

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

• IN THIS MANNER • THEREFORE • PRAY •

OUR **FATHER** IN HEAVEN
.....
HALLOWED BE
YOUR NAME | YOUR
KINGDOM COME
YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN
HEAVEN | GIVE US
THIS DAY
OUR **DAILY BREAD & FORGIVE**
US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS
AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION
BUT **DELIVER US** FROM THE
EVIL ONE
FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM
AND **THE POWER** AND
THE **GLORY FOREVER** | AMEN

————— MATTHEW 6:9-13 —————

CLC Preaching Stations

Many CLC congregations have members who live a great distance from their home congregation or other sister CLC congregations. As the Lord gives the opportunity, preaching stations have been established. Pastors from several congregations serve these small groups with the Word and Sacrament on a regular basis. Some of these groups meet in homes, others in rented facilities. Visitors are always warmly welcomed. Those who are considering a move or are just traveling through the area are encouraged to contact these preaching stations and worship with them.

Location	Pastoral Contact	Lay Contact
Alaska, Anchorage	Pastor David Fuerstenau (907) 225-2842	Mr. Josh Schultz (907) 350-6981
Alaska, Fairbanks	Pastor David Fuerstenau (907) 225-2842	Mr. Erich Hoffmann (907) 488-3017
California, Pasadena (L.A. area)	Pastor Terrel Kesterson (650) 204-9751	Mr. Mike Collins (818) 883-1748
California, Stockton	Pastor Steven Karp (510) 581-6637	Mr. Roy Cameron (209) 988-0148
Florida, Orlando	Pastor John Schierenbeck (863) 299-4084	Mr. Paul Kuehne (407) 595-5589
Iowa, Sioux Center	Pastor James Albrecht (507) 853-4417	Mr. Roger Ver Mulm (712) 722-2805
Michigan, Iron Mountain	Pastor Ed Starkey (906) 265-2124	
Minnesota, Eden Prairie (SW Twin Cities area)	Pastor David Schierenbeck (651) 492-2323	Mr. Mark Herrick (952) 944-3553
Minnesota, Rochester	Pastor Theodore Barthels (507) 433-1957	Mr. Paul C. Nolting (507) 382-4161
New Mexico, Albuquerque		Mr. Robin Volgsland (505) 892-6934
Ohio, Cincinnati (area)	Pastor Todd Ohlmann (314) 517-0177	Dr. David Menton (859) 534-5987
Ohio, Cleveland	Pastor Walter Schaller (248) 677-7242	
Oklahoma, Oklahoma City	Pastor Matthew Hanel (973) 733-4535	
South Carolina, Rock Hill	Pastor Vance Fossum (803) 796-0770	Mr. Walt Raffel (803) 328-9496
Tennessee area	Pastor Nathanael Mayhew (770) 962-9034	
Texas, Austin	Pastor Matthew Hanel (973) 733-4535	Mr. Chuck Kurth (512) 794-8991
Virginia, Fairfax (Washington, DC area)	Pastor Glenn Oster (803) 361-2739	Mr. David Loop (703) 250-2020
Washington, Withrow	Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer (509) 327-4203	Mr. Ray Lillquist (509) 683-1192
British Columbia, Vancouver (Canada)	Pastor David Reim (250) 549-5250	

The Privilege of Prayer

Pastor Theodore Barthels • Austin, Minnesota

*“The LORD is near to all who call upon Him,
to all who call upon Him in truth.*

He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;

He also will hear their cry and save them”

(PSALM 145:18-19)

Wouldn't it be nice if we could pick up the telephone and talk to the President of the United States and share our problems with him? Wouldn't it be even better if he could actually give individual attention to each and every one of us?

Of course, there is no way the President could address the individual concerns of over 300 million citizens. The current President and others have gone to the scene of some calamity to share in the sorrows and to comfort the stricken, but even as the national leader arrives at one scene, other scenes of loss and distress are occurring elsewhere.

Now let's consider that we do have the “open access” privilege with the King, the great God, our Father in heaven, who can indeed help us and who can and does care in a very personal way about each and every citizen of His Kingdom.

We have a Ruler in heaven who has power to deliver us from every evil, for He has loved us and sent His Son to redeem us. We can come to Him with all our hurts, all our concerns, and He promises to hear us. He sympathizes with us in our weaknesses and in our sorrows.

How wondrous it is that our Heavenly Father cares about and has compassion for each of us. No matter where we may be or what our trouble or affliction may be, He promises to hear our cry and to deliver His own! The deliverance He grants may not be as we envision or wish, for we do not know what is best for us

in the eternal scheme of things—yet with childlike faith we know that the Lord our God is always good to those who come to Him, hearing each and every prayer brought to Him in Jesus’ name.

