong.” The basic concept here is dominion, might, power, and strength. This strong man should possess more than brutal force.

“Let all that you do be done in love.” After the four military instructions Apostle Paul adds one admonition that is spiritual; let the self-sacrificing love (agape) motivate all the previous exhortations.

THE INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF APOSTLE PAUL’S BIDDING.

Be watchful. WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL? In most of our young people’s room’s big posters welcome, and often surprise, the one who enters. Who influences you the most? Whose footsteps and policy are you willing to follow? Who do you think is the greatest? How many young boys wish to be an all-American football star and how many are thinking about becoming missionaries? Nobody can love, follow, and serve Christ unless our Lord becomes an ideal for him or her!

Stand firm in your faith. WHAT IS YOUR GOAL? What is the highest goal you think you are able to achieve, and are you willing to make the great sacrifice necessary? Wealth? Fame? Power? Happiness? Science? Sport? Business? Family? Or does it not matter at all what you do as long as you get something for a little effort? If you drift in life aimlessly it is as dangerous as pursuing the wrong goals. Luke 12:13-21.

Be courageous. WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH? The noblest goal with the purest intention may never be reached if illegal, immoral, and evil approaches are used. Many good causes failed because wrong and inappropriate methods were used.

Be strong. WHERE IS THE LIMIT OF YOUR PATIENCE, understanding, tolerance, forgiveness, and perseverance? The man who is really strong will control himself first before he crushes his enemy. More self-control will create more harmony that in turn lets God’s Spirit rule over us and helps us to achieve more.

Let all that you do be done in love. DO YOUR BRAIN, ARM, AND HEART COOPERATE? Your personal interest, professional knowledge, and physical strength should be motivated by the love brought by Christ.

Apostle Paul was the first one to take seriously his own instructions for he wrote: “Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13-14.

Rev. Alexander Jalso

100th Anniversary of Birth
The Life of Rt. Rev. Dr. John Butosi

Few people are destined to be such a dedicated and faithful servant in Christ’s mission as John Butosi. By God’s grace, he is one. He was born on December 18, 1919 in Nyirgyulai which is in the Nyírbátor District of Szabolcs County in northeastern corner of Hungary. It will be the 100th anniversary of his birth this December.

His Christian faith was
formed during his teenage years while in school at the Kossuth Relagimnzmum at Cegléd. He roomed at the Charles Surányi Boy’s Home which provided room and board for the students. John grew up in a strict “Christian” home. He attended the local Reformed School in town for his elementary school years, trying to be perfect in upholding the traditions of Hungary Reformed religion. The Second law of the Reformed Church in Hungary concerning mission starts with the following startling sentence: “The Reformed Church in Hungary is a Folk Church and a Faith Confessing Church at the same time.” For him, this “reality” seemed to be contradictory. The trouble was with Jesus, the resurrected, living Jesus Christ. One Sunday, he was reading a pamphlet by Uray Sándor and saw in italics Jesus Lives! John knew “that He lived, He died, He was risen, He went to heaven, all in the past tense. In the present tense, that He Lives Now, Walks Among Us and Can Meet Us Personally, that was unexpected, frightening, shocking” for him. Another spiritual event occurred when he entered a rest room and unexpectedly “saw the thorn crowned face of the crucified Christ. It was not a picture or painting, for His eyes were moving. The message: We know each other for a long time that I bought you with my blood. You belong to me.” Then at the boy’s home, while putting away the Bible, it unexpectedly fell open. His eyes lit up to find Psalm 103 open in front of him. “Praise the Lord, O my soul, All my inmost being praise His Holy Name, Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits- Who forgives all your sins, and Heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the Eagles.” (Psalm 103:1-5)

John states, “it became blessedly clear that His providential care showered me with precious benefits until this very moment, for He loves me from eternity to eternity that He forgives my sin – past, present and future – for, He is our savior. I know what our Reformed theologians and creeds say about such appearances (this is why I kept quiet about it all through my life) but now I must confess that the living Word of God and the risen simultaneity of Jesus Christ have been the two basic theological facts that sustained me in my Christian life and ministry.” He reconciles these questions by studying the Institutes by John Calvin and the Bible. He knew that he was in the right place and heading in the right direction on his faith journey.

