

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

“...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken.” — John 10:35



*Preach you the Word and plant  
it home. And never faint;  
the Harvest-Lord Who gave  
the sower seed to sow  
Will watch and tend  
His planted Word.*

WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT 2000 #781:5

# Restarting of School— a Wonderful Opportunity!

Pastor Paul Krause • Markesan, Wisconsin

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*“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.” 2 Peter 1:12-15*

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One of the most difficult and challenging things with the restarting of school every fall is what has been called the “summer slide.” During the school year students receive regular reminders combined with the introduction of new material. This helps to keep the material fresh in their memories.

But then comes summertime when those daily reminders are inclined to turn into a three-month moratorium. And it is going to happen that many things have been forgotten.

So it is that during those first days back at school much time is spent reviewing what was taught at the end of the previous school year.

And “what is forgotten” is not limited to the 3 R’s, to history dates, or to scientific formulas. Nor is it only the ‘summer slide’ which is the problem.

As the Apostle Peter wrote his second epistle, he knew that his readers were already well “*established in the present truth*” (1:12). Those believers to whom he was writing had been well instructed in “*these things*” (1:12)—namely, the truths concerning salvation. They had “*obtained like precious faith...by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (1:1). They had come to know “*God and Jesus our Lord*” (1:2) and had been given His “*exceeding great and precious promises*” (1:4).

But Peter knew how easy it would be to forget what they had learned. And so he took it upon himself to “*remind [them] always of these things*” (1:12). It

didn't satisfy him how well they already knew the truth or how well they had been established in that truth! Knowing that the time of his death was soon to come, Peter was going to be "*careful to ensure that [they] always have a reminder of these things*" (1:15).

Each one of us can think of a point in life when Satan tempted us to think that we knew all there was to know—or at least all WE needed to know concerning the truths of Scripture. And how often don't we find that confirmands appear to view their confirmation as a graduation from the Bible? Or how often haven't we found new converts wavering from their regular involvement in Sunday worship and Bible classes?

So it is that we all need what Peter committed himself to leaving behind: a "*reminder of these things after my decease*" (1:15).

Yes, with the beginning of a new school year, our thoughts turn to the Christian education of our children. It is a great opportunity to take to heart the reminder from Peter that no matter how much is already known, we do well to "*abide in [Jesus'] word*" (John 8:31).

Parents and grandparents, take every opportunity to set God's Word before the eyes of the next generation! Whenever possible, make use of and get involved with the Bible education program offered by your church so that the next generation grows up "*in the training and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4).

And all this is for us too—for those who are beyond the years of learning in the classroom. Yes, we may be "*established in the present truth*" (1:12) of God's Word, but let us also take to heart the admonition of our fellow forgetter—Peter—and be reminded regularly so that we may be "*stirred up*" (1:13) in our faith and Christian life.

Let us together thank the Lord for Christian education, for every opportunity for instruction in His Word—that Word through which "*an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (1:11)!

**Each one of us can think of a point in life when Satan tempted us to think that we knew all there was to know—or at least all WE needed to know concerning the truths of Scripture.**



PASTOR GULLERUD WAS ASKED TO SHARE WITH OUR READERS SOME “CONVENTION MUSINGS.” IN THIS ARTICLE HE NICELY CAPTURES THE THRUST OF THE 31ST CONVENTION OF THE CLC (JUNE 2014). THIS ISSUE ALSO CONTAINS ONE OF THE CHAPLAIN’S DEVOTIONS AS WELL AS AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF THE SECOND CONVENTION ESSAY.

# Convention Rain Showers

Pastor Mark Gullerud • Bowdle, South Dakota

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*“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”*

I Corinthians 3:6-8

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**D**uring Convention week (June 16-19, 2014) at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis., among the usual concerns of the delegates are the weather conditions, since this part of the Midwest can be known for being hot and humid in the summertime.

With the Lord in complete control of both the climate and the weather, the week was blessed with favorable conditions. While there were some rain showers, they were not enough to hamper the Convention.

Not only did the God of heaven and earth cause rain to descend outdoors, but He also blessed convention-goers with rain showers indoors. No, there weren’t any leaky roofs! The rain showers were of a spiritual nature, coming in the form of the proclamation of the precious Word of God.

In keeping with the Lord’s illustration, *“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it”* (Isaiah 55:10-11), there was the thundering of the law of God which convicts us of our sinful and lost condition, and there was the pleasing sound of the gospel of Christ which soothes and comforts our troubled souls.

The chaplain, Pastor Mark Bernthal (Peace Thru Christ, Middleton, Wis.), watered the hearers’ hearts and souls on the basis of the powerful resurrection chapter of I Corinthians 15. His messages bolstered,

uplifted, and renewed the human spirit, reminding the audience that the fundamental Christian teaching of Christ's bodily resurrection means that we are justified before God, that sin, death, and hell have been defeated, and that we have an endless hope of a glorious bodily resurrection with our Lord unto life everlasting. May God help us to hold fast to the resurrection truths and daily rejoice in them!