Therein is the key to this special privilege—it is Jesus! Jesus has paved the way. By His innocent suffering and death for us, Jesus opened the way to the throne of God’s grace. He has made it possible for us unworthy ones to be “*fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*” (Ephesians 2:19). Thus He, and He alone, is our Mediator and Intercessor before the throne of God (see 1 Timothy 2:5).

Our Heavenly Father is at the same time our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier. As such He cares for the members of His household and desires to hear all that is weighing upon our minds and hearts. As our psalm text says, He has promised that He will hear us and act upon our faith-filled prayers.

God has issued many other invitations and promises in the Bible. “*Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me*” (Psalm 50:15). Our Savior Jesus says, “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you*” (Matthew 7:7). “*Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you*” (John 16:23). “*And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive*” (Matthew 21:22).

At times people are heard to joke about Christians having “a connection with the Man upstairs.” Far from being a joke, by God’s grace we honestly and actually DO have such a connection! “*For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers, but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil*” (1 Peter 3:12).

May the Holy Spirit lead us to appreciate what a high and special privilege we have with “open access” prayer to our loving Heavenly Father. And may His promises encourage us to make full use of this privilege. Amen!

At times people are heard to joke about Christians having “a connection with the Man upstairs.” ... by God’s grace we honestly and actually DO have such a connection!



To See The Glory Of God

Pastor David Fuerstenau · Ketchikan, Alaska

There can be a premature longing among the godly pious on Earth to see the full glory of our Lord.

So it was with Moses who asked, *“Please, show me Your glory”* (Exodus 33:18). God told His prophet that this was not possible, *“for no man shall see My face, and live.”* Moses had already seen the glory of God in a cloud atop Mount Sinai, but that was rather impersonal. To see God’s glory even partially, Moses had to be hidden in the cleft of a rock and covered with the hand of God; he was then permitted to see only God’s back as He passed by, *“...but My face shall not be seen”* (33:23).

Centuries later, on a certain mountain in Palestine, God again made allowances and provisions. Three disciples of Jesus—Peter, James and John—saw a heavenly scene: the transfiguration of our Lord. Also appearing in glory were Elijah and Moses. Elijah, an Old Testament gospel prophet, had been taken alive to heaven accompanied by a chariot and horses of fire. Moses was the Old Testament lawgiver whose body might have been carried to heaven by Michael the archangel (Jude 9) after God had buried Moses on Mount Nebo.

On the mountain Jesus’ *“face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light”* (Matthew 17:2). Thus the disciples were permitted to see Christ’s glory even in a physical way, although the full impact and realization of it might have been muted by their drowsiness and sleepy eyes.

So impressed and even rattled was Peter by this sight that he wanted to stay and build a tabernacle for each. Why descend again to the plain when one has experienced such glory!?

But it was not to be. As Elijah and Moses knew full well and as they discussed with Jesus, first must come the humiliation of the cross—that is, the willing yet hellish suffering of the Lord by which He would redeem and reconcile fallen mankind. Only then could He return to His glorious heavenly tabernacle.

Do you and I long to see the glory of the Lord? Let us be patient. It will happen. If we saw that glory now with uncovered mortal eyes,

we probably wouldn't survive. As the disciples, we would likely be too frightened and shocked to much enjoy the spectacle. Even staring into the sun can blind a person. Who can imagine maintaining eye contact with Him whose *"eyes were like a flame of fire"* (John's vision of the Lord in heaven reported in Revelation 1:14).

To see that eternal glory with physical sight, our eyes will have to be changed, as they will be on the day of resurrection. Until then, we wait on the earthly plain with great expectation to see the face of the Lord.

But that does not mean we are left waiting without certain previews, without indications, without revelation. The psalmist wrote that the very heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19). Those heavens we can see. The Bethlehem shepherds saw a heavenly angel *"as the glory of the Lord shone about them."* We can imagine the scene as Luke reported it. In his Gospel John declared that *"the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory"* (John 1:4).

Not in a physical sense, but spiritually and by faith we do see the glory of the Lord—we see it in revelation, in His Truth, in His saving gospel Word. The righteous already see Him as He is—the Savior with grace and mercy, truth and power to save us from our sins. Revel in this sight!

**... by faith we do see
the glory of the Lord—
we see it in revelation,
in His Truth, in His
saving gospel Word.**

By faith each believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore glorifies God in his body. *"For God...has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 4:6).

Blessed are all they who have not seen, and yet believe.

Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have seen!

Having seen the glory of Jesus in His creative work, in His obedient life, in His atoning suffering and death, in His justifying resurrection; having seen His glory through His works and Word and having the light of such knowledge in our hearts; being reflectors of His glory by our faith and pious works—we stand ready with IOD glasses to behold Him *"coming in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory"* (Matthew 24:30).

