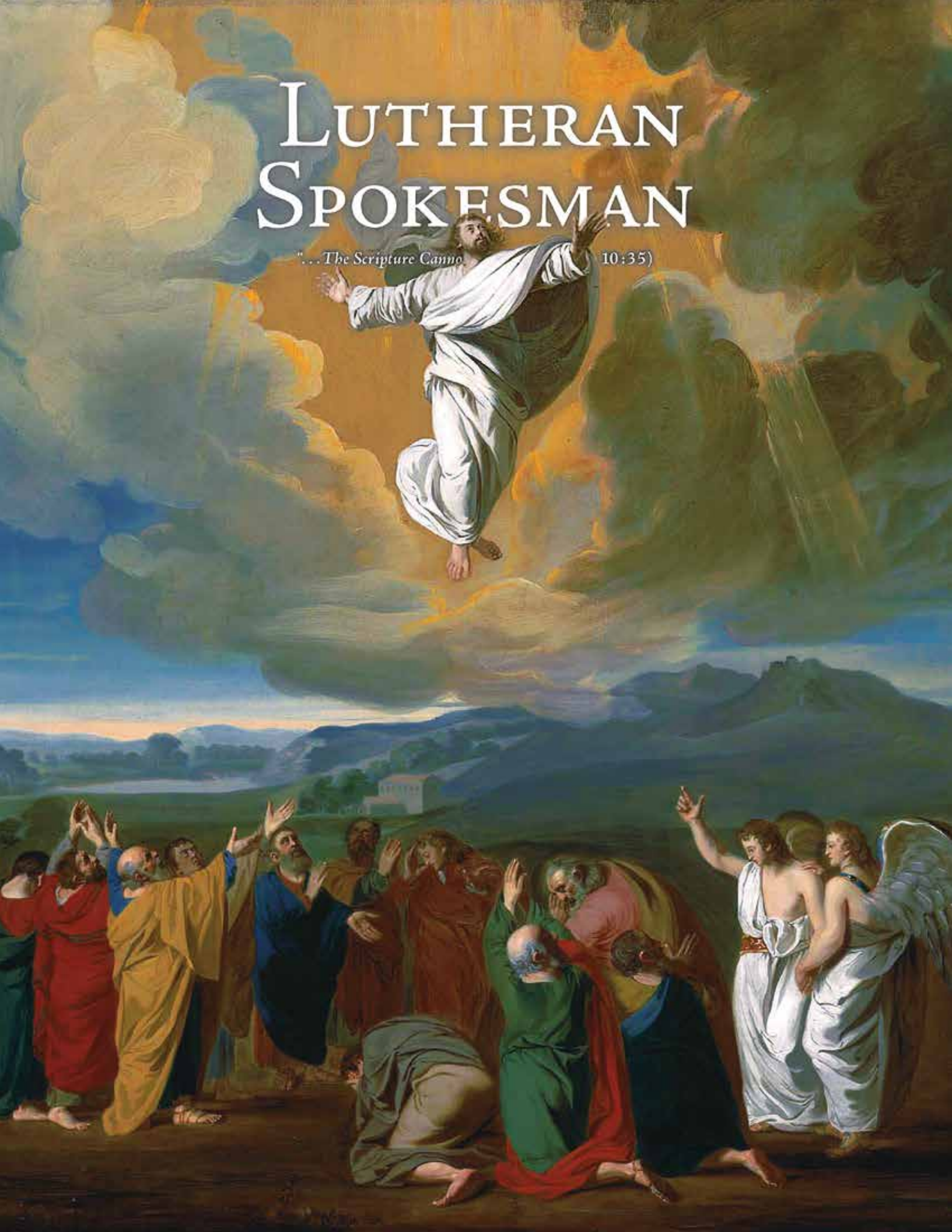


LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

... The Scripture Cannot (10:35)



Jesus Went Up So That You May Go Up	3	Grace Lutheran Church Fridley, Minnesota	10
“Be Still and Know That I Am God”	4	BEST JOB EVER	
The Edible Gift	6	The Best Coworkers	12
TLH 219, LSB 532		Notes from the Field	
“The Head that Once was Crowned with Thorns”	7	God Encourages When Satan Discourages	13
THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC Part 5		Bread of Life Readings, May 2020	14
The Formation of a New Church Body	8	ILC Newsletter	
		Paul Sullivan Retirement	15
		Announcements	16



The Lutheran Spokesman (USPS 825580) (ISSN 00247537) is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.clclutheran.org

Periodicals postage paid at Eau Claire, WI and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701-7134

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Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Naumann three months before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Naumann.

Business Manager: Rev. James Sandeen, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701. E-mail to jim.sandeen@ilc.edu. Individual subscriptions {foreign-U.S. currency only}: \$18.00 {\$36.00} for one year; \$34.00 {\$50.00} for two years; \$50.00 {\$72.00} for three years; sent in bulk to congregations: \$15.00.

Send address or payment question requests to: lutheranspokesman@ilc.edu

Spokesman Online Version at: www.lutheranspokesman.org

Printed in U.S.A.

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Jesus Went Up So That You May Go Up

“And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.”

(Luke 24:50-51)

If you're acquainted with the topography of the Holy Land, you'll understand why Jesus, when speaking of His travels to Jerusalem, often described them in terms of “going up.” He literally had to climb uphill to get to Jerusalem because it was situated on Mount Zion, which had a higher elevation than the surrounding terrain. It was on this mountain that He endured the suffering of the cross as the world's Savior and came alive three days later to show beyond doubt that His mission as Savior had been accomplished.