He was an exceptional student. He was accepted into the Reformed Seminary in Debrecen on September 13, 1939. While a student there, he became active in the Bethánia Society and served as an assistant pastor in Munkács. With World War II raging in Hungary, he enlisted in the army. He served as an officer candidate, appointed as a chaplain in a military hospital unit, moving from place to place; ending up in Gera, Germany. As the Allied forces were nearing victory and the Americans liberating Germany, he returned to Debrecen to complete his studies. He passed his second ministerial-qualifying examination on February 20, 1946 and was qualified and eligible for regular ministerial service.

With the end of World War II, there was growing unrest around the world especially in Hungary now under Russian dominance. One of John’s professors suggested that he apply for a theological scholarship in the USA to further his studies. After initially being against such a move, he investigated this possibility. Everything fell into place and he arrived in New York City on December 23, 1947. He would begin his American journey as a student in Austin Presbyterian Seminary at the University of Texas. One of the biggest challenges was to become more conversant and learn how to write in English. The first letter in English was to his American relatives, the Kish family who lived in Hammond, Indiana. After one year in Austin, John was accepted to complete his studies at the Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. But during that summer, he was invited to be the assistant pastor by Rev. Dr. Stephen Szabó at the First Hungarian Reformed Church of Cleveland, Ohio. In May 1949 John received the coveted Master of Theology degree from the Princeton Theological Seminary. The American scholarship has ended. He was now ready to return home to Hungary to begin his ministerial career.

The iron curtain had now fallen on mother Hungary. The political atmosphere was changing. All the necessary forms were sent to the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, D.C. for the return home. Then a request came to surrender his Hungarian passport and original documents to the Embassy and the official reply will be coming. Five months later, the answer was shocking. On October 8, 1949, “the Hungarian authorities did not grant permission to enter Hungary.” Later he learned that a delegation of seminary professors personally intervened with Mátyás Rákosi, chairman of the Hungarian Communist Party and defacto dictator of Hungary, and Rákosi’s decision was as follows: “If someone has spent

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now two years in America, he is an undercover man, a spy for the USA. Let him stay there!” His fate was sealed as he had no choice but to begin anew in America. Where would he go?

With help of the Magyar Synod and then President Victor Racz, John was given an opportunity to serve as pastor at the First Hungarian Evangelical and Reformed Church of Hammond, IN with denominational financial assistance for five years. He was ordained by the Evangelical and Reformed Church on April 29, 1951. It was here that he met Lorraine Frieda L. Nickel. The Hammond congregation was invited by a neighboring church to attend a presentation by a young lady Lorraine, who had just returned from a mission trip to Japan. A courtship ensued and they were married on August 16, 1953 at Trinity E & R Church of LaSalle, IL. John received his first wedding gift before the actual wedding from the US government: on July 21, 1953, he became an American citizen.

After almost five years of service in Hammond, John accepted a call to the First Hungarian E & R Church of McKeesport, PA. At Hammond, the ministry was very successful: the membership doubled, the church became independent from the Mission Board support, Sunday School, Youth activities, Bible studies, and extensive improvements were made to the property. At McKeesport, similar results occurred but many personal events occurred during this time. John was accepted to the doctoral studies program at the University of Pittsburgh. He became more involved in the Magyar Synod and the denominational merger to form the new United Church of Christ. He was elected as General Secretary of the Magyar Synod in 1959 at the annual meeting. The “sweetest” baby was born on July 13, 1959, Ann Elizabeth. And by year end, the call from the Hungarian Reformed Church of South Norwalk, CT was accepted.

The challenge serving South Norwalk was daunting. Just caring for the 700-member congregation along was a full day. But John needed to complete his doctoral dissertation and fulfil the different aspects of ministry which he defined: 1) local congregation of South Norwalk, 2) the local community of Norwalk, 3) beyond the local scene, 4) the Magyar Synod, 5) the denomination (United Church of Christ), 6) the larger (national, international, global). On August 13, 1962, he earned the “Doctor of Philosophy” from the University of Pittsburgh.

In family life, the arrival of their second daughter, Sarah Joan on September 18, 1961, was celebrated. John finally was able to return to his homeland in 1964, seeing his family and tending to church affairs in Hungary and Romania. Norwalk was filled with blessings including the celebration of the Diamond Anniversary of the congregation in 1968. The family went on a trip to Austria, Germany, Holland, and of course Hungary, visiting Budapest, Debrecen, Nyírbátor, and other places. It was a chance for the families on each side of the world to gather. During this period, John began his service in the Magyar now Calvin Synod. The chronology of service in Calvin Synod: 1959-63 General Secretary and Member on Committee of Six, 1967-71 President, 1971-75 Member of UCC Executive Council and BHM, 1975-79 Bishop, 1979-81 Deputy Bishop, 1981-85 Bishop, 2000-10 Bishop Emeritus.