The two essays carried out the convention theme that "God our Savior Desires All Men to be Saved!" (1 Timothy 2:3-4) Pastor Paul Krause (Faith Lutheran, Markesan, Wis.) showered the convention assembly with the message of Jesus being the One Mediator of that saving Truth. Jesus is the only One through whom we sinners can be at peace with God, have access to the throne of God in prayer, and gain entrance into heaven, because He alone is our Savior and our Advocate.

The second essay delivered by Pastor Michael Gurath (Holy Cross Lutheran, Phoenix, Ariz.) set forth the Bible truth of Christians being appointed to proclaim that saving Truth. We have been called to serve as the "rain clouds" of the gospel. We should never be discouraged as Christ's messengers no matter what the obstacles may be. Neither should we feel ill-equipped for this mission of sharing God's truths because by His grace we have been given His saving truths and the spirit of love for our neighbor.

The gospel rain clouds moved over to Messiah Lutheran Church of Eau Claire where Pastor Neal Radichel (Luther Memorial Church, Fond du Lac, Wis.) proclaimed God's Word at the Convention communion service. The message focused on fairness. People of the world don't think God is fair when they don't receive what they want—such as when they don't receive rain during drought conditions or receive too much rain, causing flooding conditions. We might deduce that God isn't fair when He doesn't punish us according to what we deserve. Rather He punished His Son Jesus in our stead in order to bless us with His forgiveness and salvation. In regard to fairness or justice we should note that when God offered up His Son on the altar of the cross to take away the sins of the world, He was carrying out and satisfying the divine justice of His holy Law.

On the final day of the Convention, Professor John Reim of Immanuel Lutheran College spoke in loving memory of called servants of the Word who went to their eternal reward in the past biennium after having faithfully served in the preaching and/or teaching ministry. Among those who had planted the seed of the Word and watered

precious souls with the gospel were Christian Day School teachers Mrs. Adelgunde Schaller and Helen Friedrichs, Pastor/Professor Roland A. Gurgel, Pastor Paul Larsen, Professor James Pelzl, and Pastor/Professor Patrick Udo of the Nigerian Church of the Lutheran Confession.

*“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them’”* (Revelation 14:13).

*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”* (Isaiah 52:7)



## CONVENTION DEVOTION

# The Resurrection Difference

Pastor Mark Bernthal • Chaplain

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*“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”* 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

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## **In Christ Jesus, dear fellow-redeemed:**

Are you living for a “hopeless end” or for an “endless hope”?

The difference is staggering.

Some of the believers in Corinth were influenced by the Greek philosophers and teachers of their day and were doubting or at least questioning the bodily resurrection of the dead and therefore also the resurrection of Jesus. In this section of chapter fifteen of First Corinthians Paul reveals:

### **The Resurrection Difference**

- 1. Without Christ’s resurrection, we face a hopeless end!**
- 2. With Christ’s resurrection, we have an endless hope!**

A denial of a general resurrection also denies that Christ rose. If no flesh rises from the dead, then Easter didn't happen either. Those members in Corinth who said they believed in Jesus' resurrection but did not believe in the resurrection of the dead can't be right. Faith in the resurrection of Christ actually includes faith in the bodily resurrection of all the dead. The two must go hand in hand.

In our text Paul is stating his thesis: **If Christ is risen, then we cannot deny the possibility and the reality of the resurrection of the dead.** Also in our text Paul draws some logical conclusions to show how absurd and eternally damaging it is to reject the reality of a physical resurrection.

Paul is appealing to the Greek's logical mind. He says that the consequence of denying a resurrection of the dead is that Christ then has not been raised. Therefore, everything that we teach—the whole gospel message—would be useless, vain, empty. Denying the doctrine of man's resurrection logically leads to denying the fundamental doctrine of Christ's resurrection. When that doctrine is lost, the entire message of salvation is lost. Deny one doctrine of Scripture, and you will, if you follow it out, deny other doctrines as well, for **THE SCRIPTURES CANNOT BE BROKEN.** God's Word is not just separate teachings that don't affect one another, but it is a whole body of truth.

Following Paul's logical line of thinking means that when he proclaimed that Christ did rise from the dead, he must have been lying, for if nobody rises from the dead, then Christ didn't rise either. Then the Easter story is only a fairy tale of enormous proportions that has deceived countless people around the world for almost 2,000 years; then too, Paul's seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus was only a hallucination.

In fact, Paul goes on to state that if Christ didn't rise, then people who believe in Him have an empty, useless faith. Trusting in a Messiah who did not conquer sin, death and the devil would leave us no better off spiritually than those who do not believe in a hereafter or in a god.

Paul had written to the Romans that Christ **WAS RAISED FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION.** If Christ was not raised, then we have not been justified. If we haven't been declared righteous, our sins haven't been forgiven, and we are still in our sins. That would be our hopeless end, our many sins still condemning us to eternal damnation and separation from God.

