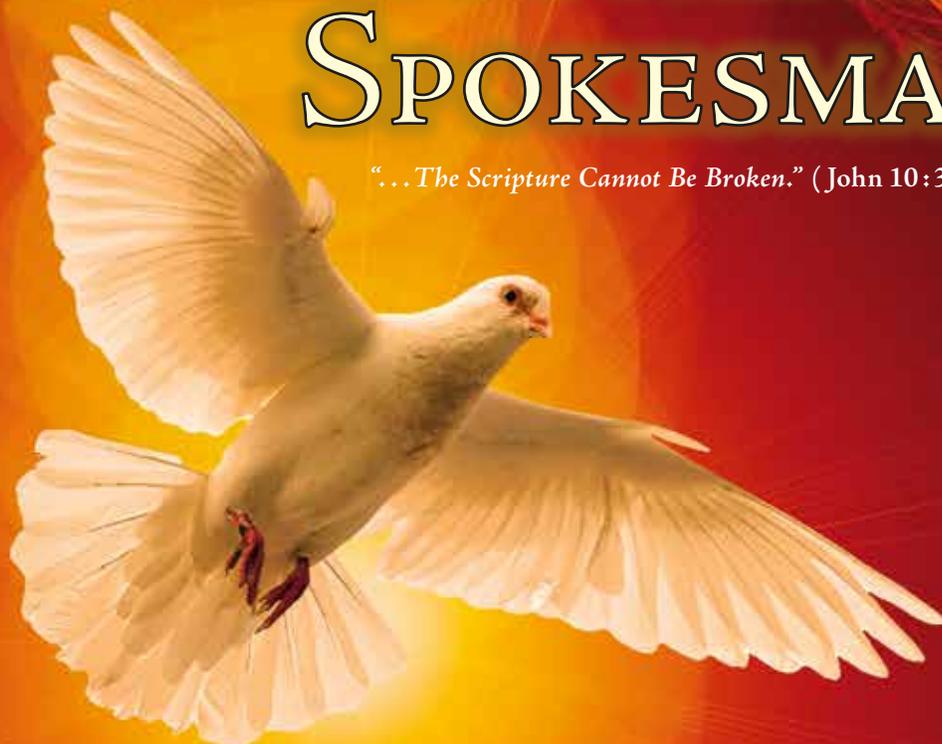


MAY 2021 VOL 63 NO. 11

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

"...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken." (John 10:35)



I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.

-- Joel 2:28

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Pentecost's Primary Miracle

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Soon we will arrive at one of the high festivals of the church year, Pentecost. This year Pentecost falls on Sunday, May 23. This is the day when we commemorate the outpouring of the gift of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples. It happened fifty days after Jesus' resurrection, ten days after His ascension. In obedience to the instructions Jesus had given them, the disciples tarried in Jerusalem in anticipation of receiving this gift. As they were gathered at a certain location in the city, all of a sudden, out of the blue, extraordinary things started to happen. The sound of a gale-force wind filled the house where they were staying. Something that looked like tongues of fire appeared and came to rest on each of them. They were given ability to communicate in languages they had never gone to school to learn.

For what purpose did God cause these supernatural phenomena to occur? The sound of a howling wind, itself a miracle, served the purpose of drawing people to the place where the disciples were so they could hear the message Jesus had given the disciples to share. The fiery tongues miracle conveyed a loud and clear message to all those gathered around: “Something noteworthy is going on here! Let's find out what it is!” But the primary miracle (on a scale of one to ten you could give it a “ten”) was the sudden ability the Spirit gave the disciples to speak the wonderful works of God to others with courage and boldness, so that many were led to faith. These one-time scaredy-cats, who not long before had secluded themselves in a locked room to avoid detection, were changed into people who were supremely happy—and not the least bit afraid—to openly spread the Gospel of Jesus! They just couldn't keep themselves from telling the assembled multitude about the Savior Who lived for them, died for them, came alive on Easter morning, and Who promises to come back to take all who trust in Him into the place of perfect peace. It was through the sharing of these blessed truths that thousands were converted and

became recipients of the priceless gifts of forgiveness, new spiritual life, and an unfading inheritance in the life of the world to come. It's not difficult to imagine how, when they returned home from the Pentecost festival, they also became witnesses for Jesus in the places where they lived.



Still today the Spirit causes the same miracle to happen. Through the message of the Gospel—which is “the power of God to salvation” (Romans 1:16)—He keeps on adding souls to the Church. He keeps on leading people lost in unbelief's darkness to trust in Jesus

as their one Redeemer from sin, death, and hell. He keeps on inspiring them, as He did the disciples on the Pentecost of long ago, to serve as witnesses to their Lord.

Praise be to the Holy Spirit for working this miracle in you, dear reader. Pay homage to Him for bringing you to a knowledge of your Savior and leading you to rejoice in all He accomplished for you. Sing to the Spirit songs of adoration for blessing you with eagerness to share the Gospel message with family, friends, and those living in faraway places (through your church's mission program), confident that He will work His “primary Pentecost miracle” (conversion!) in many hearts.

Come, Holy Spirit, from above

With Thy celestial fire;

Come and with flames of zeal and love

Our hearts and tongues inspire.

Be this our day of Pentecost,

The coming of the Holy Ghost!

(TLH 234:4)



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

With Talent on Loan from God

Love him or hate him, larger-than-life radio personality Rush Limbaugh had some interesting catch phrases, one of which forms the title of this article. It is more correct than most people might think. We have all been given talents and abilities from God. He does expect us to use them to His credit and His glory. He will demand an accounting from everyone when He returns. Although we all have various talents and abilities, they are often abused and misunderstood. May the Holy Spirit guide us, as He is a giver of most wonderful gifts (Galatians 5:22-23).