It was forty days later that Jesus led His disciples to another place of high elevation located not far from Jerusalem—the Mount of Olives. From this mountain He ascended to the greatest of heights! He was carried up to heaven in full of view of His disciples to God's right hand, “far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” (Ephesians 1:21)

The ascension of Jesus is a truth we confess each Sunday in the Creed. It's with good reason that we include it as part of our Christian confession, for it is an event loaded with meaning. Jesus' ascension gives us the assurance of our own eventual ascension on high. What the two angels told the disciples will assuredly come to pass: “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11) Then will the promise of Jesus also be fulfilled: “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:3)

Jesus' ascension also has meaning for our daily lives while we continue as pilgrim travelers through this world. When troubled by our sins we may find peace in knowing that Jesus, our divine Advocate, is interceding for us continually before His Father's throne (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25). We may treasure in our hearts His guarantee that each prayer we offer to the Father in His name will be answered (John 16:23) and always in a way that serves the purpose of leading us to our heavenly homeland. Jesus' ascension affords us the comfort that He is using His power to orchestrate all events in our lives and the world at large for our benefit (Ephesians 1:22, Romans 8:28). As the head of the Church, He will always provide gifts to us in the form of pastors, teachers, and other church leaders to serve in the public ministry for equipping us for works of Christian service and for the strengthening of our Christian faith (Ephesians 4:8-16).

Ascension Day is an annual festival, but its blessings are ours to have and enjoy all year round! When it arrives on the calendar—this year, on Thursday, May 21—remember to set aside a few moments for quiet reflection. Thank Jesus for His love that moved Him to go up to Jerusalem to suffer and die and be raised for you, and to ascend into heaven for you, where He is now ruling all things for your good, and from whence He will return to take you to be with Him forever.



Thomas Schuetze is pastor of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lakewood, Colorado.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS — COVID19 PANDEMIC

In the midst of the current global health crisis, we offer the following message of hope, delivered as a morning chapel address by Dr. Daniel Schierenbeck, professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin



“Be Still, and Know That I Am God”

(Psalm 46:10)

Over the last few weeks, our nation—indeed, the world—has had to face many unknowns that have stemmed from the coronavirus pandemic. People are wondering about their health or about the health of their loved ones. Will they fall ill? Will they develop fatal complications? People are also rightfully worried and stressed about the economic impact generated by responses to the virus.

What will happen to my job?

How will I be able to earn money to pay rent and buy groceries?

At the more local level, faculty, staff, and students here at ILC have had to scramble to figure out how to continue the spring semester.

Will we be able to return to face-to-face classes?

How can we teach online?

How can we learn online?

When will I be able to see my classmates and friends?

As we ask these questions, we can quickly spiral downwards, getting more and more panicked, worried, and stressed. If we continue to ask ourselves these questions or look for these answers from doctors or government officials, or even from parents and friends, we will become very frustrated.

Why?

Because nobody really knows the answers to all these questions. What we are really looking for is an assurance of what our future life on earth will be like. Indeed, at the heart of many of these questions is the sense that we had a plan for our life, that this plan has been interrupted, and that we need an immediate answer for when our plan can get back on track—most preferably in the way we want it to and when we want it to. Instead of looking to humans for answers, though, we need to look to the God Who gives us the ultimate answer: “*Be still, and know that I am God.*”

God’s answer to us, and not just in moments of world crisis that we find ourselves in now, but His answer to us every day, is broken down very simply in this verse:

- 1) *Be still, and*
- 2) *Know that I am God.*

Seems pretty simple, doesn’t it? For our sinful natures, however, both of these points are difficult to follow.

A few years ago, my new year’s resolution was to begin meditating and, being an English professor, I didn’t just download an app but bought a book, which was called *Just Sit*. Seems very simple doesn’t it? To begin meditating, just sit and try not to think about anything. If you have ever tried this, though, you know how difficult it is. So difficult that you need an entire book to teach you how to just sit. God’s direction for us to “*be still,*” to “*be calm,*” is just as difficult for us to follow. We want instant updates and feedback; we want to be able to refresh our newsfeed and find out the latest information; we want to be able to communicate with everybody right away. We want to do things ourselves and to take control of the situation. This is probably why self-quarantining and physical distancing—just staying home on the couch—can be such a difficult task, though at first glance it seems like the easiest thing in the world to do. This is why God has provided us a whole book, the Bible, to reveal His will and His directions showing us how to “*be still.*”

In our passage for today, and indeed throughout the Bible, God provides us the answer for how to remain calm—to be still: “*know that I am God.*” Many of you, I’m sure, remember the beginning to Psalm 46:

*“God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
Even though the mountains be removed,*

*And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea
Though its waters roar and be troubled
Though the mountains shake with swelling.”* (Psalm 46:1-3)

Eternal and unchanging

God describes some very extreme situations here but tells us directly that because He is God—because He is all-powerful—we have nothing to worry about. Also, because He is eternal and unchanging, He is “*a very present help in trouble.*” This psalm praises God for deliverance in battle but was also used as the basis for Martin Luther’s famous Reformation hymn, “A Mighty Fortress.” Because Luther saw that God rescued His people in the Old Testament, he could trust that God—all-powerful and never-changing—would also rescue His believers and preserve His Word in Luther’s lifetime. So, too, when we look at God’s fulfilled promises throughout the Bible, starting with his promise of a Savior to Adam and Eve, we see time and again how God takes care of His children, even though it doesn’t seem like it at that moment (think, for example, of Joseph’s life). At a time when we are forced to be physically distant from one another, how comforting is it to realize that our powerful God is still with us and will never leave us. We read in Psalms 46:11, “*The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.*” Indeed, God is still our “*very present help in trouble.*”

Salvation happens

Finally, to follow the words “*be still, and know that I am God,*” we have to realize through faith that our holy and just God sent His Son to die for our sins, and that Christ’s death and resurrection assures us of eternal life. The calmness that comes from such faith derives from the relief that we don’t have to do anything to make this salvation happen. It’s already taken care of. Also, this means that our biggest problems—the inherited diseases of sin and death—have already been solved by God. That gives us the perspective to see that any problem, from the most trivial to a global pandemic, is no problem for God. The God Who conquered sin and death, the God Who loves us a father, the God Who is all-powerful and present everywhere, is the One Who is in control of our lives. Therefore we pray that Holy Spirit will lead us, through faith, to follow the words of the psalm: “*Be still, and know that I am God.*”



Daniel Schierenbeck is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

The Edible Gift

The Eucharist, Breaking Bread, Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper—this sacrament has many names and, unfortunately, many misconceptions concerning it. We ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to His Word as we revisit this gracious gift of our Savior.