Also for those who have fallen asleep in Christ, who died confidently believing in Jesus' resurrection—such as longtime CLC members Roland

Gurgel, Paul Larsen, James Pelzl, Ruth Reim, Adelgunde Schaller, Ruth Sydow, Myrtle Grams, Patrick Udo, Laurie Marzofka, and many, many more have perished eternally if Christ had not risen—theirs too would be a hopeless end without a resurrection to eternal life.

Paul concludes the first part of his thesis with this final implication for our present life: **IF IN THIS LIFE ONLY WE HAVE HOPE IN CHRIST, WE ARE OF ALL MEN THE MOST PITIABLE.** If believing in Christ has value only for this present earthly life, then we Christians are fools who have made a very tragic mistake and should be pitied above all others. Without the resurrection, Christianity is pointless. Then all of our convention work this week is worthless, foolish, pointless. Then all who took vacation time to come and serve our Lord, who made sacrifices for His kingdom, who have been led to believe that the sufferings of this present life are not worth comparing to the bliss and glory of the hereafter—are really to be pitied and are hopeless.

Then our words of faith that we proclaim at the close of the Apostle's Creed, "**I believe...in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting,**" are not true but are a bunch of lies. Our words from the Nicene Creed would then be nonsense, "**I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.**" We would be looking and hoping for something that would never come to pass. The Christian life is not worth living if the hope and promise of the resurrection is not true.

But Paul's thesis consists of two points. The second point makes the big difference. We read: "**BUT NOW CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND HAS BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP.**" In effect, Paul is saying, "Away with all doubt, unbelief and hopeless endings—Jesus Christ rose from the dead!" Easter is a fact that cannot be denied. The resurrection of Christ is a reality upon which we can rest our faith for an endless hope.

Paul says that Christ is the "firstfruits" of those who have fallen asleep in Him. In the Old Testament the firstfruits were the first sheaf of grain or the first basket of wheat or bushel of corn or grapes that were offered to the Lord as a thankoffering to show that all the harvest was His and from Him and would be dedicated to His glory. The firstfruits also were an indication that the harvest of the rest of the crop was just beginning. The rest of the grain, wheat, corn, and grapes would follow.

What a perfect picture of our Savior's resurrection! Because His tomb was empty, so shall ours be. Because He rose from the dead, so shall we rise. Because He entered into eternal glory, so shall we follow Him into

eternal glory.

Christ is the first in the harvest of those who have fallen asleep. That means that the bodies of all who have died in Christ will be resurrected to everlasting life and be reunited with their souls to live forever in endless joy. Theirs and ours is not a hopeless end, but an endless hope!

In reality the whole New Testament era is the Easter season. It began with the resurrection of the Redeemer and it will end with the resurrection of all the redeemed. So we live between two Easters—Christ's resurrection some 2,000 years ago and our own resurrection on the Last Day.

What difference does the resurrection of Jesus make in your life and in mine?

**Without Christ's resurrection, we face a hopeless end—  
but  
with Christ's resurrection, we have an endless hope!  
Amen.**



Pastor Mark Bernthal (Middleton, Wis.), with his sons Pastor Luke Bernthal (Valentine, Nebr.) and Christian Day School teacher Neil Bernthal (Winter Haven, Fla.)

THEME OF THE 31ST CONVENTION OF THE CLC, JUNE 16-19, 2014

## “God Our Savior Desires All Men to be Saved!”

[The first of two Convention essays appeared last month; it was titled “Jesus is the One Mediator of that Truth.” This second essay is by Pastor Michael Gurath, Phoenix, Arizona, and is abbreviated by the editor.]

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*“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” (1 TIMOTHY 2:3-7)*

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## “We are Appointed to Proclaim that Truth!”

I have always pictured Paul as a superhero kind of missionary. No shipwreck, snakebite, or near-death by stoning would deter him on his way. Imprisonments could not silence the message which he proclaimed. Who could hope to follow in those footsteps?

### APPOINTED? ME?

Discouragement and defeat dominate us when our eyes are not fixed on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. This Jesus whom we proclaim remains faithful despite our flaws and our faithlessness. Even colleagues and fellow Christians may fail us, but our Appointer never has and never will. The Appointer’s promises are as sure now as the day they were given.

It’s easy to grow more cynical as we grow older. We find ourselves wringing our hands, wondering what this world is coming to, and joining in the long lines of those who murmur about the opposition to the truth. We have been warned, however. This comes as no surprise because our Lord who is already in the future has informed us that people will suppress the truth (see Romans 1:18-20).

It’s popular and even stylish in our society to suppress the truth. Absolute truth is viewed as antiquated closed-mindedness. It is supposed that we are

at the apex of all human history with more access than ever before to all kinds of information, and yet we cannot know anything to be certainly true.

What else could this be but the sinfulness of man on display? This is the foolishness of iniquity that would keep many in the darkness of unbelief. At the heart of the issue is not suppression of a set of doctrines. It is not a rejection of moral practices. It is not an aversion to statements of faith. The root cause is rejection of a Person, Jesus the Christ.

The Christ that we proclaim is One who comes in and rearranges a person's heart, making it His own dwelling place, thereby bringing life where there was only death. This won't happen, however, if we remain silent.