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Family trip to Hungary visiting Mom, brothers and sisters, 1968

With the death of Rev. Dr. Stephen Bessemer in Bridgeport, CT, the call was accepted to serve that congregation in the summer of 1976. The ministry in Bridgeport followed that pattern established in South Norwalk. Local congregational matters were always the top priority, but Synod, denominational and Hungarian issues were also part of his work. He was very involved in the human and religious rights of Hungarians...
throughout the world, attending several conferences during this period. In March of 1984, he attended Congressional hearings in Washington, D.C. and visited the White House on March 20, meeting President Ronald Reagan. The local church ministry of John’s life culminated on June 25, 1989 with the retirement farewell tea in Bridgeport. The plan was to move to a retirement cottage in Ligonier, PA, which was the desire of Lorraine who loved that hillside.

The Butosi Family 1976

Though John and Lorraine moved to retire Ligonier in 1989, it was far from the relaxing life of retirement. There was still much to do. On February 7, 1990, John returned to Hungary with Lorraine to embark on several tasks at the age of 70, staying with his sister, Julie. Of course, gathering with family was first priority. A great door opened of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in congregations, conferences, special gatherings in Hungary and in the surrounding countries; teaching at the Debrecen Reformed Theological University as full-time professor and chair of Mission Department, and serving as the first president of the newly organized World Federation of Hungarian Reformed Churches, involvement in the Protestant Missionary Studies Institute, and Missio Dei, the total mission of God. During this period, John traveled throughout the Carpathian Basin and the world visiting Central America, Australia, South Africa, Cuba and South America. It was not uncommon for the airlines to lose his “luggages” on these trips. Some might remember that he always called his suitcases his “luggages” even when he had only one suitcase. And there were many occasions when his “luggages” were lost but usually turned up somewhere later.

After spending the first year in Debrecen, Lorraine decided to stay in Ligonier in 1991 while John went back to Hungary. In April, she became sick and on April 16, 1991, she passed away in her sleep one day before her 68th birthday. Their first grandchild, Matthew John was born on February 1, 1991. Granddaughter Erica Nicole was born on August 13, 1994. John continued to serve in Hungary for nine years, returning in the summer months to Ligonier and Connecticut to be with his American family. With several health issues developing, he completed his work in Hungary and returned on September 15, 1998 to Ligonier for the second retirement. He spent his time between Ligonier and Connecticut, making several car trips back and forth.

On November 19, 1999, John moved to his newly built room, an addition built onto the home of daughter and son-in-law, Ann and Jim in Shelton, CT. His room was equipped with a desk, so his work continued. But now he could more spent time with the growing grandchildren. He attended Classis and Synod meetings, our local Bridgeport congregation, and many local events. He was also still very much involved in the life of the Hungarian Reformed Church. In 2002, he organized the Holy Fast. Because our Hungarian Reformed congregations in the USA were in distress, we examined three areas to study and try to change the course: 1) our ethnic identity, 2) our church situation, 3) our mission challenge. In 2004, John made his final trip to Hungary with his American family. We visited our Hungarian relatives in Debrecen, Nyírbátor, and Nyíregyháza as well as some site seeing in Budapest and

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The God Who Comes To Us

Text: Romans 5:1-5

Has it always seemed natural for us to believe in God? In one God only? It has not always been so. Our Hebrew forebears required commandments: “You shall have no other god...” (Exodus 20:3) and “You shall not bow down to them and worship them.” (Exodus 20:5) Other gods were alive, if not well, in their cultural surroundings. Moses warned the Hebrew people that they would likely turn “to serve other gods made by human hands, objects of wood and stone that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.” (Deut. 4:28) But he promised if they would seek after the true God with all their heart and soul, they would find him. (Deut. 4:29)

When St. Paul went to Athens he found them worshiping a variety of gods. So as not to miss any bets they had erected a statue to “the unknown god.” Paul told them it was this God he wanted to proclaim. (Acts 17:23)

Today, once again, all around us folk have lost their way in the wilderness of small gods—the gods of celebrity, power and affluence. We are surrounded by people who worship the god of the silicon chip and its derivatives.