At the outset we wish to establish that this precious meal *is* a sacrament; that is, a sacred act graciously given us by our God. Holy Communion does fulfill the three prerequisites for the traditional definition of a sacrament. Firstly, it is divinely instituted—Jesus Himself gave us the practice on the night He was betrayed. Secondly, the Sacrament gives or conveys the forgiveness of sins, and finally the meal contains earthly elements, namely the bread and wine.

A VERY SPECIAL BOND

One of the first misconceptions about the Lord’s Supper is that receiving it is a good work on our part. Receiving Communion is not doing God a favor, nor is it gaining favor with Him. Rather, our Savior provided this meal as a remembrance of His sacrifice for our sins (“*Do this in remembrance of me.*” Luke 22:19) as well as giving us a means to be joined with Him in a very special bond.

Many denominations view the Lord’s Supper as a memorial and leave it at that. These churches erroneously teach that the bread and wine in the sacrament merely *represent* the body and blood of Jesus. The Roman Catholic teaching swings in the other direction, stating that the bread and wine are *completely transformed* into the body and blood of Christ. This teaching of transubstantiation goes beyond what the Scriptures teach. The evangelical Lutheran church has always stood firmly on the words of Christ Himself, “*Take, eat; this is My body. . . . This is My blood of the new covenant.*” (Mark 14:22-24) Jesus said, “This is my body,” not this will *become*, nor this *stands for*, but rather, *this is*. Luther insisted on this simple word, *IS*.



In 1 Corinthians Paul emphasizes this teaching of the real presence of Christ’s body and blood in Communion. “*Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. . . . For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*” (11:27-29) For this reason Paul encourages the Christian to “examine himself” so as to take the sacrament in a worthy manner.

SUCH SELF-EXAMINATION MAY FOLLOW IN THIS MANNER:

First, we recognize that we are unworthy to receive this gift of Communion or any blessings from our Lord, for we daily sin much. Second, we confess our belief that Jesus Christ is the only one Who can give us forgiveness for our sins. Third, we recognize that Jesus gives us His body and blood with the bread and wine in this sacrament. A Christian thus armed is worthy to partake of the Lord’s Supper confidently and joyfully answering His Savior’s invitation, “Take, eat; this is given for you. Drink of it; this is shed for you.”

A good reason for us to use the term *Communion* for this sacrament is the fact that it contains three communions (joinings together) that bless us. First, we see the communion of the Lord’s body and blood that we receive with the bread and wine. Second, we are also blessed with a communion with our Father in heaven. The peace between God and man which only comes through the forgiveness of sins is ours in this meal. And finally, let us not forget the communion we share with our fellow believers; we are one in the body of Christ, until that day when we are ushered into His presence perfectly united for eternity.

May the Lord bless your reception of His holy Sacrament always!



David W. Bernthal is a retired teacher. He is a member of Luther Memorial School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

TLH 219, LSB 532

“The Head that Once was Crowned with Thorns”

Thomas Kelly's hymn reflects how Jesus exchanged
His crown of thorns for a crown of glory.

If you are one who thinks this world already has enough lawyers, then you should smile whenever the Lord turns one of them into a preacher. We all know about Martin Luther, who initially studied law only to leave it in pursuit of the priesthood, but there was also Thomas Kelly (1769-1855), an Irishman who did the same thing. Educated at Trinity College in Dublin, he left his fancy law degree behind when, troubled by his sins, he found peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. His new joy in the Gospel led him to join the clergy of the Church of Ireland at age twenty-three.

Kelly's Gospel-centered preaching, however, did not sit well with his superiors, especially the Archbishop of Dublin. So he left the established church and continued his preaching in small independent chapels around Ireland. Over the next fifty years he wrote an astonishing 765 Christian hymns. His powerful Ascension hymn “The Head that Once was Crowned with Thorns” has been published in over 450 hymnals.

Jesus' ascension was His coronation as King over all for all time. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians that God “*raised him [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.*” (1:20-21 NIV84) Kelly's hymn reflects how Jesus exchanged His crown of thorns for a crown of glory: **The Head that once was crowned with thorns / Is crowned with glory now; / A royal diadem adorns / The mighty Victor's brow.**

Surely Jesus has earned this kingship by His innocent

life, His bitter suffering and death, and His triumphant resurrection! **The highest place that heav'n affords / Is His, is His by right, / The King of kings and Lord of lords, / And heav'n's eternal Light.**

It makes us glad to gaze on our triumphant King because our own triumphs seem so few and far between. We sigh with Job, “*Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.*” (14:1 NIV84) We can sympathize with Solomon who said, “*What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief. . . this too is meaningless.*” (Ecclesiastes 2:22-23 NIV84). Yet we see Christ, glorious in the heavens, who bids us come and join Him in that glory. He is our Joy! **The Joy of all who dwell above, / The Joy of all below / To whom He manifests His love / And grants His name to know . . . They suffer with their Lord below / They reign with Him above, / Their profit and their joy to know / The mystery of His love.**