Appointed to proclaim this truth? Me? "Surely someone else is better equipped. I'm not ready and I'm not able." We are not immune to experiencing the inner turmoil that Isaiah relates by inspiration of the Spirit. *"And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!'"* (Isaiah 6:5)

An angel took a coal from upon the altar and touched Isaiah's lips, thereby forgiving him and making him clean. The results were immediate. God had a job for someone to go and proclaim His Word to a people that might never listen; nevertheless, this was His appointment. There was no more hesitation on Isaiah's part. Now in the peace of forgiveness his spirit was steadfast and ready. *"And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me'"* (Isaiah 6:8).

### TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

Apart from the question of how we are appointed is the matter of to whom shall we go and proclaim this truth. In His high priestly prayer (see John chapter 17), Jesus sends each of us just as He was sent.

He has given us the two components necessary for our mission. We are given the truth and love for our neighbor. We are all appointed to proclaim this truth in settings that we'd never choose and to people with whom we have little or nothing in common.

I recall a seminary professor in a candid moment explaining how he had never pictured himself serving a congregation in a heavily populated, urban setting. He had always had an affinity for the country and could relate to those who lived the rural lifestyle. Nonetheless, as he planned his future, it was the Lord who ordered his steps.

The apostle Paul could identify with the reality of being sent to a people and place "out of his wheelhouse." Proclaiming the truth among the Gentiles would be an uphill battle, one for which a superior Pharisee was

not suited, at least not by human estimation.

*“And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles...”* (Galatians 1:14-16a, ESV).

One of the concerns raised regarding our foreign mission work—especially in a place like Kenya where a reported eighty percent of the population professes the Christian faith—is that our time and effort would be better spent where there is little Christian presence. In many cases statistics don’t tell the entire story. In Kenya it doesn’t take long to discover that the Christ who is professed is not the Christ who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. We are appointed to proclaim God’s truth to the person who has never heard the name of Jesus as well as to the one who has been introduced to a fictional Jesus.

This is a daunting task if we are preoccupied with our limitations and shortcomings. God is telling us to *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”* not for the purpose of feeling exhausted but for the purpose of feeling exhilarated. He is the Partner in this mission for both missionary goers and missionary senders. Take heart, the Appointer is the One who has promised to be *“with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

### THE GREATEST WORK ON EARTH

Jesus knew very well that He was sending the majority of His apostles to certain death. The fact that their Appointer remained with them was the reason they died so well. It was the reason why many wondered at them while they were being killed. It was the reason why they could sing to the very end of their lives and while we continue to proclaim this truth to the very end of ours. The one who holds all authority in heaven and on Earth is the Appointer who has forgiven, called, enabled, and strengthened us.

Christ is the Truth that was wrongly put on trial. The Truth committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth, yet He was killed. In spite of all this, the Truth lives! The darkness could not comprehend Him and neither could it suppress Him. We no longer have reason to wring our hands in despair, because the Truth lives! *“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest”* (Luke 10:2).

This truly is the greatest work on Earth for teacher, layman, and pastor





Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wis., hosted the Convention communion service.

alike. The Word of the Lord continues to increase and prevail mightily.

“Two case studies are instructive. In 1900, Christians comprised 9 percent of the African population and were outnumbered by Muslims four to one. Today, Christians comprise 44 percent of the population, and in the 1960s passed Muslims in number. This explosive growth is now beginning in China. Christianity is not only growing among the peasantry, but also among the social and cultural establishment, including the Communist party. At the current rate of growth, within thirty years Christians will constitute 30 percent of the Chinese population of 1.5 billion” (Philip Jenkins, *The Coming of Global Christianity*, p. 56)

Martin Luther was once approached by a man who enthusiastically announced that he had recently become a Christian. He asked Luther, “What should I do now?”—as if to say, should he become a minister or perhaps a traveling evangelist or a monk. Luther asked him, “What is your work now?” “I’m a shoe maker.” Much to the cobbler’s surprise, Luther replied, “Then make a good shoe, and sell it at a fair price.” Opportunity to proclaim God’s truth arises while we faithfully fulfill our vocations in a God-glorifying manner.

It has been said that in seeking to proclaim God’s truth it “might mean that we go to the same Starbucks to form relationships, work out without an i-Pod to engage those around us, and play in the front yard rather than the back in order to be available for the neighbors.” Yes, in all circumstances we are appointed to proclaim that truth.

Forgiven, called, equipped, and loved—even as the Son is loved by the Father—we proclaim this precious truth near and far.

# Shooting Our Arrows

Pastor David Fuerstenau · Ketchikan, Alaska

**T**hose who lived during the really cold war might recall that there was a red phone in the White House connected directly to one in the Kremlin.

You might also have heard someone compare the red phone scenario to prayer. Every Christian has a direct hot line to heaven and can beseech, thank, and praise God whenever and whatever the situation.