The prophet prays, “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down... to make your name known to your adversaries.” (Isaiah 64:1a and 2b) Psalm 8 responds to that plea. See the majesty of creation. See it in the heavens. See it in the creative powers of the God’s human creature. The poet, Gerard Manly Hopkins, claimed, “The world is charged with the grandeur of God, it breaks out like shook foil...”

I once heard a rabbi say, “I found God under a microscope at MIT.” For many God has come to them in this way. Indeed, God comes to us in creation but how full is that revelation? The prophet said, “They who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” (Isaiah 9:2) He looked for God to pull back the curtain in human history.

Martin Luther was not convinced by the God he discovered in nature. He said, “Whosoever does not apprehend this man born of Mary, simply cannot apprehend God, even if they should say that they believe in God, creator of heaven and earth.” Pascal, the 17th century genius, said of the starry sky, “The eternal silence of this infinite space frightens me.”

For myself, the God “who inhabits eternity” did not grasp me early. Instead, I was drawn by the

Continued from Page 7

other parts of the country. His daughter Sarah died on October 20, 2006 at the age of 45. Rt. Rev. Dr. John Butosi went home to the Lord on July 12, 2010 at the age of 90. A celebration of his life took place on July 17 at United Church of Christ of Bridgeport, CT and burial on August 6 at Ligonier Valley Cemetery in PA next to wife Lorraine.

John’s life was filled with many blessings. From his humble beginnings, he served the Lord with all his heart and soul. His passion to serve was limitless. He was a local church pastor, a Synod innovator and leader, a teacher and professor, an activist for the Hungarian Community, a husband, father and grandfather, and in every turn, a preacher. Moved by the Holy Spirit from childhood, he preached the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He knew he belonged to Jesus Christ body and soul, in life and death, “because by His blood He paid for all my sins and protects me so well, that nothing can happen to me without His will.” This was especially true when he made his many trips abroad to places where the government restricted movement and speech and his family always worried if he would make his destination and return home safely. But as he knew better than anyone else, he was in the right place and God was with him. Along the way, he made a difference and touched their spirit. It is no doubt that he continues to leave his mark on the lives of many.

On May 17, 2019, the Common Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church gathered to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Hungarian Reformed Unity in Debrecen, Hungary. John’s life and service to the Hungarian Reformed community was remembered and honored on this 100th anniversary of his birth year.

This article was written by Jim and Ann (Butosi) Ballas. Contents and quotes are taken from “Praise the Lord, O My Soul” The Autobiography of John Butosi.

Visiting family in Debrecen, Hungary 2004
Man of Nazareth who “was tempted in every manner such as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15) This God, vulnerable and accessible, claimed my attention. We often speak of the Son who has come to us revealing the heart of God. But we’re reminded also that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (Romans 5:5)

We’re aware of temptation that sits at the door waiting for a chance to enter. We may be even more aware of God the Spirit who is given to us to convict, correct, cajole, encourage, advocate and guide—to lead us into true living. This is the God, who as the poet, Francis Thompson, put it, chases us down the labyrinthine ways of our lives as a hound dog on the trail of the prey.

God comes to us in many moments—in the science lab, in a vision of the cross, in a moment of spiritual reflection. God is imaginative in chasing us down, showing us his glory, lowering our defenses and claiming our devotion.

Some years ago Dianne and I visited our son and daughter-in-law who were living in Japan. On Sunday morning in Kyoto I entered the little red brick Episcopal Church just around the corner. I wrote down my experience so to remember it better.

There were four worshipers at the 8:00 a.m. English service—a young scholarly American who taught English, a dark-haired younger Japanese woman and a Caucasian woman of retirement age. With these three I passed the peace of Christ. They had all put on red slippers provided at the door. I just entered in sock feet. We sat in the choir—four people facing each other across the divided chancel. The Japanese priest spoke in a sort of broken, pigeon English. When it came time for Holy Communion, he dropped the wafer as he broke it. His associate helped him pick it up.

I went to church to seek a vision of the high and Holy One who inhabits eternity, the One in whose image I am made, there to know myself and the world around me in the light of the Holy One.