Jesus turned His cross into our hope and glory. He turned an instrument used to *punish* people's sin into an instrument used to *pay* for people's sin. He changed a symbol of death and despair into a symbol of salvation. His ascension into heaven says, “Yes!” to this and “Amen!” to us, His children by faith. **To them the cross, with all its shame, / With all its grace, is giv'n; / Their name an everlasting name, / Their joy the joy of heav'n . . . The cross He bore is life and health, / Though shame and death to Him: / His people's hope, His people's wealth, / Their everlasting theme.**



David Schaller is pastor of Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sister Lakes, Michigan. He also prepares the “Bread of Life” devotions for the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC

One aspect of the discussion surrounding the “Joint Statement,” which will again be before us at our next convention, is how much importance to give to the events that took place around the period 1955-1961 that led to the formation of the CLC. In this seven-part series, Professor Emeritus David Lau provides a digest of these events, excerpted from his book, “Out of Necessity.” We urge all CLC members—and particularly convention delegates—to re-familiarize themselves with this important period in our fellowship’s history.

The Formation of a New Church Body

Individual pastors, teachers, congregations, and individual members of congregations had withdrawn from the various synods of the Synodical Conference. Some of those who withdrew were acquainted with others who withdrew, but this was not always the case. There was a craving for fellowship on the part of those who had withdrawn. They did not want to be alone. They needed the comfort and the support of others who had taken the same stand they had taken, on the basis of the same Word of God. At first there were only a very few, but as time went on and the offenses and disobedience continued, the number grew larger, and the possibility of a new organization presented itself. But for those who withdrew something was more important than organization, and that was unity in confession of the truth.

We need to remember that those who withdrew were individuals in whom the Holy Spirit worked a childlike faith to take an unpopular stand, and that they were used to being challenged for the positions they took. They were used to fighting verbal battles with their opponents. So it was not at all a self-evident thing that these individuals with their strong opinions would be able to work together in a united organization.

Therefore we must emphasize that God is the one who enabled those that withdrew from the Synodical Conference synods in the years from 1955 to 1961 to find each other, to become united with each other in doctrine and practice, and in time to become an organized church body that worked together in the work of the Lord. “*God sets the solitary in families.*” (Psalm 68:6) To Him be all the glory!



THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC

The coming together took place through a series of meetings between 1956 and 1960. The first such meeting was a “free” conference hosted by Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato, Minnesota, on September 26-27, 1956. Another meeting took place at Lyons, Nebraska, on October

22 and 23, 1957. “At this meeting it was mutually agreed that there was a need for an Article to be drawn up on the doctrine of Church Fellowship. This was the initial move toward the framing of the document later to be known by the title Concerning Church Fellowship” (C. M. Gullerud: A History of the CLC, p. 2). Winfred Schaller, Jr. was given this assignment.

One of the most productive conferences during the interim was held at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming, from May 6-8, 1958. M. J. Witt was elected chairman of the Interim Conference. One major decision of the conference was to begin publication of The Lutheran Spokesman. The man chosen as editor was Winfred Schaller, Jr., with Norton Carlson as co-editor. The March 1959 Lutheran Spokesman reported that the first two issues were mimeographed (first issue: 200 copies; second issue: 700 copies)

WINFRED SCHALLER, JR.’S CONFESSION ON CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

The next conference was held from July 30 to August 4, 1958, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington. Most of this meeting was devoted to a consideration of Winfred Schaller, Jr.’s confession on church fellowship. The first two sections of Leonard Bernthal’s confession

**“that it will not tolerate less than complete agreement”
in any area of doctrine “as a basis for fellowship.”**

on church and ministry were presented and discussed. Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato was the site for the next conference, held from January 13-15, 1959. Winfred Schaller's confession on church fellowship was one of the main topics for consideration. By God's grace "agreement to the doctrine on Church Fellowship was expressed by the group." The document was now placed into the hands of an editing committee made up of Edmund Reim and George Barthels. The other major presentation was Leonard Bernthal's paper on church and ministry.

**THE NEXT CONFERENCE,
HELD IN RED WING, MINNESOTA,
FROM AUGUST 18-21, 1959, WAS A
STORMY ONE.**

Two pastors had notified the conference that it should proceed as a free conference without devotions rather than as a conference based on unity of doctrine. Withdrawal from one of the synods of the Synodical Conference was, in their opinion, not sufficient evidence of unity of confession. (In response to this) it was the position of the conference "that it will not tolerate less than complete agreement" in any area of doctrine "as a basis for fellowship." There was continuation of discussion on the doctrine of church and ministry. The committee responsible for editing the confession Concerning Church Fellowship reported that "the conference found itself in complete agreement with the doctrinal substance of the confession."

By the time of the Red Wing conference Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato had begun to prepare for the first school year of Immanuel Lutheran College (including seminary and high school). In connection with the recent conventions of the Wisconsin Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod the conference stated: "We must conclude therefore, that both the Wisconsin Synod and the ELS are persisting in unscriptural fellowship with the heterodox Missouri Synod and we are constrained to give our full support and encouragement to those who have severed, or are in the process of severing their membership in the above bodies in obedience to God's Word."

The last conference before the organizing convention of August 1960 was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church in

Mankato on January 19-21, 1960. The editing alterations to Concerning Church Fellowship were accepted. Edmund Reim was asked to write a preamble to Concerning Church Fellowship, and it was decided that this document be published as the confession of the Interim Conference. The Mankato Seminar on church and ministry had proposed six points to summarize this doctrine. Leonard Bernthal's paper on church and ministry as well as these six points were given to an editing committee.