Keep jealousy in check. It is easy to fall into the trap of seeing another's abilities and wondering, "Why can't I . . . (fill in the blank)." It is also easy to consider someone else's talent as more important or prominent than the talent we possess and then to belittle or under-appreciate our own. What a horrid world this would be if we all possessed the same abilities! Everyone would be scrambling for the same positions and leaving who knows how many unfulfilled. Rather, let us thank God for the talents of others, as well as our own.

His will, not ours. The norm today is to perpetually promote the lie to our children that they can be whatever they want to be. A quick inventory of our own desires versus abilities will show the fallacy of this statement. You may have wanted to be a professional athlete, but reality shows that only 1% of the top 1% have the ability to do so. Another may wish to be an architect; however, no one will trust an engineer or designer if he happens to be terrible at math. TV personality Mike Rowe, of *Dirty Jobs* fame, encourages young people not to follow their passion when

pursuing a career. Rather, he suggests, find something you are good at and bring your passion with you.

God has given you talents and abilities. Most of us don't know the limits or range of them until we are challenged. Let the Lord lead your heart to seek what He desires you to do. Not all are called into the preaching or teaching ministry; however, all are called to proclaim the Gospel and serve Him in whatever they do. "*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.*" (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Find your niche. Our vocations should first and foremost honor God. Secondly, they ought to provide support for our families. Our avocations, however, are the area where we may hone the skills and talents God has given us not only to amuse ourselves, but also to serve others as well. Look in your talents and abilities toolbox and compare your inventory to your church's, your neighbor's, or your community's needs. Did you find a fit? Ask the Lord to give you the courage to use your ability and find the joy in serving others.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, and then read it again. You are a member of the body of Christ. He does have a place for you!

So when the Lord returns to see what we have done with the talents He has lent us, He will see us clothed in the robe of His own righteousness. Then we will hear Him graciously exclaim, "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*" (Matthew 25:21)

Look in your talents and abilities toolbox and compare your inventory to your church's, your neighbor's, or your community's needs. Did you find a fit?



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

WS 224, LSB 497

“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord!”

One of Martin Luther’s greatest contributions to Christian worship was his effort to collect and produce hymns for the congregation in their own language. He was insistent that people should become active participants in learning and proclaiming the Gospel through singing. For the Festival of Pentecost he wrote the German hymn *Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott* — Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord!

He based this hymn on a text and melody that was already familiar. There was a Latin antiphon (responsive prayer) in use that was spoken or sung at Pentecost. It went, “Come, Holy Spirit, fill up the hearts of your believers, and kindle in them the fire of your love: You who have gathered the nations in the unity of the faith through all the diverse languages. Alleluia, Alleluia.” Luther translated this antiphon and made it the first verse of his hymn, fitting it to a melody that was similar to the one heard in church. It is a prayer that the Holy Spirit would come and pour out His gifts in our hearts, gifts such as faith, peace, and forgiveness. Truly, without the Spirit’s work in us we could neither receive nor hold on to any of these blessings, as Paul teaches, “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:3 NIV84) Further, we do not ask the Spirit’s blessings for ourselves alone, but for people everywhere. We pray that He would work in others too, and unite them with us in the Holy Christian Church. **Thou in the faith dost men unite / Of ev’ry land and ev’ry tongue; / This to Thy praise, O Lord, our God, be sung. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

To the first verse, based on the 11th century antiphon, Luther added two more original verses. In the second verse

he addressed how it is that we receive the Spirit’s gifts. Namely, they come to us through the Word of God. The Word is the tool the Spirit uses to work faith in our hearts, so we pray that the Word be preached to us without error and that it lead our hearts and minds to trust in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Oh, cause the Word of Life to shine! / Teach us to know our God aright . . . / From ev’ry error keep us free; / Let none but Christ our Master be / That we in living faith abide, / In Him, our Lord, with all our might confide.** We make so much of the Word of God in our worship services and teaching today because the Word cannot be separated from the work of the Spirit. Where the Spirit is, there is the Word. Where the Word is, there is the Spirit.



The closing verse is a prayer that, having heard the Word of God, the Spirit would help us lead holy lives according to it, especially in times of trial and temptation. There are echoes here of

Luther’s explanation to the Second Petition of the Lord’s Prayer: “God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and live a godly life here in time and hereafter in eternity.” Compare this with our hymn: **Grant us the will Thy work to do / And in Thy service to abide; / Let trials turn us not aside. / Lord, by Thy pow’r prepare each heart . . . / That bravely here we may contend, / Thro’ life and death to Thee, our Lord, ascend.** To this we say: **Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**



David Schaller has recently accepted a call to serve on the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Moses The Great

It is not unusual for people to be called “the great.” More often than not, however, such are political and military leaders. Catherine the Great, Alexander the Great, and Frederick the Great come to mind. Religious leaders not so much, although some have dared to call Pope Gregory “the Great.” These men and women are deemed great because of their supposed impact on history.

The Bible also calls some personages great. King David testified that “*The LORD is great.*” (1 Chronicles 16:25) The angel Gabriel told the virgin Mary that her Son JESUS “*will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest.*” (Luke 1:32) Even the Baptizer would “*be great in the sight of the Lord*” (Luke 1:15), as an angel told his father, Zachariah. Jesus also later testified that “*among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist.*” (Matthew 11:11)

That would include Moses, although who wouldn’t argue that he was special? He was not only God’s friend, speaking with God face-to-face, but as Stephen testified, “*Moses was . . . mighty in words and deeds.*” (Acts 7:22)

Indeed! Moses confronted Pharaoh and demanded the release of the children of Israel from their slavery. Moses led his people safely across the Red Sea and faithfully for forty years of desert wandering. Moses was buried by God Himself on Mount Nebo, and later appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yes, he was special, even great.