I remember that when I went forward with the others to partake of Holy Communion I stubbed my left foot on the altar furniture. As I knelt I thought how glad I was that I had not stubbed my right foot, whose toes I had murdered in the dark some nights earlier. But on the way back to my seat I stubbed those swollen toes on my right foot. It hurt like the dickens. Grimacing in pain I resumed my seat, inwardly laughing at my own clumsiness, but then reflecting on the nailed, hurting, humiliated feet of our Lord, whose symbols of suffering love in Holy Communion I had just received.

In that far away church of another denomination I sensed the reality of the Triune God—high and holy, suffering for our sakes, revealed on the winds of the Spirit. I saw the presence of the corner church, a witness to the One God in a land of many gods. In my tortured toes I sensed the body broken and blood spilled for my deepest needs. And in that moment the Spirit moved, speaking to a visitor from afar.

May we, each in our own way, see the Lord, who is our Creator, Redeemer and Comforter, and so see ourselves and the world around us in the light of that revelation. Amen.

Rev. David B. Bowman, Ph.D

Palm Sunday Communion Service in Buffalo, NY

On Palm Sunday, 2019 we gathered at Chapel of the Saint Jude Center, Buffalo, NY to worship our Lord God in an ecumenical service. We as Hungarian Reformed people believe that God created us being Hungarian, Christ called us to follow him as Reformed, Roman Catholic, or Lutheran believers and we, pastors were called to serve by the Holy Spirit. Hence we gathering in the chapel, and hence the people are coming from different denominations. We are all one as Hungarians, we are all one in the innate need to worship our Lord on the language what our mothers taught to us.

The Buffalo congregation worships the Lord on Palm Sunday at the Saint Jude Center, Buffalo, NY

On this Sunday The Rt. Rev. Dr. Csaba Krasznai, Bishop of the Calvin Synod blessed us and inspired us in His sermon to follow Christ. More than 20 people participated in the Holy Supper, which was presided by The Rev. Thomas Burian, so by receiving the elements and the Holy Spirit we will be able to follow Christ.
As the mission and oversight by the Calvin Synod, we are gathering once a month in Buffalo and the Canadian Niagara Falls for a church service. Please follow the Facebook advertisements of the time of the services.

Rev. Thomas Burian administers the Holy Supper

Members of the United Church of Christ in Bridgeport, CT participated in the Greater Bridgeport Annual Crop Walk to raise funds to fight hunger. It is about a three mile walk at Seaside Park in Bridgeport. A determined group of seven individuals collected funds from our very generous congregation and members of our community. This group included Eric Gramse, Sandy Stasko, Holly Kruzshak, Shelley Visinski, Barbara Poruban, Petronia Knight-Martin and Ann Ballas. Following a fellowship lunch on Sunday, May 5th, we shared a time of prayer and thanksgiving and went off to meet the challenges of a very rainy, cold and windy afternoon. Despite being wet and cold, our fortitude was maintained, and we were able to submit our collective donation of $1044.00. It took a few days for our shoes to dry, but I hope that all will be willing to participate again next year. Many thanks to all who were involved in making such a significant difference in the fight to feed the hungry. Thanks to coordinator Ann Ballas for all her work and for this report.

Our members also participated in Join Against Hunger by collecting non-perishable food items during the month of May. We have donated these much-needed items to the Bridgeport area food banks. Thanks to all our members who for their generous donations.

By Jim Ballas

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Barbara Poruban, Sandra Stasko, Holly Kruzshak, Eric Gramse, Ann Ballas, Petronia Knight-Martin, Shelly Visinski (from left to right)
Az Egyház négy alapelve

„Ők pedig kitartóan részt vettek az apostoli tanításban, a közösségben, a kenyér megtörésében és az imádkozásban.”

(Apostolok Cselekedetei 2:42)

Kedves Kálvin Zsinat Gyülekezetei!
Kedves Testvéreim a Krisztusban!

Hogyan kellene működnie egy gyülekezetnek?

A textustán az Apostolok Cselekedeteiről írott könyv 2:42– nagy segítségünkre van a kérdés megválaszolásában.