The week of August 9-12, 1960, was a very exciting time for the pastors, teachers, and delegates who gathered at Trinity Lutheran Church in Watertown, South Dakota. The stage for the organizing convention had been set by the previous meetings of the Interim Conference. The chief doctrines in controversy, church fellowship and church and ministry, had been studied at length and it seemed as though there was agreement on these teachings on the part of almost all participants. Forty-five pastors and teachers registered for the convention, together with 23 lay delegates and 14 visitors. What gratitude to the Lord must have filled the chairman's heart as he addressed this assembly, for just a few years earlier he had stood almost alone in his confession!

On Thursday evening the delegates surely were praying to the Lord of the Church that on the next day, the last day of the convention, unity on church fellowship, unity on church and ministry, and unity on the proposed constitution would prevail so that the Church of the Lutheran Confession could begin its work as a unified church body. After a few minor changes were made it was resolved "that the essay, 'Concerning Church Fellowship,' be recognized as a confessional statement of this conference." The vote was unanimous. On Friday afternoon the assembly unanimously adopted all the theses (on church and ministry) as the confession of the new church body. The report of the Constitution Committee was adopted unanimously. The dominant note at this convention was joy and hope, joy at the unity the Holy Spirit had worked and hope that the future would provide still more opportunities for the preaching and spreading of the pure Gospel.

David Luis a retired pastor and professor. He lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

A SLICE OF LIFE IN THE CLC

Snapshots of congregations from around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Grace Lutheran Church Fridley, Minnesota

Nestled in an inner-tier suburb due north of Minneapolis, Grace Lutheran Church of Fridley, Minnesota, has been proclaiming the priceless Gospel of Jesus Christ. This group of Christians has been gathering together around the Word and sacraments for the past sixty-five years. They have a dedicated core of members who take growing in the Word of God seriously as they bask in the grace of their Savior. Even at its initial founding in July of 1955, the voters of the congregation adopted as their official motto Ephesians 2:8: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith.”*

While certainly Sunday worship is an ongoing and primary activity of the congregation, another fruit of its faithfulness is how important the group considers instruction from the life-giving Scriptures. Bible Classes on Sundays and Wednesdays are well attended, evidence that such study is a key component to congregational life. A recent study of the book of Proverbs has demonstrated how this group eagerly mines for the precious gems of heavenly wisdom and searches for the Spirit-intended meaning of Scripture. There is often a lively and beneficial discussion about how various pithy statements of wisdom apply to their daily walks of life: *“How much better to get*

wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.” (Proverbs 16:16)

But Grace also understands that these priceless diamonds are not to be hoarded by the adults, but to be generously shared with the next generation: *“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”* (Proverbs 22:6) Christian education for the youth has always been a key focus here. The adults, by way of support, are quite mindful that the children are the future of the church.

Grace Lutheran School, started in 1976, has been a flourishing center of activity as it anchors children in the Word. In addition to the parents at Grace who take advantage of this haven for their children, many opportunities have arisen recently to share the valuable truths of God’s Word with children outside of our fellowship. In recent years, usually about half of the enrollment has been made up of non-member children; for example, ten of our twenty-one students in 2019-20 are non-members.

Grace has been advertising its school in a local parade held in Spring Lake Park, the community due north of Fridley, which is also the public school district in which





Vacation Bible school students.

Grace resides. This has become a concerted effort as the children, parents, and grandparents have pooled together to promote the school. Their love of and appreciation for the school is publicly evident by the positive witness they give to others in the community. This has greatly helped in differentiating Grace's school from other Christian schools in the area. In the past year, such advertising has led to more non-member students in our school.

The parade has also helped in further promoting our vacation Bible school. Recently Grace had fifty-nine students registered. In order to staff this endeavor, many of our young people have helped teach and assist with activities. The vacation Bible school has also attracted more non-members students into our school.

Grace's website has been an effective tool in advertising our church and its Christian education. It helps to have technologically gifted members who are aware of cutting-edge tools which help to make this possible. Videos of our worship services and Bible classes have been regularly posted on our website, and statistics indicate that these are well utilized.

For the past ten years, Grace has also been blessed with contacts from Liberia, a west African country that is English-speaking and has its constitution modeled after that of the United States. Due to a civil crisis in that country during the early 2000's, some Liberians expatriated to the northern areas of the Twin Cities. After a Liberian joined the congregation in 2010, Grace's pastor traveled to Liberia in 2015 to visit the member and investigate the possibility of doing mission work there. The CLC Board of Missions eventually called Grace's pastor to be the part-time visiting missionary to Liberia, and the congregation allows him to travel there on an annual basis.

Another wonderful Spirit-led feature that is evident at Grace is its unassuming friendliness. The congregation has

a tight bond between people of all ages and backgrounds. To foster this, a regular hospitality activity is held following its worship service on the first and third Sundays of each month. To see people integrate with each other makes this a beautiful fellowship opportunity. The members and visitors interact with each other, sharing aspects of their individual lives, and also providing much-needed Christian support and encouragement. This also provides an avenue for informal discussion about congregational matters, keeping the members active and engaged. In fact, the parking lot regularly has vehicles in it during the week as members actively serve in many varied and important ways.

Currently Grace has 160 members with 36 of these being pre-communicants. Sunday worship attendance can typically be between 90 and 100. While Grace's congregational numbers have declined, its activity and commitment to the Word certainly has not. Many members have transferred to other CLC congregations. In fact, many current and former Grace members are usually seen at CLC events and are serving in synodical leadership positions. Thus, historically and currently, Grace has been a pivotal pipeline providing support to the CLC as a whole.

Grace continues to look to the Word as the Holy Spirit fills the congregation full of life. The Savior's love is evident as members love one another and support one another in the midst of a world that is often inhospitable to Christians committed to the truths of God's Word. The congregation continues to move ahead by the Lord's grace, with confidence

that He will lead us according to His good pleasure and with the Christian support which we sincerely provide to one another.