But we also remember how Moses murdered an Egyptian, how he fled the country, and became a herder of sheep in a foreign land for the next forty years of his life. What’s so great about that?

Here is where Hebrews 11 provides the divine commentary on that whole episode. “*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy*

the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” (24-27)

Here, then, is what made Moses great in God’s eyes. It was the fact that Moses forsook his elite and princely position in Pharaoh’s court and chose instead to identify with God’s people—who at the time were ill-treated slaves. That decision cost him sin’s pleasures and Egypt’s treasures, but he gained a future with his people, a future involving the coming Messiah.

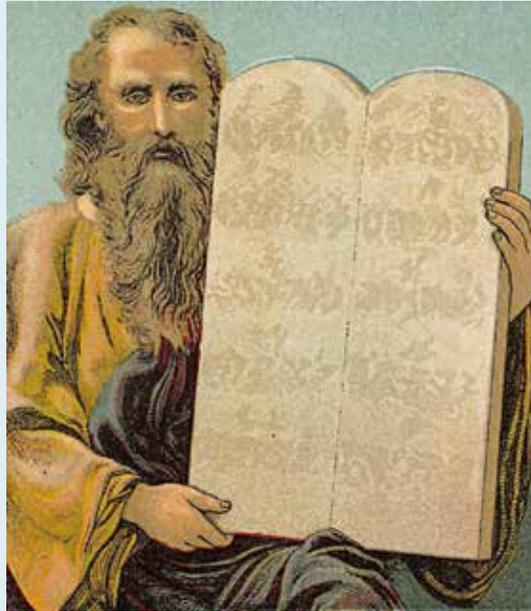
Thus Moses esteemed the suffering and reviling of Christ—Whom he already knew as his Savior—as his greatest honor and treasure, willing to be disgraced for Him. Moses didn’t need Egypt, nor did he fear its king. Rather, Moses prospered by seeing and having the invisible God

at his side. By faith, he looked forward to the same heavenly reward as did Abraham, the father of all those who believe. And that decision, that reproach, that faith made Moses great.

Do we want to be great in God’s kingdom? It won’t happen by seeking power, riches or authority.

It can happen only by identifying with Christ, being willing to share in His reproach and suffering. For the Savior Himself “*did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*” (Mark 10:45) Thus, those who would be great must become servants (Matthew 20:26). As Jesus further testified, those who keep His Word and proclaim it will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19). To such humble faith, obedience and service may we all aspire—even greatly.

David Fuerstenau is pastor of Holy Truth Lutheran Church in Ketchikan, Alaska.



Get Wisdom

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (James 3:17-18)

I think it’s safe to assume that everyone would like to be considered smart. Parents want their children to be smart so they can be successful. Children want to be smart so they don’t get made fun of by their classmates. And none of us like to feel inferior to people we think are smarter than we are. Being smart is important to almost everyone.

Yet, as important as it is to be smart, there is something more important. The truth is, some of the most brilliant people who ever lived will not be in heaven because, in spite of all of their intelligence, they lacked Godly wisdom.

Wisdom is not the same as intelligence. Wisdom does not come from having fancy degrees or from being able to memorize numerous facts. Wisdom is more about knowing what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and why to do it. Wisdom is putting knowledge into practice. For example, I can know that I need to change the tires on my car, but if I don’t know when to do it, I am not wise.

But that’s only talking about earthly knowledge and wisdom. What about Godly wisdom which is often so contrary to the way we think? James tells us that the wisdom that is from above is pure. It’s never mixed with any error. It is peaceable. It always wants to bring people together. It is considerate, understanding, willing to put others ahead of self. It is willing to yield—willing to do what others ask. It is full of mercy, always kind to others even when they wrong us. It is full of good fruits, bearing what God desires. It is impartial, never prejudiced against anyone. It is without hypocrisy. It is sincere and completely genuine.

But how often is our attitude completely the opposite of everything listed here? As we look at all of this, each of us must come to the same conclusion: I am not wise. I am a fool, and as such, I deserve hell.

So how can we gain Godly wisdom? We look to Jesus. He is the wisdom from above, and we see His wisdom on

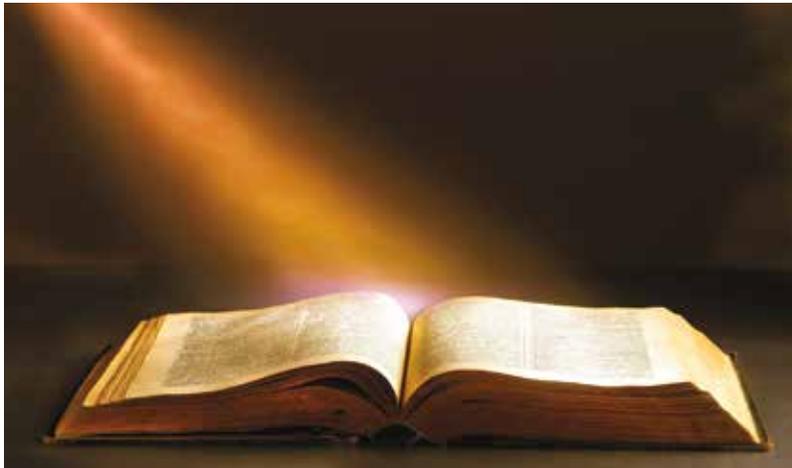
display in everything He says and does. He is pure, always speaking God’s Word in truth. He is peaceable, longing to bring people back to God. In His earthly ministry, He was considerate, helping the weak with healing and care. He was submissive, willing to obey His Father, no matter how much it cost Him. He was full of mercy, not giving

the world what it deserved for sin. He was full of good fruit, doing all that the Father desired. He was impartial, reaching out even to the lowest of the low. He was sincere, genuinely loving every person He ever came across, no matter what they did to Him. More than that, He took all of our failures and foolishness and nailed them to Himself on the cross so that we might be forgiven. And through the work of the Holy Spirit, we believe that this is true, and so we are counted worthy to dwell in heaven because we have been made wise unto salvation.