A textusban négy fő alapelvet és gyakorlatot találunk, amelyek minden egyes helyi gyülekezet számára elengedhetetlenül fontosak ahhoz, hogy azok megfelelően működjön:

1. Az apostoli tanítás.
2. A közösség.
3. A kenyér megtörése, azaz az úrvacsora.
4. Az imádkozás.


Nézzük meg ezt a négy alapelvet, hogy hogyan működött mindez az első gyülekezetben, és vizsgáljuk meg a közösség fontosságát, a kenyér megtörésének jelentőségét, valamint az imádság elengedhetetlent voltat az egyház életében.


Dicsőség legyen Istennek Református Egyházunkért, gyülekezeteinkért, ahol tisza és a Biblián alapuló tanításokat kaphatunk.

2. A második alapelv a közösség.

Valaki egyszer egy felmérést készített a gyülekezetében. Megkérdezte a tagoktól: „Miért csatlakoztál éppen ehhez a gyülekezethez?” 93 százaléka a megkérdezettek azt mondta, hogy a lelkipásztor személye miatt. Utána azonban ezt kérdzte: „Ha a lelkész elhagyná a gyülekezetet, te is elmennél?” 93 százaléka a tagoknak azt válaszolta, hogy nem. Amikor megkérdezte, hogy miért nem mennének el, akkor a legtöbben ezt válaszolták: „Mert nagyon jó barátaim vannak ebben a gyülekezetben.”

Egy másik felmérébben 400 olyan embert kérdeztek meg, akik korábban elhagyták a gyülekezetüket. Megkérdeztek tőlük, hogy miért mentek el. A válaszadók 75 százaléka azt mondta: „Azért, mert úgy éreztem, senkit sem érdekelt igazán, hogy ott vagyok-e a templomban vagy sem.”

A kapcsolatok elengedhetetlenül fontosak egy gyülekezet életében. Ha minél több jó kapcsolata van valakinek egy közösségben, akkor több mint valósúlní, hogy az a személy nem fogja magát egyedül érezni és nem is fogja elhagyni azt a gyülekezetet.

A kapcsolatok mellett a szeretetvendég is nagyon fontos volt, mert az egy bensőséges, mély közösséget fejezett ki. A Krisztusban való életük a bensőséges kapcsolatokra épült, arra, hogy mindenben Isten dicsőítsék meg. Ezért írja Pál apostol: „Akár esztek tehát, akár isztok, bármi mást cselekedztek, mindent Isten dicsőségére tegyetek!” (1Kor.10:31)

3. Az Úrral és az egymással való közösség legfontosabb része volt a kenyér megtörése. Ez volt a harmadik alapelv, ami nagyban meghatározta az első gyülekezet életét. A kenyér megtörése, magát az Folytatás a 12. oldalon
Az ő tanítása nyomán és az ő hatására erősödött meg bennem a missziológia és a gyülekezeti evangélizáció iránti még mélyebb és elkötelezettebb érdeklődés – emeli ki Krasznai Csaba.

Sokat elárul Bütösi János vezetői személyiségéről, hogy több alkalommal is püspöknek választották. A misszió iránti buzgósága nemcsak nemek, hanem az egész egyház életére nagy hatással volt. – Erősen és elkötelezetteen szorgalmazta a reformátusság, illetve az egyház és a különböző felkezetekhez tartozó keresztyén kereszténységét. Nemcsak beszélt róla, hanem tett is azért, hogy ez megvalósuljon – értékelő értékeiért. – Krasznai Csaba.

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A Magyar Református Egyház 2009. május 22-én elfogadott alkotmánya lehetővé teszi, hogy a Magyar Református Egyházhoz csatlakozhassanak a Kárpát-medencén kívüli református közösségek is valamely Kárpát-medencei egyház vagy egyházkerület útján. Ezzel a lehetőséggel élve, a Dunamelléki Református Egyházkerületen keresztül kérte csatlakozását a Káylv Egyházkerület, az erről szóló határozatot egyhangúlag fogadták el a Zsinat tagjai, az alkotmány függetlét is eszerint módosították.

Az elmúlt évszázdaban úgy alakult, hogy független gyülekezetek mellett két magyar református egyháztest is működik az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban: az Amerikai Magyar Református Egyház – melynek képviselői tíz éve Debrecenben jelen voltak a Magyar Református Egyház megalakulásánál –, valamint a Krisztus Egyesült Egyházához tartozó, magyar gyülekezeteket tömörítő Kálvin Egyházkerület.

