

It is quite impressive, you are THE only church in the whole town of Jerico! You have the tallest building in Jerico!! Yes, the grain elevator is a taller structure, but that does not count. At one time when this sanctuary was filled with worshipers Jerico had no other place that consistently gathered such a large assembly of people!!! But that is not what we are celebrating today!

Did you ever ask yourself why the founders named this town "Jerico"? Biblically Jericho was an idolatrous Canaanite city. They certainly did not seek to emulate that sordid past. Nor did your forefathers when the church was moved to this location and changed its name to Jerico Lutheran Church.

Now Jerico's members were sinners to be sure, just as you are today. And while we can all confess breaking the first commandment and committing the sin of idolatry often in many different ways, yet the difference would be that repentant idolaters have always made up this congregation. No doubt the naming had more to do with the conquest of Jericho, an enemy of God and His people, not leaving one stone upon another, not leaving one living inhabitant alive after its defeat – except the prostitute Rahab and her family. Remember she helped the spies prior to Jericho's defeat.

Surely the United States Military Academy, West Point, does not study the battle plans of God's great general Joshua as a valid tactic to be used by its officers. The parading around a city with the Ark of the Covenant once a day for six days

and then seven times on the seventh day and making a great collective shout at the long blast of the ram horns would not, without God's command, succeed today as it did then. Can you imagine the defenders of the city on the walls increasingly mocking the people of God as they fulfilled the daily orders of Joshua? Very likely being tempted to doubt the command of God, they nevertheless by God's grace remained steadfast according to the Word of the Lord, as foolish as it may appear to the world and, as promised, the walls came tumbling down.

God's ways are not our ways. As God's people we consider His Word as our great heritage defeating all our enemies through His Son, Yeshua, Jesus, the Word of God made flesh. One of His more notable ancestors was the Jericho survivor - Rahab. Sin, death and hell were all defeated everlastingly for us by the holy life, atoning suffering and death and victorious resurrection of Christ Jesus. This is what we are blessed to celebrate today marking Jericho's 150th anniversary. Our sinful reason would suggest that the way we defeat these spiritual enemies is by our own good works and actions, but all such battle plans fail miserably, leading only to hell. Rather it is the work of God's own Son alone which saves us. Through faith in Him we are freely forgiven and saved.

Let us sing of this great heritage known and trusted by God's people throughout the millennia and by God's grace still known and trusted by you today by turning to Hymn #583. Please rise to sing.