As He leads us off this worldly plain to the heavenly Mount Zion, we shall then fully *"see Him as He is for we shall be like Him"* (1 John 3:2); then *"we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man"* (1 Corinthians 15:49).

That's the more filled-out description of the eternal blessedness of all those who long to see the glorious face of God!

LOVE: Valentine's Day or Every Day?

Pastor Jay Hartmann · Corpus Christi, Texas

On the day when the world celebrates “love” with flowers, cards, candy, and various other trinkets, what part does it play in the Christian life?

Actually, the love celebrated on Valentine's Day by the world is not the love that the Christ-believer celebrates every day. Valentine's Day is a day in which sensuality, materialism, and commercialism are thinly veiled in the name of love. While there is nothing wrong with showing love toward loved ones with gifts, mere worldly love does not reflect the true love that Christians celebrate daily.

Every moment of our lives we celebrate the love of Jesus as it was given and shown in His life and death as our substitute. The Lord Himself explains both the perfect love He has for us and the love He wants us to have for others when He teaches: *“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails”* (1 Corinthians 13:4–8a).

This love is known in Christian circles as *agape* (Greek: ah-gah-pay) love—the highest and greatest form of love demonstrated by God to a lost and fallen world through His Son, our Savior Jesus. *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 4:10).

The love seen in advertisements for flowers and candy is a far cry from the love we as God's redeemed and dearly loved children celebrate and rejoice in every second of our lives. Worldly love does not give any kind of lasting assurance or peace. But the love God demonstrates for all mankind is the all-consuming and unconditional love expressed in the familiar passage, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).

God's *agape* love shown in Jesus produces faith, forgiveness, and salvation by the Spirit working through the gospel. Such “true love” shown in our lives can only be a gift of the Spirit. Its greatest demonstration is always and only in Christ's life and death. God's

true love for us is celebrated not only on one particular calendar day but continually by those who have been called to faith in Christ.

The love Jesus shows and we as His children strive to have is always pointed away from self. True Christian love is first and foremost for our Savior God, and thus radiates outward rather than inward in true reflection of Christ's love.

Whether on Valentine's Day or any day, we strive to practice the love empowered by Jesus: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).

Dear Christian, give your "sweetheart" candy and flowers and gifts if you will. But if you want to give true love, give Christian love—love such as that shown in our Savior's life and death freely given for us unworthy sinners. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).



A True Christian Love Song

What Wondrous Love Is This—Words: Attributed to Alexander Means. This hymn is often sung during the Lenten season throughout the Church of the Lutheran Confession and the world. It's found in our *Worship Supplement 2000* hymnal (#723), and the melody with its haunting modal or "mountain minor" character surely enhances its powerful words (verses 1 and 4 are listed below). This timeless American folk hymn expresses God's *agape* love and makes a "sweet" meditation on Christ's wonderful love (st. 1) which brought about our salvation—to which believers respond with praise now and through eternity (st. 4).

Verse 1:

What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, O my soul!

What wondrous love is this,
O my soul!

What wondrous love is this
that caused the Lord of bliss

To bear the dreadful curse
for my soul, for my soul,

To bear the dreadful
curse for my soul!

Verse 4:

And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing on, I'll sing on;

And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing on.

And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing His love for me,

And through eternity,
I'll sing on, I'll sing on;

And through eternity,
I'll sing on.



"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." John 15:13

Smudged Face = Clean Heart?

Teacher David W. Bernthal • Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

“Tradition...tradition!”

Some of you may be humming or singing the catchy tune from *Fiddler on the Roof* by now.

As good Lutherans, we know it isn't only the Jewish faith that is rife with tradition. Our Lutheran heritage too has handed down many customs and traditions over the centuries. But if someone were to ask us why we follow a certain tradition, and we have to answer as Tevye the milkman (in the above musical) answered, “I will tell you...I don't know!”—then we need to do some research!

Ash Wednesday has its traditions from well before the Lutheran church came into existence. This first day of the Lenten season is intended to make Christians mindful of their sins and to bring into focus the gravity of those sins and their consequences. In 1091 Pope Gregory I started the tradition of marking a cross of ashes on the foreheads of the faithful as he uttered the words of Genesis 3:19, “Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.” This custom has been passed down through generations, spreading even to many Protestant denominations.

This custom was reminiscent of Old Testament people of God sitting in ashes or sprinkling them on the head. In a time of great sorrow or repentance, ashes and sackcloth were outward signs of grief or repentance.