Utóbbi képviselői is rendszeres meghívottak voltak a Generális Konvent éves közgyűléseinek, a közös zsinatoknak és a Magyar Diaszpóra Tanács üléseihez kapcsolódó megbeszélések is lehetőséget nyújtottak a találkozásokra. Emellett a Kőrösi Csoma Sándor-programon keresztül hozzájuk érkező ösztöndíjas lelkészek is építették az egyházaink közötti élő kapcsolatot.

Krasznai Csaba püspök korábban már jelezte a Káylv Egyházkerület csatlakozási szándékát a Magyar Református Egyházhöz, majd idén tavasszal tájékoztatta a Generális Konvent elnökségét, hogy egyházkerületi tanácsuk egyhangú döntése nyomán a gyülekezetek presbitériumai elé terjesztették a csatlakozás kérdését, azok többsége pedig a csatlakozás mellett foglalt állást.
Összefoglalónk a 2019. májusi Magyar Református Egységnaphoz kötődő ünnepsésgorozatról (részlet a cikkből)

2019. május 20., hétfő


Fa, amely gyümölcsöt terem
Református egységünk háladódönnépe faültetéssel kezdődött a Magyar Református Egyház Zsinatának május 17-i ülése előtt. A püspökök és a Kárpát-medencei egyházmegyék képviselői közösen ültettek el egy tölgyfát a Debreceni Református Kollégium díszudvarán, ezzel is kifejezte összetartozásunkat. A Magyar Református Egyház jelképévé vált fa egyszerre utal gyökereivel a történelmi múltra, amelyből kinő a törzs, és a folyóvíz mellé ültetett fa biblikus képére, amely képes gyümölcsöket teremni. A Kárpát-medence minden református egyházmegyéjéből hoztak a zsinatra érkező tagok egy-egy cserépnyi földet, amelyet mindnyájan a kollégium udvarán elhelyezt tölgyfára szórtak – így vált a szimbolikus faültetés egységről szóló üzenete mélyebbé.

A Magyar Református Egyház Közös Zsinatának ülése 2019. május 17-én a Debreceni Református Nagytemplomban

Egyek lettünk újra

„Nagyon rég volt, amikor a gyermekek elhagyta édesanyját, de egy nap a gyermekek, akiből időközben felnőtt lett, hazatalált és az édesanya tárt karokkal, szerető szívvel fogadta” – kezdte köszöntőjét Krasznai Csaba, a Kálvin Egyházkerület püspöke. Mint mondta, az anyák már csak olyanok, hogy nem tagadhatják meg önmagukat és azt a szeretetet, ami gyermekeik iránt él bennük.

1921. októberében döntöttek úgy az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban élő magyar reformátusok, hogy önálló egyháztaként, az amerikai református és presbiteriánus egyházakkal karöltve végzik szolgálatukat. „Miért volt szükség arra, hogy az ottthon egyháztól elszakítsák a köteletet elszakítani a köteléket az otthoniakkal? Erre nincs válaszunk, de a múltat nem is lehet megváltoztatni. Ma azonban a Kálvin Egyházkerület hazatalált, ennek pecsét Isten és emberek előtt csatlakozásonk aláírása” – fogalmazott a püspök. A magyar közösség mellett a Kálvin Egyházkerület továbbra is a Krisztus Egyesült Egyházának része marad.

Krasznai Csaba azt vallja, ez a csatlakozás határokon és tengereken átívelő módon köti össze a reformátusokat: „Egyek lettünk veletek keresztné református testvéreink, akik a Kárpát-medencében vagy a világ bármely táján éltek és tagjai vagytok a Magyar Református Egyháznak. Köszönöm zsinatunk nevében azt az áldást és szeretetet, hogy visszafogadtátok gyermekeket.”

Farkas Zsuzsanna

Forrás:
http://reformatus.hu/mutat/16310/

„Hadd tartsunk veletek”
A debreceni Nagytemplomban tartott zsinati ülésen visszatekintettek a magyar református egység Folytatása a 16. oldalon

A május 17-i ünnepi zsinaton csatlakozott a Magyar Református Egyházhoz az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban működő Krisztus Egyesült Egyházhoz tartozó, magyar gyülekezeteket tömörítő Kálvin Egyházkörelet. „Egyek lettünk veletek, keresztyén református testvéreink, akik a Kárpát-medencében vagy a világ bármely táján éltek és tagjai vagytok a Magyar Református Egyháznak. Köszönöm zsinatunk nevében azt az áldást és szeretetet, hogy visszafogadtátok gyermeket” – fogalmazott az erről szóló egyhangú döntés után püspökük, Krasznai Csaba. Az ülésen módosították a csatlakozás érdekében a Magyar Református Egyház alkotmányát, a Dunamelléki Református Egyházkörelet pedig átengedett néhány képviselői helyet a különleges alkalmakkor összehívott közös zsinatban.