But has prayer ever been likened to shooting arrows? Consider the perplexing case of King Jehoash of Israel—a man who misplayed his opportunities. Though Holy Scripture describes him as a king who “*did evil in the sight of the LORD*” (2 Kings 13:11), yet Jehoash recognized Elisha as God’s prophet and Israel’s spiritual father. When Elisha lay dying, the king came to him weeping and quoted the very words Elisha had uttered when God took Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind: “*O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!*” (v. 14).

In response Elisha instructed the king to take a bow and shoot an arrow out the east window of the room. Therein Elisha announced the Lord’s deliverance of Israel from Syria and predicted Jehoash’s victory at Aphek (13:17). Elisha then instructed Jehoash to take further arrows and strike the ground with them.

This is where it turns disappointing. Perhaps the king became timid or tired. Perhaps he was struck with discouragement and loss of enthusiasm when he realized he would have to actively fight against the Syrian enemy. For whatever reason, Jehoash struck the ground with his arrows only three times when he should have doubled the number of strikes at the very least. By not doing so he forfeited a complete and total victory.

We all have our needs and enemies. But God has given us plenty of arrows in our quivers. There is first and foremost the arrow shot toward heaven. And what an arrow it is – ‘the Christ alone arrow.’ It is actually shot by God Himself who through His Son promises and gives overall victory: the complete forgiveness of all sin, the perfect righteousness that justifies and avails, resurrection life, and eternal

glory. These are the blessings that are given completely by heavenly grace and without our active participation in achieving them.

But on Earth we still have our great enemies, and arrows enough.

We pray God for help and victory over our Old Adam. God answers with encouragement and strength, but not without our participation in the battle. We remember the dictum of Dr. Martin Luther: “God does not work in us without us.” Therefore, daily victory over Mr. Old Adam is achieved only through struggle—we ourselves drowning him with contrition and repentance.

We beseech God for victory over the world. God surely answers prayer, but again we are involved, for John wrote that *“This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith”* (1 John 5:4). Jesus overcame the world by His suffering and death. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior shares in that victory. Our faith connects us to Jesus, and obedience follows faith as an exercise of it. Our prayer is answered when through the Spirit we recognize that we *“are not of this world”* (John 17:16) and when we flee temptation. As Joseph said, *“How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”* (Genesis 39:9)

We implore God for victory over the devil. Jesus has already defeated him yet points us to battle. In our personal struggle we have great weapons to be used against the wiles of the evil one. Paul urged us to put on the whole armor of God and use it: the waist belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the combat boots of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (see Ephesians 6:10-17).

We also have many needs. Far too often *“you do not have because you do not ask”* (James 4:2). Are there arrows left unshot? Are we in need of the daily basics? God answers and provides, but He also points to our involvement. *“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat”* (2 Thessalonians 3:10). We might pray for success in evangelism and the spread of the gospel. God is ready to answer and directs us, *“Go therefore and make disciples...”* (Matthew 28:19); *“Do the work of an evangelist”* (2 Timothy 4:5).

Native American shamans used ‘prayer sticks’ in their quest to invoke healing and protecting spirits. Those born of God by the Holy Spirit have prayer arrows. The apostle exhorts Christians to *“pray without ceasing!”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

The experience of King Jehoshaphat also teaches us to use those arrows faithfully and repeatedly—every one of them.

# GOD'S OBSCURE SAINTS

(Eighth in a Series)

This edifying series of chapel talks comes from the archives of our Spokesman Assistant Editor, Prof. Em. Paul R. Koch • Eau Claire, Wis.

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*“The Elder, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth: Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, because they went forth for His name’s sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth. I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true. I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.” (III John)*

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## **Fellow saints, called in Christ Jesus to be sanctified and glorified:**

Today we are skipping ahead to a late chapter in God’s Book, to the third epistle of John the Evangelist. We have met a number of obscure saints in our travels and have learned that many New Testament books were written to obscure saints.

Today’s thoughts are going to be based on an entire Epistle of the New Testament, so short it could be memorized in an hour or two. Who is the obscure saint so highly thought of that God caused the Apostle John

to address him personally with this inspired message? His name is Gaius: “*To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth,*” and the letter is called the Third Epistle of John.

As we read the sacred text, we remind ourselves to ask pertinent questions, and then search for the answers—so that the Word may become profitable to us, as our Lord intends. What is the specific message here? Why is it important to know? What area of my Christian life is my Lord concerned about in these words—“*I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*”

Let me repeat that: “*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*” Among all the joys of being an apostle and pastor and evangelist, John says that up at the top of the list is that Gaius and others had found their hearts and lives to be grounded in the Truth, which is Jesus and Jesus’ Word. That means they were not only children of God but were children of God who were orthodox both in word and deed.

Gaius is praised for being faithful to the Truth and for having a life-style that was faith-oriented. This pleased John, and it pleased Jesus. God’s children are inner motivated to tell God that they love Him; they are pulled to warmly embrace God in their hearts, to humbly adore Him, and to serve Him. We call it Christian sanctification.

How, then, did this obscure saint put into practice his up-welling desire to bring to God his heart’s love and devotion?