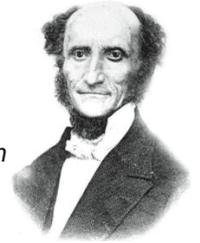
In Christ, we are wise. And so we cast aside the wisdom of the world, and we rejoice in the wisdom from above that has saved us from all of our sins.



Robert Sauers is pastor of Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions.



One of the hallmarks of the Lutheran Church is its proper understanding and application of the Bible's two main teachings—Law and Gospel. Dr. C.F.W. Walther's seminal work, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, is the basis for this two-year series. Note: page numbers given are accurate for the 1929 and 1986 editions of the book.



Two Principles for Correct Preaching

“Thesis V—The first manner of confounding Law and Gospel is the one most easily recognized—and the grossest. It is adopted, for instance, by Papists, Socinians, and Rationalists and consists in this, that Christ is represented as a new Moses, or Lawgiver, and the Gospel turned into a doctrine of meritorious works, while at the same time those who teach that the Gospel is the message of the free grace of God in Christ are condemned and anathematized, as is done by the papists.”

Perhaps the easiest way to understand Dr. Walther's point in this thesis is to consider how the sacraments are understood throughout the various Christian denominations. In the Lutheran Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are looked to as ways Christ our Savior promised to “give, offer, and convey” to the sinner the forgiveness of sins which He died to obtain for us. In this view, the Sacraments are about what God is doing for us and for our salvation. In Baptism, the Holy Spirit buries the individual sinner with Christ and raises him to newness of life with Christ (see Romans 6). In the Lord's Supper, God gives to the sinner the very thing by which Christ obtained forgiveness for us, which is His body—which was given to bear our sin and punishment, and His blood—which was shed on the cross to cleanse us from all sin. Thus, the sacraments are a true means of grace, giving to us that grace of God by which we are saved.

Outside of the Lutheran Church, there is no such understanding of the Sacraments. Instead, they are treated as works on our part, ranging from symbolic acts of obedience to Christ to works that we must perform to

obtain some forgiveness for our sins. Though the latter version sounds much worse than the first, they are identical in nature. They both proceed from an understanding of Christ as a new Lawgiver, one Who came to tell us how to live rather than to give us life through the forgiveness of our sins. In both cases—and in every version of the Sacraments in between—Dr. Walther's analysis rings true: “Anyone, therefore, imagining that Christ is a new Lawgiver and has brought us new laws cancels the entire Christian religion. For he removes that by which the Christian religion differs from all other religions in the world.” (p. 71)

What is that difference between the Christian religion and “all other religions”? In a word, grace. Salvation comes only as a free gift of love from God to the sinner. While it is true that, during His ministry, Christ taught the Law forcefully and sternly, He did so only in the desire that sinners might recognize their inability to meet its demands so that they would then take refuge in Him and the salvation He came to provide. He did not come to heap upon sinners more obligations in addition to the ones we already could not keep.

By contrast, the Holy Scriptures teach us that the Gospel is true grace and that salvation comes only by Christ's work for us. On the cross, He purchased our redemption. Now, through the Gospel in Word and sacrament, He brings that redemption to us. The message of the Gospel is simple. In the words of Jesus to the paralytic, “*Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.*” (Matthew 9:2 ESV)



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

[To read Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* for free on-line, and to access related Bible class materials, go to www.ilc.edu/Walther]

ERROR'S ECHO

In this series we take a look back at some of the most notorious errors and heresies that have threatened the church over the centuries, as well as the subtle (and not so subtle) ways in which those false teachings continue to haunt 21st century thought and theology.

Donatism

Unlike other errors, Donatism did not grow out of futile attempts to explain the deep things of God. It sprouted from the aftermath of persecution.

Roman Emperor Diocletian (A.D. 284-305) initiated a severe persecution in an effort to turn Christians back to paganism. Many Christians then renounced the faith, and many others were imprisoned, tortured, or put to death.

After the persecution, a point of controversy was whether Christians who had forsaken the faith could come back to the church. The church said that they could be readmitted after a lengthy penance. Some, however, referred to those who had renounced the faith as *traditores* ("traitors"), and said they would need to be rebaptized. Donatus, in North Africa, was one of these opposition leaders and the one from whom *Donatism* receives its name.

Donatists also said that no *traditor* could serve in the church, and that any sacraments performed by a *traditor* were invalid. By contrast, the church taught that moral unworthiness among the clergy did not affect the validity of the sacraments they administered.

The division in the church grew as each side worked hard to gain congregations. In the ensuing years, the fortunes of the Donatists rose with freedom and fell with persecution according to each new emperor's wishes and whims.

When the Vandals conquered Africa in 428, the Donatist controversy was effectively ended. A few Donatists remained even then, but like the rest of Africa, these were swept away by the Islamic conquest at the end of the 7th Century.