Több meghívott vendég is köszöntötte az ünnepi tanácskozás résztvevőit, például Gulyás Gergely miniszter és Papp László debreceni polgármester. Áder János köztársasági elnök levélben üdvözölte az egybegyűlteket. Beszédében kiemelte, hogy nem felejthetők el azok, akik már nem lehetnek közöttünk, de sokat tettek az egység kimondásáért, és példájukkal másokat is erre bátorítottak. Papp László polgármester arról beszélt, hogy Debrecen történél a 16. század óta egyé vált a református történelmével, a közös múlt pedig a jelenben és a jövőben is kötelező.

„Az elmúlt tíz év bebizonyította, hogy a közösség meg tudja sokszorosra erejét és olyan folyamatok indulhatnak el, melyekre korábban nem, vagy csak alig volt lehetőség” – nyilatkozta Varga Mihály miniszterelnökhelyettes. Najla Kassab, a Református Egyházak Vilákgörgösségének elnöke köszöntöjében arra figyelmeztetett, hogy a közösségünk ereje azokban a dialógusokban van, amelyek a régiókban történnek. Krasznai Csaba, a Kálvin Egyházkörelet püspöke az újraegyesülés történelmi jelentőségét emelte ki. Zán Fábián Sándor, a Kárpátaljai Református Egyház püspöke pedig azért is köszöntetett mondott, hogy a szombati szabadidő ünnepi istentisztelet gyűjtésének a nagyobbnyi Irgalmas Samaritánus Református Gyermekethon lehet a kedvezményezettje.

Forrás:
https://www.parokia.hu/v/egyek-lettunk/

Calvin Synod Homeland and Overseas Mission

Mission Coordinator:
Rt. Rev. Stefan Istvan Torok, Auxiliary Bishop
94 N. James Street, Woodbridge, NJ 07095-2919
Tel: 732-634-1751

USA
Support the Bethlen Communities Heritage Center and Museum and Archives, Ligonier, PA

TRANSYLVANIA
1. The Szekely Miko Reformed High School in Sepsiszentgyorgy is asking financial support for their school.
2. The Backarmadarasi Kis Gergely Reformed High School in Szekelyudvarhely, Transylvania is asking financial support for their school.
3. Fund Reformed School and help poor people in Transylvania Reformed Assistance Committee (TRAC)
4. School Fund in Kolozsvár, Transylvania. The School Fund is coordinated by Ms. Gabriella Nadas.
6. Support the Roof Fund in Szekelyudvarhely as requested by Zsolt Tokes, principal of the school.
7. The Hungarian Reformed Church of Nagykároly-Kertváros (Carei) in Transylvania is asking for donations for their construction project of a new church building and parsonage. Further information is available at the following website: http://kertvaros.freewb.hu

UKRAINE
1. Support the Good Samaritan Orphanage and School in Nagydobrony in their mission work.
2. Support the food pantry named “Crumbs for Lazarus” to feed the hungry in Csap as requested by Rev. Janos Balogh.
3. Center for children's Evangelism Center burned in Carpatho-Ukraine, which provided spiritual growth for 100s of children. The BeregCamp workers voluntarily offer their services. The request is made to us to help the rebuilding of this center. Donations may be sent to our Synod Treasurer for this cause.

Please send donations to the Calvin Synod Treasurer. Kérjük, hogy adományait a zsinati pénztároshoz küldjék:

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Adományainkkal segítsük a Bethlen Otthon Múzeum és Irratár fenntartását.

ERDÉLY
2. Az Erdélyi Iskola Alap megsegítésére folyamatos segítséget kér Nádas Gabriella az Iskola Alap koordinátora.
3. A Székelyudvarhelyi kollégium tető fedésére segítséget kér Tőkés Zsolt, igazgató.

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Bethlen Communities
125 Kalassay Drive, Ligonier, PA ● info@bethlen.com ● 724-238-2235