We can deduce much from what John had heard about Gaius: “*You are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We therefore ought to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.*” (NIV)

Gaius had opened his home and probably his bank account to serve traveling evangelists. They in turn reported how kindly Gaius has treated them, and now John wanted Gaius to hear the good impression he had made and how much it had meant to those missionaries to have him for a friend.

Good old Gaius! Though not a clergyman and probably not gifted with facile speech but with personality traits on the quiet side, he was like many other obscure saints. God made him a Christian gentleman with a soft heart, so generous that he blossomed when someone needed his help. He was full of the warmth of love for his brethren. Gaius supported the spokesmen of God with his prayers and his dollars and his home. We are blessed with such saints in our congregations, and we know many of them by name.

The rest of the letter goes quickly, and we skip the two verses where John laments another fellow who was the opposite of our friend Gaius.

Then comes the short admonition: “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good” —then comes testimony about another obscure saint who was actively living his religion; then a personal comment, “I hope to see you shortly and we shall speak face to face”; and then the letter closes with, “Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.”

How comforting to know that Christians scattered across the miles and in foreign countries find one another! Away from home, our missionaries discover that God’s children open their homes to their brothers and sisters. Love like that is precious; it deserves to be cultivated and nurtured. We understand this, for it is God who opens hearts with His love and keeps them open to love one another.

Let us join in prayer: “Lord Jesus, You who have so deeply and greatly loved us, opening to us Your home and making it our home, please give us an ever-growing desire to serve one another with such love; give us grace to become stronger and more consistent in exercising the love that really counts unto eternity. To Your glory, as always! Amen.”

We close these moments of devotion with Hymn 540 (TLH).

**How comforting to know that Christians scattered across the miles and in foreign countries find one another! Away from home, our missionaries discover that God’s children open their homes to their brothers and sisters. Love like that is precious; it deserves to be cultivated and nurtured.**



“...Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (9:27-28).

## Worship Him, All You People

Pastor Emeritus Daniel Fleischer • Oakdale, Minnesota

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“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: ‘What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” Hebrews 2:1-9

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Chapter two of Hebrews begins with the word “*Therefore*,” which tells us that what follows is based on what came before. What came before is found in the first chapter which speaks of the superiority of the Lord Jesus over “*the prophets*” (Hebrews 1:1) who bore witness of Him in the Old Testament.

Furthermore, Jesus is also clearly “*better than the angels*” (1:4), who as created beings worshiped the Lord Jesus, who “*obtained a more excellent name than they*” (1:4). That more excellent name was inherited and was used by the Father when He called Jesus by a name that does not define the angels. At His baptism as well as on the Mount of Transfiguration the Father said of Jesus, “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, ‘Hear Him!’*” (Matthew 3:17, 17:5)

The writer of Hebrews is not denigrating the angels nor diminishing the word “*spoken through angels*” (2:2) by whose direction the law was received (Acts 7:53). They served the Lord, so their testimony was valid, steadfast,

and came to pass (“...every transgression and disobedience received a just reward...” Hebrews 2:2).

Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). That designation itself sets Him apart from the angels. His word is of such importance that we cannot escape the judgment to come “if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord...” (2:3). The law is glorious, but the gospel is more glorious (2 Corinthians 3:9-11). “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard [the word of salvation], lest we drift away” (2:1).

The apostles and prophets who heard Jesus’ words witnessed to the truth of Jesus, God confirming the truth “through signs and wonders, with various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit...” (2:4). The Evangelist Mark tells us that those who had heard the Lord Jesus and were sent by Him to proclaim the gospel went, “the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (16:20).

The Pentecost experience is an outstanding example of what Mark wrote as a penman of the Holy Spirit. Note that the apostles did not speak the word of angels but the word of One greater than the angels—Jesus, the Son of God!

Therefore, give heed to the things that you have heard, and continue to listen as the Word of God is spoken to you by faithful witnesses of the Lord Jesus. The words of Jesus are spirit and they are life (John 6:63). What faithful witnesses bring in the stead and by the command of the Lord Jesus “are as valid and certain as if Christ, our dear Lord dealt with us Himself” (Ministry of the Keys, Luther’s *Small Catechism*).

There is a danger that we who through the gospel have enjoyed such great salvation—for it is ours even now—can be pulled away by doubt, temptation, and persecutions that grow increasingly harsh. But such doubt will disappear as we remember that the Word of salvation is spoken to us by the very Son of God, who understands our every weakness and who was tempted in every fashion as we are, though He was without sin. He knows the strength of our enemy. Why would anyone who recognizes the power of sin on the one hand—and on the other, the embracing love of Christ, neglect the Word which is “the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16)?

The writer to the Hebrews tells us of another manifestation of Christ’s superiority to the angels. He quotes Psalm 8 which reminds us of the humiliation of Jesus in which He was made lower than the angels (Psalm

8:5, Hebrews 2:7). In fact, the angels ministered to Him in the Garden! We know from Scripture that Jesus bore this humiliation for us that He might elevate us to sons and daughters of the Father, having reconciled us to Him by His atonement. Even in His humiliation, Jesus accomplished more for us than did the angels!