The historic Lutheran Confessions condemn the Donatists and their practices while upholding the true nature of the Church. "Our churches condemn the Donatists and others like them who have denied that the ministry of evil men may be used in the church." (*Augsburg Confession*, VIII, see also *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, VII and VIII)

The questions asked after Diocletian's persecution echoed in eastern Europe after the fall of Communism, "Should men who collaborated with Communists be considered for

leadership in the churches?" Variations of the Donatists' incorrect application of Scripture continue to echo within Christianity. Applying God's Word faithfully gives clear direction.

The "way back to the Church" after falling from faith is not through church-prescribed penance and rebaptism. Rather, it comes only through the atoning work of Jesus and the forgiveness that is received by grace through faith. The goal is not to *punish* those who have stumbled, but to *restore* them. "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness." (Galatians 6:1) "You ought rather to forgive and comfort him [the penitent], lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow." (2 Corinthians 2:7-8)

The blessings that come to us through Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not dependent on the faith of the one who administers them. If that were true, how could we ever truly know whether or not we had received God's gifts? Rather, it is the Gospel in Word and Sacrament that is "the power of God to salvation." (Romans 1:16) Nevertheless, it is also true that called servants are to be "blameless, as a steward of God" (Titus 1:7), so there can be situations in which a called servant's fall into sin leaves him unable to continue effectively serving in the public ministry.

When sin creates difficult situations, the right course will always and forever be to "follow Christ." The solution is to keep our eyes trained on Him (Hebrews 12:2), and to let the Gospel of forgiveness through Christ alone lead the way.

In reaction to the Donatists, Augustine said, "The church is composed of sinners; if we excluded all sinners, no one would be in ministry." We are indeed all sinners—*redeemed* sinners through the blood of Christ. That is the proclamation that drowns out every one of error's echoes.



Wayne Eichstadt is pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Spokane Valley, Washington.

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Jamestown, North Dakota

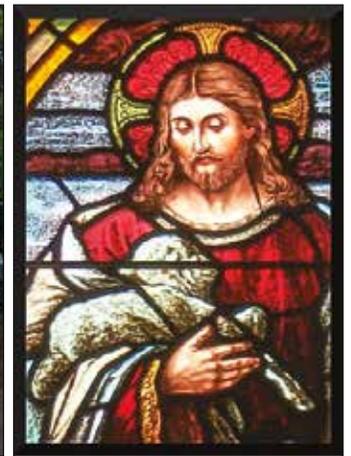
90 Years of Preaching the Gospel

Our Savior's Lutheran Church is approaching its 90th anniversary of preaching the Gospel of forgiveness to the Buffalo City and beyond. As with all things, we give glory to God for what He has done through dedicated men and women of the congregation, along with the long list of called servants who have served here.

A casual observer might say that little has changed since our last report. When it comes to the pure teachings of God's Word, that's a good thing. A few updates do come to mind.



Above Left: Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Jamestown, North Dakota.



Above Right: One of the stained glass windows in Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

JARS

For decades, Redeemer in Bowdle, South Dakota, has hosted the Joint Area Reformation Service, or JARS. Our pastoral study club invites a preacher from another conference, and members gather from around the Dakotas and Nebraska to worship and have a meal on a Sunday evening around Reformation. Redeemer asked Our Savior's to assume the responsibility of hosting this special service, which we did, first in the fall of 2019 with Neal Radichel of Immanuel, Mankato as our guest preacher. Unfortunately, we didn't hold JARS last year due to . . . well, you know why.

COVID

A lot has changed around here due to the virus. While those changes are common to many *Lutheran Spokesman* readers, you may find our circumstances and response to this crisis interesting. In North Dakota, all restrictions placed on churches came in the form of recommendations. Here at Our Savior's, we felt blessed to have the freedom to decide for ourselves how to respond. We suspended in-

person services on March 18, 2020 of last year and resumed them on May 17, 2021.

Masks are not required but also not looked down upon at Our Savior's. We've blocked off a few pews and reduced the size of each table at communion. We have had no monthly potlucks. VBS last summer was a "take home" affair and the children's Christmas Eve program was recorded and posted online.

While not going to church seemed as strange and wrong to us as it did to many of you, we came out of the experience with a lot of positives:

- We began recording services and devotions and posting them to Facebook. Technological challenges related to this (including a steep learning curve for the pastor!) were overcome. We discovered that it wasn't that complicated after all and we probably should have been doing it all along.
- Stronger connections to members-at-a-distance were established and are being maintained.



Left: The sanctuary of Our Savior's where we will soon celebrate 90 years of preaching the Gospel. Bottom inset: Members of the Tour Choir of Immanuel Lutheran College sharing a meal with us.



- We developed better communication between leadership and members via email and text.
- We learned to respect and listen to each other's varying levels of concerns in this time when factual information about risks seems hard to come by and "qualified opinions" are often contradictory.

GARAGE

The parsonage garage was replaced during the last year. Members in the congregation who are in the trades found an opportunity for a "free" 25'x25' modern garage to replace the much smaller and aging one we had. Anyone familiar with building projects knows why the word *free* is in quotation marks. Concrete, permits, electrical, grading, and so forth all cost money, but a combination of generous financial gifts and a lot of volunteer labor made it happen.



TOUR CHOIR

Our Savior's was very happy to host the Tour Choir of

Immanuel Lutheran College on March 14, 2021. We give glory to God for what He continues to do through dedicated and selfless students who share the Word in this way. We especially thank Him for the thirty-three tours directed by retiring Professor John Reim (see page 13) and, of course, his decades of teaching at ILC. Thank you, Lord, for Professor Reim!