John Hein is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Fridley, Minnesota, and chairman of the Board of Regents of Immanuel Lutheran College.



BEST. JOB. EVER!

Are you a young person pondering a career? Have you considered becoming a pastor or a Christian day school teacher? This twelve-part series is meant to coincide with the work of the President's Committee on Partners in the Public Ministry (CPPM). Its aim is to help you think more deeply about the great importance—and many blessings—of the public teaching and preaching ministry.

The Best Coworkers



BEST. JOB. EVER!

**In love, we encourage
one another, pray for
one another.**

It is a conversation that has taken place in almost every home: “You won’t believe what happened at work today. Linda, from accounting, came in with an attitude and started telling me how fed up she is with all the mistakes coming from my department. So I went straight to my supervisor and told him that he needs to get a handle on her.” No, it’s not always the same circumstances and certainly not always the same names, but we all have complaints about issues that take place at work. That’s because wherever we work we will, inevitably, have to work with some descendant of Adam and Eve. It is also true that wherever we go, there we, also descendants of Adam and Eve, are. You may be a structural engineer, a farmer, or a day laborer, but regardless of your occupation, there are going to be conflicts because people are sinful, and, in our sinful state, we pridefully and selfishly find faults in others that we overlook in ourselves.

Believe me, the same is also true in the public ministry. Many of the same conflicts that arise in other vocations also arise among coworkers in the teaching and preaching ministry. I know this to be true because I am one of those coworkers who, at times, gets under other people’s skin. I’m certain that all of my fellow laborers in the ministry would affirm the same of themselves.

That being said, I do love my coworkers, and I can see that my coworkers do love me. That’s because the Holy Spirit has worked that love in our hearts by the Gospel of sins forgiven through Jesus’ cross. In love, we encourage

one another, pray for one another in our struggles, admonish one another in our weaknesses, and comfort one another in our trials, as so many believers in other occupations do on a daily basis. The very fact that we need such encouragement, prayer, admonishment, and comfort demonstrates that none of us can claim

to be the best coworkers, or else we would not need such support—indeed, we would not need forgiveness or a Savior.

But we do need a Savior and we do need forgiveness, and by God’s grace we have a Savior and we have forgiveness in the Person of Jesus Christ, God’s Son. It is His love for us, His selflessness, His faithfulness, His joy—not our own—that keeps us waking up each day eager to “go to work.” Thankfully, it is the same love, selflessness, faithfulness, and joy of Christ that allows us to go to sleep at night in peace with our God and with one another. By His grace He calls imperfect, sinful human beings into the public ministry and allows them to work with Him for the salvation of souls. We become coworkers by that grace given to us, but we remain imperfect coworkers who, like all believers in Christ, have the best Master, Lord, and Savior, because *“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”* (1 John 2:2)

Frank Gantt is pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Loganville, Georgia.



God Encourages When Satan Discourages

[Ed.: the following is a report about current activities in the HCLCN. It is written, in his own words, by the indigenous pastor who is our main contact in Nepal. Names of people and places are being withheld because of the risk of persecution. The report is lightly edited for clarity.]

It is my privilege to share an experience in the Lutheran Spokesman. It is from the year 2019 and it is about a discouraging and disappointing incident that ended up bringing encouragement and blessings.

I would like to give a brief religious background of Nepal. Nepal used to be the only declared Hindu kingdom in the world. Well, there are millions of Hindus in India but India is not declared as a Hindu country in their constitution. Nepal became secular country in 2007. The census report 2011 says that there are about 1.4% Christians and 98.6% non Christians (Hindus 81.3%, Buddhist 9%, Muslims 4.4%, Kirat 3.0%).

ANTI-CONVERSION LAW

Since the country introduced an anti-conversion law in August 2018, the Christians in Nepal are facing different kinds of challenges and persecution. Currently the country is discriminating against religious minority groups, especially Christians.

I would like to tell you my story from 2019. On my birthday, July 31, there were some youth from our church who came to celebrate my birthday and fellowship. There were about twenty persons at my apartment. They came to pray and to wish me well on my birthday. They were singing a few hymns. We were in a happy mood and celebrating. At that moment the landlord called me on my phone. He did not ask what is happening but started to question me, and said that we are not allowed to sing a Christian hymn in his house. I wished he could have done it sometime later because I had guests at my apartment. I felt humiliated in front my family and friends. It was a terrible experience for me.

We could not abandon our Christian witness, so eventually we were forced to leave the apartment. We were hurt by the treatment and had trauma from it. So we did not plan to find another apartment at that moment. We found shelter at our church. We used a few rooms at the church to store our possessions. It has been seven months now that we are staying sometimes at my parents' house, sometimes at church, and sometimes at our relatives. As we have used some rooms at the church, it has affected regular church activities like children fellowship, youth fellowship, and so forth.

HOWEVER I HAVE BLESSINGS AND GOOD NEWS, TOO.

The Lord blessed us and encouraged us with more believers and more new churches. In 2019 there were two baptism services in a west-central district of the country in which there were altogether fifty eight persons from two villages receiving baptism. These villages have a Christian majority. The Lord has blessed us with more sheep in His flock. In spite of the anti-conversion law, evangelism is silently growing and the Lord has worked and blessed our work in the country.

There is some more exciting news, too. The Himalayan Bible Institute is going to graduate fourteen students in the month of April. We are excited about the ordination of these men for the work of the kingdom in this country.

We had three state meetings (there are seven states in Nepal). Eighty-eight pastors attended our meetings and most of them were from independent churches.

God is good and He does mighty things through His children to extend His kingdom. Though it is tough and challenging to do the work of the kingdom of God, He hears our prayers and He is always with us to support and encourage us. We are confident that He will never let us down. Praise be to God alone!