Thereafter He was crowned with glory and honor and was set over the works of God, having all things made subject to Him (Psalm 8:6, Hebrews 2:7-9). He was exalted and now exercises authority at the right hand of God the Father, co-equal with the Father. This is not an authority given to or belonging to the angels.

The words of Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 are comfort and reassurance for us in every trial and affliction. It does not yet appear how things are, but it shall be made manifest. In Christ we are victorious, and as we are members of His body by faith in Him, all things are made subject to us. What is Christ's is ours, ready to be revealed in the judgment!

Therefore, honor the Lord Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords, mightier and more glorious than all things in heaven and on Earth.

Worship Him whom even the angels worship! Nothing or no one in heaven or on Earth is greater than He—our God!



A previous installment in this study called attention to the fact that the word “better” is a key word in this epistle to the Hebrews; a listing of twelve different “better” passages was given. Another key thrust found in Hebrews are “lest” passages which warn against backsliding; the first of such passages is found in this month’s study. A listing follows:

1. *“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away” (2:1).*
2. *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (3:12).*
3. *“But exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (3:13).*
4. *“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it” (4:1).*
5. *“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience” (4:11).*
6. *“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that [lest—KJV] what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather healed” (12:12-13).*
7. *“Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God” (12:15).*
8. *“Lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled” (12:15).*
9. *“Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright” (12:16).*

These warnings show that the Christian life is real and it is serious; yet at the same time our Hebrews studies underscore that the life in Christ is the better life, yes, the best.

*"...The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me." (John 10:25)*

## *"...You give them something to eat"*

Pastor Wayne Eichstadt • Mankato, Minnesota

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*"When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.' But Jesus said to them, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.' And they said to Him, 'We have here only five loaves and two fish.' He said, 'Bring them here to Me.' Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children." Matthew 14:13-21*

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Food—one of two essential elements for life on the Earth. *"...And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content"* (1 Timothy 6:8).

Food—a necessity to be sure, but not that by which life is measured: *"Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"* (Matthew 6:25)

Food—a topic of worry, in spite of God's promises: *"I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink...Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"* (Matthew 6:25-26)

Food—in some places so scarce that the people perish; in other places so abundant that there are contests of who can eat the most in the shortest period of time.

Food—the common denominator in "going out," "coming over," business meetings, youth events, fellowship opportunities in a congregation, and so much more.

Food was also very much on the minds of the disciples when they came

to Jesus one late afternoon. It was time to send the people home to get food, the disciples told Jesus. Jesus' response was simple, matter-of-fact, and to the point: "*They don't need to go anywhere. You give them something to eat*" (Matthew 14:16).

"*You give them something to eat.*" It was a remarkable moment in a remarkable day that hadn't turned out quite as planned. After hearing that John the Baptist had been executed, Jesus went to a deserted place to be by Himself, but crowds of people found out where He was.

As He saw the crowds, did Jesus tell His disciples, "Get rid of them, tell them I'm on leave. Tell them I need some time to think. Tell them I'll come back soon"? No, Jesus was moved with compassion, put His intended "time away" on hold, taught them (Mark 6:34), and healed their sick (Matthew 14:14).

"*You give them something to eat.*" The disciples must have been a little dumbfounded. We?! We are going to give them something to eat?! They could see the crowd. They knew the task was impossible. Even giving everyone a tiny snack would be expensive—and that's not even thinking of availability. Yet Jesus said, "*You give them something to eat.*"

The disciples were able to locate five loaves of bread and two small fish—a food supply that would not go very far. The disciples were at a dead end, but they were at the beginning of the Savior accomplishing His task.

The beginning of the lesson Jesus was teaching His disciples was that they needed to come to the end of human ability. They needed to see and understand their own limitations and inabilities before they would be ready to appreciate what the Savior could do.

Jesus blessed the food and distributed it to the disciples who, in turn, distributed it to the people. The food kept coming. The disciples kept distributing. In the end, all had eaten their full—5,000 men plus women and children—with twelve baskets of leftovers. Amazing!

The number of people served that day was dramatic. Because we can sometimes get caught up in numbers, it is worth remembering that the miracle would have been just as great if there had been only fifty people. Jesus fed the people by His power, and the leftover food far exceeded the original amount.

"*You give them something to eat*" was something the disciples could not

accomplish. They were reminded of their dependence upon the gracious providence of God. They witnessed first-hand how our Savior is ready and able to supply our needs even when it seems impossible.

The disciples learned lessons that day that we can carry over into our family budget conversations—to our time spent poring over household financial data.

We can keep these lessons in mind as we walk into a grocery store (where we don't have to struggle with finding food; instead we can read labels to determine what *quality* of food to buy).

Of these lessons we can remind ourselves and teach our children as we invite the Savior to our family meals, “Come, Lord Jesus...” and then “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good...” after we have received sustenance from His hand.