TEMPUS FUGIT

Time flies. We were surprised to get a request for an update from the *Spokesman*, until we realized that it has been over six years since the previous article. We're still here at the corner of 5th Avenue and 4th Street SE in Jamestown, still meeting at 10:00 A.M. every Sunday, and still thanking God for sending His Son to die for our sins so we sinners can stand righteous in that great Day. Come, Lord Jesus.

Until then, come on by and see us!



James Naumann is pastor of Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jamestown, North Dakota.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

In this series, those involved with CLC foreign missions profile one aspect of our overseas endeavors.



Story of A Himalayan Seminary Student

[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.]



Far Left:
Church service.
Left: Newly baptized
members.

The Himalayan Bible Institute has two facilities to train and equip students with the Word of God for the church ministry. Of the fourteen students enrolled at one of them, we are going to tell about one young man who came to us for Bible training so he could lead and preach the Word at his rural church.

This young man was born in 1994 in Salyan district, which is in the western part of Nepal. He was the youngest child in the family. He has an elder brother and a sister. He was brought up in a Hindu family and grew up in a rural community which was bound by superstition and witchcraft. The place he belongs is one of the remotest areas in the country. As he is from a low-income family, he had to face many difficulties and challenges. He often didn't get proper food, education, or health services as a result of his poor financial situation. He used to go to the temple of the Hindu god Shiva, but he did not feel peace in his heart, therefore he did not like idol worshipping. He received school education in the village school.

At that time, he heard the Gospel from a preacher from a nearby village. The Holy Spirit ignited faith in his heart. His wife's uncle is a Christian, and he learned something from him. Our local HCLCN pastor went to him and had some Bible lessons and instructed him from the Word of God.

After several months going to our sister church in the area, he was baptized on January 26, 2014. He got some Bible classes and regular worship services. About six months later he went to his own village to preach the saving Word to the community who did not know Christ the Savior.

His father and mother are against his conversion from Hindu to Christian. He is hated and mocked and humiliated for being a Christian. His parents and a brother tried to persuade him to return to Hinduism. His sister is a Christian, so she supported him. He has a wife who is a faithful Christian woman, a son, and a daughter. Even though he is facing various kinds of persecution and difficulty, he is continuing the work of the Kingdom.

Eventually, this young man enrolled in our Himalayan Bible Institute. There he completed a two-year course and is now ready for graduation. He says the training has helped him a lot and he knows more about biblical teachings and truths which he can preach and teach to the congregation which he serves. He says that the Lord has brought more people into His flock.

Now he serves over thirty souls in his village. They gather in a small hut where he preaches and leads the congregation. The HCLCN helped them to build the hut as a worship place. We pray and look forward to training and equipping more local leaders so that many may hear and come to know the truth and be saved.

Every other month we get an update on what's been happening recently at our Immanuel Lutheran High School, College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Professor John Reim Retires

When those outside of the ILC community think of Professor John Reim, they would likely visualize him in the front of a church directing a choir concert. When students or faculty at Immanuel picture John, they may imagine a man, papers in hand, running across campus. First impressions could lead one to think that he is running because he is late. However, for those who know John, his rapid transit from place to place is instead an indication of his approach and dedication to his work.



heard down the hall, his voice conveying an unmistakable liveliness as he engaged with his classes.

When students and staff recall Professor Reim, they will likely remember his chapel talks. His presentations were rich with the Gospel message. He often included a clever linguistic analogy or visual aid that assisted the hearer in understanding and remembering the spiritual message.

During his elementary and high school years, John attended several different schools in California as well as Immanuel Lutheran High School in Eau Claire. He continued his training at Immanuel Lutheran College to receive college and seminary degrees. After serving several years as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Winter Haven, Florida, John accepted the call to return to his alma mater as professor, taking up this role in January 1988 and continuing to serve until May 2021. In 1997, John married Carolyn Gerbitz. They were blessed with three children, all of whom are now college age or older.

For thirty-three years at Immanuel, John was the director of both the mass choir and tour choir. Those who have attended an Immanuel choir concert have witnessed the enthusiasm and joy exhibited by John as he leads the students in their songs of praise. This joy and enthusiasm is often mirrored in the faces of smiling vocalists. Those who have had the privilege of attending many ILC concerts would have noticed that each concert was fresh and new. It seemed that every concert included a new, original composition from John. Many concerts also included songs from different cultures and musical styles from around the world. Without a doubt, selecting music and preparing concerts was a year-round marathon for John.

Although John's most visible role was as choir director, he also taught music, German, Spanish, Greek, religion, piano, and organ classes. John was as energetic in his class presentations as in his choir directing. He could often be

John was not content with standing still professionally, either. Although he had the equivalent of a Master's degree by virtue of his seminary training, John took courses at the University of Wisconsin and earned a Master's degree in Music. When Immanuel needed a Spanish teacher, John pursued training so that he could transition from teaching German to teaching Spanish. Many of his summers were spent taking advantage of professional development opportunities, literally around the world. Though a seasoned teacher with plenty of experience, John was always striving to learn new things to improve his work at Immanuel.

In addition to choir concerts, John impacted the lives of many CLC members by compiling the Worship Supplement (year 2000). Many of the hymns selected and liturgies written by John have become ingrained in the worship lives of CLC members and has also reached those outside our fellowship.

Following the 2020-21 school year, John and Carrie plan to take up residence in the Milwaukee area. We thank the Lord for the work He accomplished through both of them, and wish His continued blessings on their family.

"Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!" (Ps 96:1) Thank you, Professor Reim, for helping so many of us sing songs of praise to our Lord!