Such outward customs may indeed be “fine” (as Dr. Luther puts it in his *Small Catechism*); however, if the custom loses meaning or if the tradition becomes the focus of worship, there is a real problem.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in the temple (Luke 18:9-14), the Pharisee is the one who *appeared* to have it all together spiritually. After all, he dressed the part and *looked* ready for worship, brought the prescribed amount for his offerings, observed the traditions of the day, and stood alert at worship. So who dared doubt sincerity in his confession to his God!?

On the other hand, the tax collector secluded himself in the shadows of the temple and didn't look or act worthy of the Lord's mercy. Yet the Lord, who sees and knows all, declared this man to be justified rather than the other. That declaration was based on God's mercy and was prompted by the man's humble confession.

When worshipers focus on *what they are doing* rather than on *whom they are worshiping*, they are in danger of falling into the same category as those whom Jesus spoke of in Matthew 5:7-9. "*Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*"

While placing a smudge of ashes on one's forehead may indeed remind a person that by nature he is nothing but dust and ashes, yet a dirty face does not equal a clean conscience! No amount of ash on the face can disguise the dirt and guilt in one's heart. No hand wringing or psalm chanting is going to exempt one from the coming judgment. Not even a flood of tears will wash away a single misdeed committed against Holy God.

During the coming Lenten season let us focus on the true source of our salvation—the shed blood of our Savior. That innocent blood was poured out for all sinners, so that even undeserving sinners such as we are may stand righteous before God's great throne of grace.

Based on this great mercy of our Lord, we can take to heart the truth behind the words of the poet:

*Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest
Was not spoken of the soul.**

* From "A Psalm of Life" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



While placing a smudge of ashes on one's forehead may indeed remind a person that by nature he is nothing but dust and ashes, yet a dirty face does not equal a clean conscience!

MEDITATIONS ON JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT:
MATTHEW CHAPTERS FIVE THROUGH SEVEN

The Lord's Prayer An Antidote for Anxiety

Pastor John Klatt • Rapid City, South Dakota

In this manner, therefore, pray:

*Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.
Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*

Amen.

*For if you forgive men their trespasses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
But if you do not forgive men their trespasses,
neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

(MATTHEW 6:9-15)

The author **C. S. Lewis** once said that he did not care to read newspapers. He felt that accounts of what was happening far from home distracted him from what was happening close to home. He believed that he needed to pay more attention to friends and neighbors whom he could help or befriend and pay less attention to people in the news whom he could not help.

There are other good reasons for limiting our exposure to national and international news. One is that accounts of wars, natural disasters, and violent crimes are upsetting, even when they have no immediate bearing on our life. We need to have some awareness of what is going on in the world, but we may not need nearly as much as we get these days—when headlines appear on the computer screen every time we open our web browser.

Instead of dwelling on the trouble and turmoil going on in the world, it is far better to commit these matters to our heavenly

Father. Jesus invites us to do this in the prayer that He has given us.

We cannot stop God's enemies from blaspheming His holy name, but we can commit the matter to Him by praying that His name be hallowed. He is able to see to it that His Word is taught in its truth and purity.

We cannot stop God's enemies from fighting against Him and His people, but we can pray that His kingdom come and His will be done. He has the power to thwart the evil plans of His enemies. He has the wisdom to use them to further His own good and gracious purposes.

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus turns our attention from matters far from us to those close to home. By teaching us to pray for our daily bread, He reminds us that we are completely dependent on Him for our needs each day, and that this is so whether we are poor or rich. He reminds us that all we have is from Him and that we are His stewards of our earthly goods. He also lifts from us the burden of anxiety about our daily bread by assuring us that He will provide for us according to His perfect wisdom.

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus humbles us and leads us to repentance. He gets us to thinking about how we have profaned His Name by indifference to His Word or by unholy living. He brings to light our sins against God's holy will.

But He also lifts us up. He offers forgiveness for all the sins that we have committed against Him.

Jesus also shows us our need to forgive others. He singles out this matter for special attention here—following His instruction on prayer. We are inclined to dwell on wrongs done to us, whereas we need to remember that our heavenly Father wants us to forgive others as He has forgiven us.

By teaching us to pray against temptation, Jesus reminds us that we are in constant spiritual danger from Satan, the world, and our own sinful nature. He also assures us that He will protect us from these mortal dangers.

By the prayer that He has given us, Jesus wants to deliver us from troubles of the mind and spirit. It is a precious resource for peace in our daily lives.



INTRODUCTION & PART ONE OF A SERIES

“This is most certainly true!”

Prof. Joseph Lau, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

THE APOSTLES' CREED

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived
by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day
He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven
and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;
from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Let us first give some introductory comments, starting with the basic fact that “A creed is a statement (written or spoken) of what a person believes.” (p. 89, *Luther's Catechism*, Sydow ed.)

The Apostles' Creed is one of the three ecumenical (general or universal) creeds of the Christian Church; the other two creeds are the Nicene (A.D. 325) and the Athanasian (A.D. 450). These three creeds have been used regularly by Christians around the world for centuries.