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS MAY 2020

TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941; WS = Worship Supplement 2000; LSB = Lutheran Service Book, 2006

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
May 1	TLH 336; LSB 695	1 Samuel 18:1-11	It's difficult for us to see the success of others without feeling jealous, but jealousy in the heart leads to other sins too. May God preserve us!
May 2	TLH 590 (LSB 755)	1 Samuel 19:1-7	Jonathan interceded for his friend David. It is a blessing when the Lord gives us friends who stand up for us.
May 4	TLH 435	Psalm 63	In his loneliness, David longs for fellowship with God. Then he remembers the Lord's faithful help and this encourages him, leading him to sing praises and rejoice.
May 5	WS 766 (LSB 671)	John 14:1-14	We don't have to worry about finding the way to Jesus' place ourselves. He finds us and will take us to be with Him. Trust Him!
May 6	TLH 59 (LSB 398)	1 Samuel 20:30-42	The Lord used Jonathan to save the life of David— who was to be king and the ancestor of Jesus. Saul would not stop God from bringing His Son into the world.
May 7	TLH 433	1 Samuel 21:1-22:5	David's adventures to escape Saul begin. Ahimelech the priest helped him on his way at Nob— even though it would cost him his life.
May 8	TLH 513	Psalm 64	David's life was often threatened, but he was confident that the Lord would be with him and with all His believing children.
May 9	TLH 537; LSB 540	John 15:1-8	What a blessing it is to remain in Jesus! You will be connected to His love and He will cause you to bear much "fruit" in your life! Why ever cut yourself off from that?
May 11	TLH 349; LSB 588	John 15:9-17	When we are connected to Christ, the true Vine, He moves us to love Him and one another.
May 12	TLH 607	1 Samuel 22:6-23	Eighty-five priests from the house of Eli were put to death (cf. 1 Sam 2:31-33), but the last one, Abiathar, escaped with David and would help him.
May 13	TLH 526 (LSB 745)	1 Samuel 23:1-14	Clearly, the Lord was responsible for David's escapes from Saul. When we escape danger, isn't that the Lord's doing too?
May 14	TLH 39 (WS 748)	Psalm 56	In the end, what can other people really do to hurt us? Nothing. The Lord has already delivered us from death.
May 15	TLH 536 (LSB 868)	John 15:18-27	When people hate us for being Christians, it's hard not to get "riled up" and angry, but remember that their hatred of you is evidence that you are a child of God.
May 16	TLH 233 (LSB 499)	John 16:1-16	The Holy Spirit brings you both comfort and truth.
May 18	TLH 517 (LSB 758)	1 Samuel 24:1-13	Rather than take Saul's life, David left the matter of vengeance in the hands of the Lord.
May 19	TLH 621 (LSB 858)	1 Samuel 25:14-35	A godly wife is a blessing from the Lord. Here Abigail steps in and pleads on behalf of her boorish husband, also keeping David from bloodshed.
May 20	TLH 422; LSB 889	1 Samuel 26:1-12	Saul just won't give up pursuing David, but once again David leaves vengeance to the Lord— much to Abishai's dismay.
May 21	TLH 527 (LSB 757)	Psalm 69	Christians must sometimes endure scorn and insults for the sake of the Lord, but the Lord is with us when we are in trouble. Praise Him!
May 22	WS 765 (LSB 840)	John 16:17-33	What encouragement we have here from Jesus! "Your joy no one will take from you." "Ask and you will receive." "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
May 23	TLH 276 (LSB 684)	John 17:1-19	Jesus prays for His disciples that they might be sanctified (set apart) from the evil one and the unbelieving world.
May 25	WS 760 (LSB 544)	John 17:20-26	Here Jesus prays for you, me, and all Christians—that we would know the love of God and the glory of Christ.
May 26	TLH 368	1 Samuel 27:1-12	See how many surprising techniques God used to preserve David's life! Here David finds safety by living in enemy territory, and he even finds time to continue the unfinished conquest of Canaan as well.
May 27	WS 741 (LSB 807)	1 Samuel 28:1-2, 29:1-11	David readied himself to fight with the Philistines against Saul until the Philistines said, "Wait a minute, we're not sure we can trust this fellow!"
May 28	TLH 522 (LSB 615)	1 Samuel 30:1-20	Having been sent back, David continued his "private war" against the Amalekites. When things looked bad for him and his army, "David found strength in the Lord his God."
May 29	TLH 402 (LSB 731)	1 Samuel 31:1-13	While David was back fighting the Amalekites, Saul lost his battle (and his life) to the Philistines. On the run for "ten chapters," the Lord delivered him from his pursuer for good. God is faithful!
May 30	TLH 25	Psalm 71	The Lord is our deliverance and our refuge!

Paul Sullivan Retirement

If I had to go out on a limb, I would venture to say that this is the type of article Professor Paul Sullivan does not like to see about himself. I think I was asked to write it because my office was across the hall from his for twenty years. Over that time, I have learned a lot from him and about him, but I still feel I have only scratched the surface, only peeled back the outermost layer.

Paul has an interesting educational background.

In addition to attending Christian primary and secondary schools in the United States, he was a 5th grader in Berlin, Germany, and a high school sophomore and junior in two different schools in Alsace, France. In college he pursued art for a time, but ended up graduating from Northwestern-Watertown with a degree in pre-theology. He completed his seminary training at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon.