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

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS MAY 2021

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
May 1	TLH 633	1 Chronicles 28:1-10, 20-21	King David prepared his son Solomon for the building of the Lord’s temple. God’s house was important then and it still is today.
May 3	TLH 478	Zechariah 2:1-13	The Lord’s believers (His “Jerusalem”) enjoy His presence and His protection.
May 4	TLH 220; LSB 564	Zechariah 3:1-10	Although Satan tries to accuse us of sin, Jesus defends us by covering our sins with His righteousness, just as Joshua was given a change of clothes in Zechariah’s vision.
May 5	TLH 214	John 14:27-31	Jesus has gone to His Father, but He has not left us alone or without comfort. We are comforted by the peace of Jesus’ forgiveness every day.
May 6	TLH 342 (LSB 611)	John 15:1-17	Those who are connected to Jesus bring forth the “fruit” of good works in their lives. We especially know Christ’s people by their love for others.
May 7	TLH 472	John 15:18-27	We followers of Jesus won’t be treated well by the unbelieving world. But that’s okay because it shows we aren’t part of the world’s unbelief.
May 8	TLH 636	Zechariah 4:1-14	Whether building up the temple in Jerusalem or building up the Holy Christian Church throughout the world, both are done in the strength of the Spirit and not by human strength.
May 10	TLH 461	Zechariah 5:1-11	Those who practice wickedness and do not repent are excluded from the Church of God.
May 11	TLH 460	Zechariah 6:1-15	God will judge the world, but the Lord Jesus (the “Branch”) is our salvation and He will build His Church.
May 12	TLH 227	John 16:1-15	Difficult days were ahead for Jesus’ disciples, but the Spirit of Truth would be with them to guide them. Our trials as Jesus’ disciples are also eased by the Comforter.
May 13	TLH 471	John 16:16-24	When Jesus died, His disciples were sad and fearful, but when He rose and they saw Him again they were joyful. Now we are sad and fearful, but when we see Jesus again we will rejoice.
May 14	WS 736 (LSB 633)	John 16:25-33	By His death and resurrection Jesus has conquered for us all the evil and trouble that the world can throw at us. Hallelujah!
May 15	TLH 417 (LSB 703)	Zechariah 7:1-14	While in exile, the people fasted and “acted religious,” but were their hearts really in tune with the Lord’s will? Watch that your religious activities flow from a repentant heart.
May 17	TLH 524 (LSB 734)	Zechariah 8:1-23	The Lord’s delivering hand would bring about the release of Judah from exile in Babylon. Later, many throughout the world (including us) would cling to Judah’s God.
May 18	TLH 218 (LSB 494)	Zechariah 9:1-17	All God’s enemies are brought to nothing, and our King, Jesus Christ, appears in order to save us from sin, death, and Satan!
May 19	TLH 464 (LSB 649)	John 17:1-26	In this famous prayer just before His death, we see how much Jesus wants eternal life for you and me—and everyone.
May 20	TLH 142 (LSB 438)	John 18:1-11	Of course Jesus could have escaped His crucifixion, but that would have ruined everything. He was there to take responsibility for our sins, and that is exactly what He would do.
May 21	TLH 143 (LSB 439)	John 18:12-40	One by one they all turn against Jesus. Annas, then Peter, then Pilate, then the whole crowd. Finally, we have all turned each one to his own way. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
May 22	WS 756 (TLH 345)	Zechariah 10:1-12	The Lord had brought judgment on Judah to reveal to them the depth of their sins, but He promised also to restore them so He could send them a Savior.
May 24	TLH 485	Zechariah 11:1-17	Wicked spiritual shepherds had contributed greatly to Judah’s downfall, but the Good Shepherd (Jesus) would strike out against the false prophets until He too was rejected.
May 25	TLH 474	Zechariah 12:1-14	Judah’s inhabitants would find peace and security in Jesus Christ during His ministry, but they would also suffer the sorrow of seeing Him crucified, and they would mourn their sins.
May 26	TLH 144 (LSB 421)	John 19:1-16	Pilate finally caved to political pressure and to protect himself he handed Jesus over to be crucified. May we stand firm when we are pressed by sin and not give in to the crowd.
May 27	TLH 165	John 19:17-27	Caring for His mother at the cross, Jesus not only honors the fourth commandment in our place but also gives us a reminder of His love toward all His family (you and me included).
May 28	WS 722	John 19:28-42	The payment for our sins completed, Jesus declared His work finished. Proof of its acceptance in heaven would be made public on the third day.
May 29	TLH 170 (LSB 452)	Zechariah 13:1-9	The Lord promised to wash away the sin and impurity of the people. Ultimately, this took place when Christ was “struck” and crucified for sin.
May 31	TLH 469 (LSB 648)	Zechariah 14:1-11	Just as the Lord fought for the salvation of His people long ago, He “fights for us upon the plain with His good gifts and Spirit.”

IN THE PIPELINE

Want to meet the person who may be your next pastor or Christian day school teacher? This series profiles the men and women who are in their final year of preparation for the public teaching or preaching ministry at Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Kathleen Lynne Naumann

Age: 25

Program: College—
Teaching Track

Year in School: Senior

Where were you born?

Olympia, Washington

Where did you grow up?

In the Pacific Northwest—Tacoma, Washington, to be exact.

Married? Unmarried? Tell us about your family.

Unmarried. I'm the middle child of five, with two older brothers (Nick and Drew) and two younger sisters (Claire and Jane).

What hobbies, sports or extracurriculars interest you?

I enjoy puzzles of all kinds, thrifting, and hanging out with family and friends.

Tell us one thing about yourself that most people don't know.