Along with the Lord's Prayer, *The Apostles' Creed* is perhaps the most familiar religious statement of Christians today. Unlike the other two Creeds whose dates of origin and specific reasons for authorship can be traced, the history of *The Apostles' Creed* is a bit more nebulous.

The Apostles' Creed is the oldest of the three creeds. For centuries it was believed that the apostles of our Lord gathered to write the specific words of the Creed, thus providing its name and authorship. Some accounts even relate that the Creed was composed on the festival of Pentecost with each apostle contributing one statement to it. Since no biblical testimony can be found for such a contention, this is, no doubt, the stuff of legend. The statement of Christian faith most resembling *The Apostles' Creed* in its present form is the Old Roman Creed which was in use already in the A.D. 300s.

So, is the name “Apostles' Creed” inappropriate? No, for the Creed is indeed a fine summary of the doctrines which the apostles of the early church proclaimed, based on the sure words of Scripture itself.

In Ephesians 2:19-20 the “*fellow citizens with the saints*” (the Holy Christian Church) is described as “*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*”

Martin Luther said the following in a sermon on Trinity Sunday, 1535: “Neither we nor the early Fathers invented this Confession of faith, but just as a bee collects honey from all kinds of beautiful flowers, so is the whole of The Apostles’ Creed a finely constructed summary of the whole of Scripture, the writings of the beloved prophets and apostles, for the benefit of children and simple Christians.”

Regarding *The Apostles’ Creed* itself, it can be divided into three sections, each devoted to one member of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Apostles’ Creed is an elaboration of several passages of Holy Scripture, some of which were spoken by Christ Himself. The most familiar of these is the Savior’s Great Commission, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (Matthew 28:19). The early church used a similar confession in connection with the sacrament of Baptism (as *The Apostles’ Creed* is often used today). The triune nature of the God we confess (three-in-one and one-in-three) is also found in the divinely inspired epistles of the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 8:6 and 12:13, Philipians 2:5-11, and I Timothy 2:5-6).

Following the sixteenth century Lutheran Reformation, confessional (creedal!) Lutheran Christians included *The Apostles’ Creed* in the *Book of Concord* of A.D. 1580. The *Book of Concord* was and is a collection of documents the Lutherans believed and taught—all based on the doctrines of Holy Scripture.

In his *Small Catechism* which was intended especially for children, Martin Luther provided a wonderful “explanation” or summary to each of the three parts of the Creed. He did this by giving a thoughtful, Bible-based answer to the question: “*What does this mean?*” The first and shortest article describes the work of the Father: “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”

We intend to take a closer look at each of the three articles in the Catechism in five installments. For the First Article the five parts planned are...

- 1) God is my Father Almighty;**
- 2) God is Maker of Heaven and Earth;**
- 3) God is my Preserver and Provider;**
- 4) God is my Protector;**
- 5) God does all this for me by His grace.**

THE FIRST ARTICLE

(About Creation)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has created me and all creatures.

He has given me my body and life, eyes, ears, and all my bodily members, my mind, and all my senses and still keeps them for me.

God also preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, animals, and all my property and all I need to support this body and life. He

protects me from all danger. He guards and defends me from every evil. God does all this because He is my good and gracious Father in heaven, not because of anything I have done to earn or deserve it.

For all of this it is my duty to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

(Martin Luther's SMALL CATECHISM, Sydow edition, 2000)

1) God is my Father Almighty

I remember a photograph from my youth in which my father was carrying my pre-teen brother and me, one in each arm. At the time I remember thinking that dad was strong enough to do anything. Perhaps you've had the similar feeling of having an 'almighty' human father.

But as I grew up and then became a father myself, I became all too aware that both my dad and I had power that was limited in almost every way. Try as they might, human fathers—even Christian ones—just can't do everything they would like to do for their children.

Because we human fathers are sinful, we fall short on a daily basis. Surely we can't provide the most important thing of all—a remedy for the sins of our children; nor can we prevent their physical or eternal death.

In *The Apostles' Creed* we Christians profess belief in a different kind of Father, one who is truly almighty in every sense of the word. Without any merit or worthiness in us, we have become His adopted children through faith in His Son, Jesus, our Brother. "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*" (1 John 3:1).

As this series continues in *The Lutheran Spokesman* in coming months, we pray that we will be drawn ever closer to our Triune God so that we all echo the Bible-based Christian confidence of Martin Luther, the Reformer, as he expresses it in that concluding statement to the Explanation of each Article: "**This is most certainly true!**"



The Beauty and Joy of Christian Fellowship

Pastor Em. David Lau · Eau Claire, Wisconsin

(Fifth of eight installments)

As we study the Scriptures, we soon learn that there is another very special evil that is always threatening to spoil the beauty and joy of Christian fellowship. In fact, it is this evil that first spoiled the relationship between God and our first parents in Paradise.