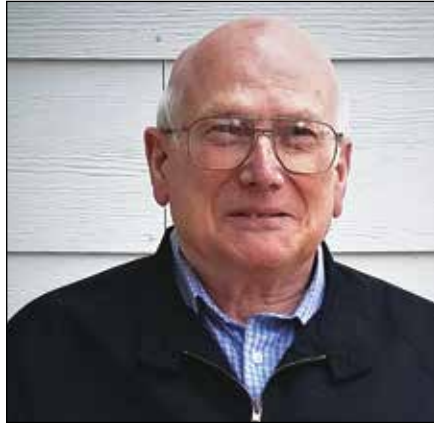
After college, Paul served in the military for two years, one on a base in Kentucky, and the other in Long Binh, Vietnam, during the war there.

Sixteen years in the ministry.

He then served sixteen years in the pastoral ministry. He married his wife, Jan, in 1974, and their family soon began to grow.

Paul then left the public ministry and took a job at Dayco Eastman in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. At this fluid conductor company, he filled many positions—including production worker, manager, supervisor, and quality assurance coordinator. His family joined the CLC's Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, during this time.

Paul returned to the full-time public ministry when he accepted the call to teach at ILC in 1997. In his time at ILC he has taught in all three departments: high school, college, and seminary. The subject areas he taught were quite varied, including English, church history, psychology, religion, and art. He also taught introductory French and



German language classes. He was an engaging chapel speaker and oversaw the school's literary magazine.

The role that perhaps defined his time at ILC the most, however, was that of Dean of Students; arguably the least coveted job on campus. It requires time, empathy, Christian maturity, equanimity, patience, an evangelical spirit, love, and often a thicker skin than most possess. More than once, while peering through his office window unnoticed, I saw a man deep in prayer,

or nodding off in exhaustion. That is the nature of the work. When asked about his thoughts on his work as dean he replied, "Dear Lord, bless my efforts and forgive my failures."

First to volunteer

In spite of his long days and many responsibilities, he was often the first to volunteer to help others, both colleagues and students alike. He arrived early and stayed late. He willingly volunteered many weekends to fill pulpits for CLC pastors. He is a voracious reader and learner, always willing to try new teaching approaches and technology. He is rumored to have jumped on student desks while giving a lecture, and I personally witnessed him do a front handspring to the delight of my physical education class. He would take time to pick up a carelessly discarded candy wrapper.

But what stands out to me the most about him is his knowledge and understanding of Scriptures, the ability to locate the precise passage at the appropriate moment. It does not surprise me that the one interest he plans to keep pursuing into retirement is the study of God's Word.

Many thanks to our gracious God for blessing ILC with this faithful servant over these many years. You will be missed, friend.

Joe Lau is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



Lutheran Spokesman

501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Retirement Gift: Professor Paul Sullivan's faithful service to our church and our school would have been acknowledged during the ILC Class Day/ Graduation festivities on May 22-23, 2020. Although it is now uncertain whether these events will be held, we plan to continue our custom of presenting a monetary gift to the outgoing faculty member as a token of our appreciation. You are invited to contribute to this gift, which will be given to Professor Sullivan at the close of the academic year.

—Pastor John Hein, Chairman, ILC Board of Regents

Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference

The Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference, originally scheduled for April 28-30 at Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church in Phoenix, Arizona, has been postponed until the fall, with the same schedule of assignments. Any necessary convention preparation will be done via online video conferencing.

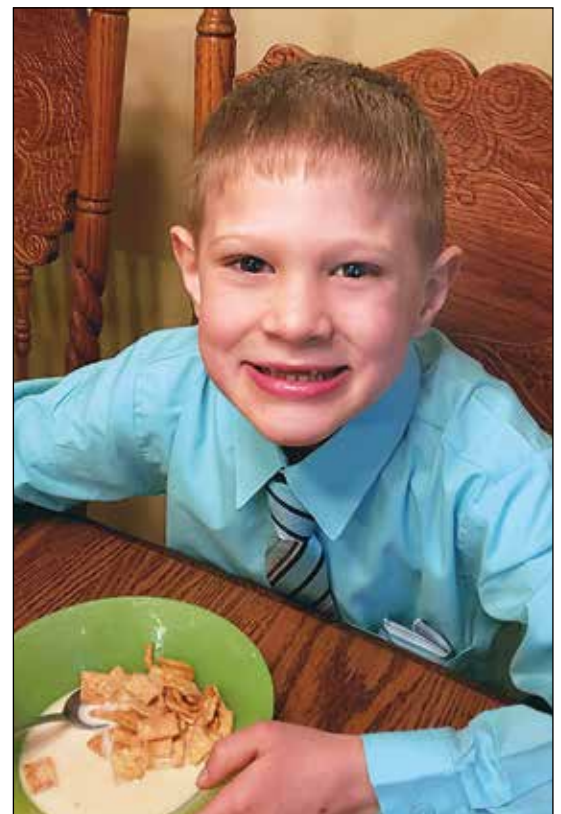
—Pastor Michael Gurath, Conference Chairman.

CLC-ILC Business Office & Book House, at 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, will be open for electronic business by mail, email, or phone from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. (CDT), Monday through Friday, but is closed to all walk-in business until further notice. (See the CLC Directory for contact information for the Business Office, Book House, and all periodicals.)

—Rev. James Sandeen, CLC Treasurer.

Synodical Meetings Rescheduled. Due to government restrictions on public gatherings and health concerns prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the spring meetings of CLC boards and Coordinating Council have been rescheduled to June 8-10, 2020, and the CLC Convention has been moved to July 30-August 2, 2020.

—Michael Eichstadt, CLC President



Isaac Nelson, member of Messiah Lutheran in Hales Corners, WI, still dresses up for church even though he watches the live stream from his home in Waukesha, WI.



From the Seventy-fifth anniversary celebration at Salem Lutheran Church in Eagle Lake, Minnesota, on October 20, 2019. Left to right: former Salem Pastors Norman Greve and Rick Grams, and current Pastor George Dummann.



A driveway in Madison, WI.