Though never much for organized athletics, I've always been an excellent badminton player!

Which academic subjects especially interest you?

Math and English have always been some of my strongest subjects.

How did you first come to consider the public teaching or preaching ministry as a career?

When I graduated from ILHS, I was considering becoming a dental hygienist, but I don't enjoy chemistry very much, and dental hygiene programs involve quite a few chemistry



classes. My cousin Michaela Winters and I are very close, and she called me one day as she was nearing her graduation from the Education program at ILC. When she spoke about how excited she was to get into her own classroom, her enthusiasm was contagious, and I couldn't help feeling that I wanted to see for myself if this was the right track for me.

What have you appreciated most about your time at ILC?

The Christian community that surrounds each student here. In high school, I remember some classmates complaining that there's "too much Jesus talk" at ILC. After I graduated from high school in 2014, I found myself very much missing all that talk about Jesus at chapels, in the classroom, around campus, etc. Christ is made the central focus of all aspects of education and life on campus, and

that atmosphere is very encouraging and edifying for young Christians at a time in their lives when they are extremely impressionable.

What qualities do you think will most be needed by the future leaders of the church?

1 Corinthians 13:1-3,13: "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

"And now these three remain: *faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*"

SEEN IN PASSING

Items of interest from various sources of religious news and opinion, in print and on the web.

Chinese Christians Told to Renounce Their Faith or Lose Benefits. In April 2020, provincial government officials in China began to cancel old age and disability benefits to those who espouse the Christian faith. *Bitter Winter*, a human rights and religious liberty magazine, reported that the provincial government of “Linfen, a prefecture-level city in the northern province of Shanxi, called officials from all villages under its jurisdiction for a meeting. The participants were ordered to remove crosses, religious symbols and images from the homes of people of faith who receive social welfare payments and replace them with portraits of Chairman Mao and President Xi Jinping. The officials were instructed to annul the subsidies to those who protest the order.” Other Chinese provinces are doing the same. “A Christian from Weihui city in the central province of Henan has been taking care of her two sons by herself after her husband died unexpectedly more than ten years ago. She started receiving a minimum living allowance from the state in 2016. In early April, a village official ordered the woman to sign a statement renouncing her faith and destroy all Christian symbols in her house. Since she refused, her allowance was canceled.” Feng, Zhang. “People on Social Welfare Ordered to Worship CCP, Not God.” News—China. *BitterWinter.org*, 20 Jul. 2020. Web. 16 Mar. 2021.

A Big Win in the Fight Against Pornography. On December 4, 2020, the New York Times published an article by Nicholas Kristof that was highly critical of Pornhub, the largest pornography site on the web, claiming that it contained user-submitted depictions of underage subjects, violent sex acts, and other exploitative content. The article was swiftly followed by U.S. and Canadian government scrutiny of the website, and a threat of restrictive legislation, fines, and lawsuits. Simultaneously, Discover, Visa, and Mastercard announced that they would no longer process payments from the site due to the unlawful material. As a result, Pornhub in an overnight move deleted over ten million videos, roughly three-quarters of its content. The anti-trafficking ministry “Exodus Cry,” whose long campaign against Pornhub predated the Kristof article, “has framed its efforts in the fight around the scriptural call to ‘set the captives free,’ seeing pornography and prostitution as an issue of exploitation and abuse of power, not just sexual sin.” Director Laila Mickelwait says she’s not satisfied with this win, however: “Justice means shutting this site down and holding its executives criminally accountable for what they have done, and we will stop at nothing less.” Shellnutt, Kate. “Pornhub Removes Majority of Videos in a Victory for Exodus Cry.” *Gleanings. ChristianityToday.com*, 14 Dec. 2020. Web. 16 Mar. 2021.

Euthanasia Gains Ground in Europe. European countries like the Netherlands and Belgium have long been on the radical edge of social issues, but their practices regarding euthanasia especially have drawn worldwide attention in recent years. Both countries now allow mentally ill patients who ask to die to be euthanized. “According to government statistics, in 2017, Dutch psychiatrists and doctors euthanized 83 mentally ill patients. Sometimes these legal homicides are accompanied by consensual organ harvesting after death. . . . The Supreme Court of Switzerland, a country that permits assisted suicide clinics—ruled several years ago that the mentally ill have a constitutional right to access death. Accordingly, there are many verified cases of the non-physically ill being assisted to kill themselves—including an elderly woman who wanted to die because she had lost her looks. Canada, which recently legalized lethal injection euthanasia for those whose deaths are ‘reasonably foreseeable,’ now is debating expanding the right to be killed to those whose lives are not in danger.” Smith, Wesley. “Targeting People with Mental Illness and Dementia for Euthanasia.” *Special Report. Spectator.org*, 17 Oct. 2019. Web. 16 Mar. 2021.

A Growing Habit of Cohabiting. “A Pew Research survey in 2019 found that 58 percent of white evangelicals and 70 percent of black Protestants believe cohabiting (living together without marriage) is acceptable if a couple plans to marry. The youngest Americans are far more liberal on cohabitation, with less than 10 percent finding it morally problematic. The idea of waiting until marriage comes across as even more antiquated in other studies. The most recent National Survey of Family Growth, done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and completed in 2019, has found that 43 percent of evangelical Protestants ages 15 to 22 said they definitely or probably would cohabit in the future. Only 24 percent said they definitely would not. Over two-thirds of those ages 29 to 49 had cohabited at least once. And 53 percent of evangelical Protestants currently in their first marriage cohabited with each other prior to being legally wed.” Ayers, David. “First Comes Love, Then Comes House Keys.” *Christianity Today* April 2021:36. Print.