What is this evil? It is the teaching of some point that is either contrary to God's teaching or that adds to or subtracts from it. Satan spoiled the perfect fellowship in Eden by introducing a doctrine that was contrary to God's Word. He said to Eve: *"You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"* (Genesis 3:4). This, of course, was contrary to God's clear command: *"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die"* (Genesis 2:17).

The introduction of false teaching



is a dangerous evil because it not only involves sin on the part of the teacher but it also has the potential of leading others astray from God's Word. That is why our Lord does not want any kind of false teaching to gain a foothold in His

Church. The apostle Paul instructed his assistant Timothy: *"Remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine"* (1 Timothy 1:3). No greater harm can come to a Christian congregation than when those who are supposed to be God's spokesmen teach otherwise than what God's Word teaches.

With respect to false teaching Paul repeated the same warning he had used in connection with the toleration of ungodly conduct. He wrote: *"A little leaven leavens the whole lump"* (Galatians 5:7). In fact, Paul went so far as to curse those who change or pervert Christ's gospel:

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8). Paul compared false teaching not only to yeast that permeates the whole loaf but to cancer that spreads quickly if it is not dealt with at once. In the early church Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching lies concerning the resurrection of the dead. Paul said of them that *“they overthrow the faith of some”* and *“their message will spread like cancer”* (2 Timothy 2:17-18).

False teaching is seductive, appealing to a human being's old Adam. Sometimes it is introduced out of personal malice. Sometimes it spares its promoters and adherents persecution from the unbelieving world. Satan even likes to pretend that false teaching is a thing of beauty and joy and love in contrast to the true teaching of the Lord—which appears to be so rigid and unbending. Since Satan knows how to disguise himself as an angel of light, false teaching is presented as love, tolerance, freedom, and fair play.

But God's Word is clear. He wants His ambassadors to *“preach the Word”* (2 Timothy 4:2) and *“teach no other doctrine”* (1 Timothy 1:3). He provides this assessment of any teacher who disagrees: *“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which*

accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing” (1 Timothy 6:3-4).

Remember how God warned His Old Testament people against false teaching. If they heard of anyone bringing in false worship, they were told to investigate, and if the report was true, and wrong teaching was being taught to God's people, they were directed by God to take drastic action immediately lest the false teaching spread (Deuteronomy 17:2-7). Sadly, God's people rarely heeded this strong warning, and as a result their nation was corrupted by false teaching of various kinds, even gross idolatry, and the people were led away from their God. Throughout Israel's history the beauty and joy of true fellowship with their God was rarely to be seen, simply because of the snares of false teaching that had been allowed to spread, unchecked by the positive action God demanded.

In the New Testament the presence of false teaching in Christ's Church does not call for the death penalty, but it does call for action lest God's people be led away from Christ and His Word. The continuing action that is necessary in order to preserve the beauty and joy of Christian fellowship is an intelligent alertness to what is going on in the world. Our Lord Jesus said: *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous*

wolves” (Matthew 7:15). Jesus’ disciples were slow learners. They did not understand at first what He meant when He told them “to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” But finally “they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matthew 16:11-12).

John wrote: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Paul wrote to Titus: “There are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain” (Titus 1:11).

How do we stop the mouths of false teachers? We cannot prevent them from public speaking, of course, but we can prevent them from speaking in our churches and schools. There is nothing beautiful or joyful about false teaching. It creates dissensions; it disturbs the faith of the simple; it can even lead lifelong confessors of Christ into doubts and despair. Through every kind of false teaching Satan’s aim is always the same: to destroy our faith in the gospel of Christ and lead us into the hell where he himself is destined to spend eternity.

In our dealings with suspected

false teachers we, of course, need to have the attitude Paul called for in these words: “I beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:1-2), but at the same time we should be spiritually alert. “We should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ” (Ephesians 4:14).

This means that when God’s Word demands strong action in behalf of God’s people who are in danger of being misled by contrary teaching, we will not hesitate to do what Paul tells us to do: “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:17-18). Notice that the purpose of this action of avoiding is to prevent simple Christians from being led astray. The beauty and joy of Christian fellowship is in evidence when Christians love each other so as to do what needs to be done to protect one another from the cancer and leaven of false teaching.

(to be continued)

Another Mass Murder

Pastor Paul Fleischer • Cheyenne, Wyoming

Words cannot express the horror experienced in the Connecticut city where a young man murdered his mother at home, then entered the kindergarten classroom in a local school, shooting to death twenty children and six others on the school staff. After the rampage, the killer killed himself.