Remember that while the big number is noteworthy, the miracle isn't in the number. The fact that a family of five has food on the table is a miracle of God's grace just as much as a meal for 5,000 was during our Savior's ministry. The meals we eat are no less a gift from our Lord than supper on a mountainside.

Today God generally provides through natural means, but can we not see the miracle in seeds that sprout, grow, and bear abundant harvest after a farmer simply buries the seed in the ground?! The abundance of food produced in our land, the amazing availability of variety in the food supply, the “baskets” of leftovers that are thrown out each day—Jesus is still feeding the 5,000 by continually providing food in good measure (as well as every other needful gift).

John reports that the day after the 5,000 were fed, a large crowd was again following Jesus. They followed excitedly, not because of His teaching, but because they liked the idea of hanging around with a man who could feed thousands with so little. Jesus counseled them, “*Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life...*” (John 6:27)

Food provides nutrition, strength, and energy. It is essential, it is promised by God, and it is not necessary to worry about it. Rejoice to know your Savior, who is able to serve bountiful feasts of food for body and for soul.





“Four of four” Ude clergy (Matthew, David, Aaron, Prof. John) are encircled by Pastors Michael Eichstadt, Bruce Naumann, Neil Radichel, Paul Krause, Norman Greve, Paul Tiefel, John Johannes (emeritus). The occasion was David Ude’s ordination/installation on June 29, 2014.

## IMMANUEL LUTHERAN SEMINARY GRADUATE

# Meet Pastor David Ude

I am David Ude (and as my Mom would point out, that’s David, not Dave!). I am child number eight of nine and pastor number four of four in our immediate family! I am blessed to have many cousins, nieces, and nephews (at last count, Grandpa Roland A. Gurgel has over 120 descendants).

I was born in Madison, Wisconsin, and grew up in Milwaukee until the family moved to Fridley, Minnesota, when I was nine years old. During this time my love for Wisconsin and its sports teams was purified in the fire!

I attended high school, college, and seminary at Immanuel in Eau Claire, so I’ve been there over a decade. I enjoyed my time there—especially the years I was able to spend coaching Cross Country, Track and Field, and Baseball.

On June 23, 2012, I was married to Rachel (nee) Radtke. We have a

daughter Anastasia who is almost six months old. She is poised to crawl, forcing us to put away the cords which weave their way around our house.

For pastimes I enjoy attending baseball games, running, listening to audio-books (those last two often go together), fishing, and eating. I love the fall of the year, which combines many of my favorite things—crisp air (good running weather), beautiful colors, and of course the Packers.

Most of all, I enjoy mining the treasures of God’s Word and sharing them with others. There are gems to be found under every rock, and there are always some souls that need them.

I have been called to serve Living Word Lutheran Church, Appleton, Wisconsin. While I am looking forward to discovering all there is to do and see in this beautiful part of the country, I am even more excited to speak the good news of salvation in this area. May God grant it.

(We thank Pastor Ude for introducing himself to our readers at our request. — Editor)



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN SEMINARY GRADUATE

## Meet Pastor Peter Evensen

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*“Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day” Psalm 25:5*

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I was raised on a ranch north of Grand Rapids, Minnesota. I grew up in the American Lutheran Church (now part of the ELCA) and graduated from Oak Grove Lutheran High School (ALC) in Fargo, N.Dak. in 1985.

During my junior year I realized that the ALC was not teaching the true good news of salvation through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, and so I began looking for a church that correctly taught the truth of God’s Word.

I received a double degree in Computer Science and Electrical Engineering in 1989 from Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. (Dr. David Menton taught at the Medical School there). During this time I attended a Baptist church and also became good friends with a student who was a member of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod (WELS). God used our friendship to lead me to Bible-based

Lutheranism a couple years after we graduated.

Several years after I joined the WELS, some problems developed in the congregation which resulted in a number of people, including me, leaving the church. We met independently for almost a year. One of the group started investigating the CLC and bringing us information. I and a number of others started attending and eventually joined Faith congregation, CLC, in Manchester (St. Louis).

On my journey to the CLC I developed a passion for languages and have become conversant in French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. I have had the pleasure of going on four CLC Mission Helper trips to India (dabbling in Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu) as well as making a trip to Peru.

As I look back, I see God's guiding hand; even though the way has not always been easy, I am thankful that He has brought me to where I am today.

I trust that He will continue to lead me and guide me in His truth.

(We thank Pastor Evensen for introducing himself to our readers at our request. On August 3, 2014, he was ordained and installed as pastor at Rock of Ages Lutheran Church [CLC], Grand Rapids, Michigan.)



Peter Evenson seated with 2014 CLC Convention delegate Len Benter of Faith Lutheran, Manchester, Mo.



The tandem of Editor Fleischer (since 1984) and Assistant Editor Koch (since 1998) steer the content/direction of the *Lutheran Spokesman*, until the December 2014 issue. Beginning January 2015 and beyond, new yokefellows of the *Lutheran Spokesman* will be Pastor Paul Naumann, editor, with teacher Craig Owings as assistant.

Look for the farewell story in the December 2014 issue.

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## LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

“... THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN.” — JOHN 10 : 35

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