A number of Scriptures come to mind, including: *“But we know that the law...is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers...”* (1 Timothy 1:8-11).

The grief of the parents and others who suffered the loss of loved ones is almost beyond our conception. Psychoanalysts and grief counselors will try to discover and explain reasons for such barbarism, but apart from Holy Scripture nothing that god-less, unbelieving worldly/secular/humanistic counselors come up with will get to the bottom of the problem of such violence in our murderous culture.

Bible-believing Christians, on the other hand, know the root cause of such violence and thus can begin to understand it and prescribe the solution to such senseless slaughter. It all began with the world’s first family, when Adam and Eve’s first son Cain murdered their second son Abel (Genesis 4). Their grief and trauma were amplified by knowing that their own disobedience and fall into sin (Genesis 3) had brought death into the world. What their killer-son did to his brother had to be traced to the sin they had passed along to him!

Still today, the disobedience of Adam and Eve is the root of all sin, including murder.

When Jesus wanted His disciples to realize what it was that “defiled” a man, He said: *“Out of the [sinful] heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies....”* (Matthew 15:19f). The sad truth is that it is the heart of all unregenerate people—and our own sinful nature, too—which gives birth to the most vicious and heinous of crimes, including murder.

Recognition and acceptance of this truth suggests that the only real solution to sin and all its consequences and ramifications is the gospel of Jesus Christ—that sinners become “righteous” through a new birth

which creates faith in the Savior.

The law of God—or of man—can only check or restrain sin to a degree. Yes, “*the law [of God] is good if one uses it lawfully,*” but that law cannot change or alter the sinful human heart. That is the Holy Spirit’s domain, for “*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The new birth brought about through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (also, via the sacrament of Holy Baptism: Titus 3:5-7) instills a new and clean heart.

By the same Spirit God’s reborn children are able to “rule” over the sin within. “*The LORD said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it*” (Genesis 4:6f). By allowing jealousy to rule him, Cain’s sinful heart drove him to snuff out the life of his brother.

Consider also King David. Guilty of adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11), David was led by the Holy Spirit to record the only solution to his on-going sin problem (which remains the problem of all descendants of Adam and Eve). Turning to God in contrition and repentance, David pleaded: “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me...Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness*” (51:10,14).

It is not God’s fault when such horrific things as mass murders happen. God has been and remains a loving and merciful God. By His grace He has also provided the solution to the “sin problem” within this evil, fallen world. That solution is His gospel of a Savior from sin and of a Spirit who enables “born-again” sinners to crucify their sinful flesh (Galatians 5:14) and by the Spirit’s power to rule over the sin that arises within.

Such scriptural truths help explain the cause behind mass murders and other heinous crimes. The same Scriptures are the best place for the victims to turn—and for you and me, as we all languish under sin’s ugly consequences. Jesus Christ was born to die for us. Jesus overcame sin and death by willingly enduring the horror of God-forsakenness and (innocent!) crucifixion for us. He, our Wonderful Counselor, invites the broken-hearted to come to Him for healing, saying: “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28).



Editor's note: For both obituaries in this issue our reporter is Prof. Em. Paul R. Koch, faculty colleague at ILC of both Jim Pelzl and Adelgunde Schaller.

IN MEMORY OF

James Charles Pelzl

Family, friends, and former colleagues of James C. Pelzl gathered on November 19, 2012, at Messiah Lutheran Church of Eau Claire, Wis., to praise the Lord Jesus for bringing this unique person into the world (June 28, 1926), for taking James into His family via the rebirth of Holy Baptism, for fostering his growth in godliness and his pursuit of academics, for nurturing him in marriage with Lorna Gerlach (Nov. 22, 1951) and endowing them with daughters Peggy, Susan, and Julie.



We glorify the Lord for using Prof. Pelzl's talents in the teaching ministry at Immanuel Lutheran College (1971-1991), and after the Lord called Lorna to eternal rest (1975), for nurturing him in marriage with Carla Thurow (1976) and for endowing them with their son Paul.

Whether behind the podium in his math/science classroom or at his workbench crafting furniture and stringed musical instruments, Prof. Pelzl conducted himself as a Christian gentleman; even his emphatic "Really, I'm serious!" had an endearing quality. Jim made and kept friends for the long haul; he gave more than he took; he enjoyed serving others.

Our memories of Jim as a Christian friend are kept fresh in Messiah congregation as we worship in view of the chancel furniture that he built to grace our sanctuary. In addition, furniture and musical instruments that he crafted for family and friends remain as testimonials to his meticulous concern for quality (cf. Acts 9:39).

Throughout Jim's life, the Lord sustained Jim with His Word as

the Spirit empowered him to leave behind secular advantages and to avoid religious falsehoods—as he served the Church of the Lutheran Confession on a number of boards and committees and educated an entire generation of Immanuel Lutheran High School and College students. When he retired from the ILC faculty, Jim remarked that he would miss (most of all) the mid-morning chapel services, for the Word of God was his meat and potatoes. [Editor’s note: These chapel services are accessible at <http://www.ilc.edu/chapel.htm>.]

Since November 14, 2012, James C. Pelzl holds a choice seat in God’s auditorium, where he is enjoying worship services “world without end.” Still in their time of grace are his wife Carla; his four children: Peggy (Mark) Herrick, Susan (Mike) Eichstadt, Julie, and son Paul; five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, three brothers, a number of nieces and nephews, and many friends in his Christian family.

On our part, we testify to the Lord’s work accomplished through one of his humble workmen, for we attend to the voice from heaven: “...*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them’*” (Revelation 14:13).



IN MEMORY OF

Adelgunde Frieda Schaller

Adelgunde Frieda Schaller (second child of Pastor John Pieper and Lydia nee’ Hoenecke), born on July 23, 1911, in Yellow Medicine County, Echo, Minn., was blessed with one-hundred-and-one years, three months, and twenty-four days on planet Earth before Jesus took her to Himself on November 16, 2012.

Family and friends gathered at Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on December 1, 2012, to celebrate the victory that Jesus has given her over sin, death, pain, and all the burdens of this world—which Adelgunde bore with Christian patience.

We appreciate that Adelgunde Schaller was given the grace to follow in the footsteps of many renowned Bible women (as recounted in the funeral service obituary), for the Lord blessed her service to Him and His people in many ways. Belonging to God’s family since her

Baptism, Adelgunde attended Christian schools during her childhood and teen years, enjoyed devotional singing, and as a young adult taught at Bethany Lutheran High School and College, which led to her marriage with Hilbert Schaller in 1942. (That's the time-frame of the accompanying photo.)



The Lord blessed them with six children during their fifteen years of marriage as the Lord moved them to Glencoe, Minn.; Loveland, Colo.; Plymouth, Nebr.; and then back to Mankato, Minn.—before Hilbert’s earthly pilgrimage ended in 1957.

The Lord did not forsake this widow as she nurtured her six children at home and in the Christian fellowship of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Mrs. Schaller became a kindergarten teacher at Immanuel Lutheran parochial school before joining the faculty of the fledgling Immanuel Lutheran High School and College (Mankato), and her service to ILC continued in Eau Claire for a total of forty-one years in classroom and library—ending with her retirement in 2000 a month before her eighty-ninth birthday.

She helped nurture two generations of ILC students, who will long cherish her memory—as do her former colleagues and many friends.

Mrs. Schaller (“Gunde” to her contemporaries) was personable; she looked you in the eye, was an engaging conversationalist, and shared her thoughts with vigor—all in a ladylike manner and with good humor. She was a natural teacher, interested in national and world history, an inveterate traveler (Germanic to the core!), and an avid sports fan.

Her family and friends will long remember her as a special gift of God. “Now rest beneath night’s shadow” was earthly prelude to the eternal life which she now enjoys “with all the saints who from their labors rest.”

Adelgunde Frieda Schaller was preceded in death by her parents, sisters Ingeborg (her twin), Caecilie Pieper, Lydia Janzow, and her daughter Judith (Robert) Voss. She is survived by her five children: Miriam (Robert) Nestler, Althea (William) Sell, Deborah (William) Perry, Peter (Melanie) Schaller, Andrea (Matthias) Borck, her sister Zita Broetzmann, her brother John (Julie) Pieper; fifteen grandchildren, twenty-four great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

Praise be to God who has given her (and us) the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ!



THIS COPY PROVIDED BY

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

Postmaster: Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN 55113 and additional offices (825-580). ISSN#0024-7537. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville MN 55113

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.clclutheran.org. Editor: Paul Fleischer, 1741 E. 22nd Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001-4138, E-Mail to paulgf@qwestoffice.net; Assistant Editor: Paul R. Koch; Art Director/Designer: Matthew Schaser, Staff: Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Wayne Eichstadt, Warren Fanning, Daniel Fleischer, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, Jay Hartmann, John Klatt, Paul Krause, Joseph Lau, Nathanael Mayhew, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Andrew Schaller, Thomas Schuetze. Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Fleischer six weeks before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Fleischer. Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. E-Mail to BennoSydow@yahoo.com. Individual subscriptions {foreign-U.S. currency only}: \$18.00 {\$22.00} for one year; \$34.00 {\$42.00} for two years; \$50.00 {\$62.00} for three years; sent in bulk to congregations: \$15.00. • Spokesman Online Version at: www.lutheranspokesman.org Printed in U.S.A.