

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

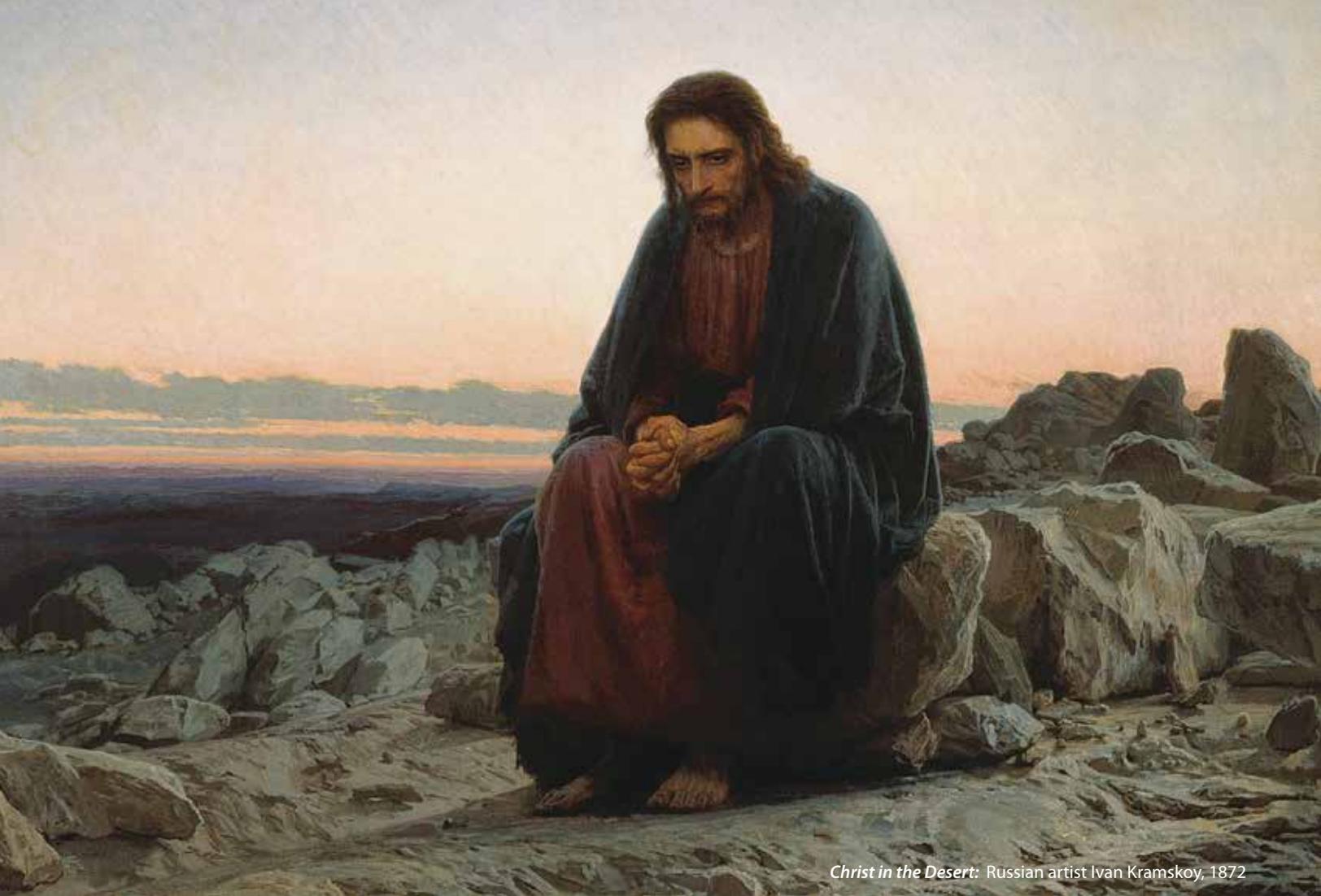
"...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken." (John 10:35)



Lent

"He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Hebrews 4:15



Christ in the Desert: Russian artist Ivan Kramskoy, 1872

Luke 4:1-2

“Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil.”

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Into the Wilderness

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry” (Matthew 4:1-2).

Just when we are seeing signs that spring is coming soon, as the days are getting longer and warmer, we begin what may seem to be a darker, colder journey—the journey of Lent. We follow Jesus into the wilderness.

As Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness where He fasted for forty days, we set out on a forty-day journey to explore the barren wilderness of our souls.

When Jesus was alone in the wilderness without food, He had a lot of time for reflection and prayer; time to contemplate His purpose in life and time to commune with His Father in prayer for strength to boldly go ahead and fulfill His mission.

So also for us, Lent is a time to retreat from the distractions of the world so that we can take time for true reflection and meditation on God’s Word, and for prayer. That can be a painful, sorrowful time as we reflect on the long line of dismal failures, lackluster commitment, and even some dark sins in our lives.

Why do we choose to do this? It is not some form of penance as though, if we feel sorry enough for our sins, God will take pity on us and forgive us. No, but it is the first step to finding true joy and peace. Lent is a time of repentance. When we see the true desperation of our sins and the punishment we deserve, then we will find the greatest joy and peace in pondering what Christ has done for us.

The wilderness was not a peaceful place of contemplation for Jesus, because He was not alone. The devil was there tempting Him every step of the way. This was a battleground where Jesus was fighting off all the attacks of the devil. We read specifically about only the last three temptations, but the Gospel writers also tell us that He was tempted for forty days. And He overcame every temptation the devil could hurl at Him. That was part of the perfect obedience that God credits to our account by faith. How many times have we fallen prey to the devil’s temptations? How many times have we given in to evil desires, to selfish motives, to inner pride or to testing God?

This was a battleground where Jesus was fighting off all the attacks of the devil.

Let us go into the wilderness with Jesus and see how He remained perfectly faithful to His Father throughout, and how He has transferred His perfection to us, declaring us righteous. In the process He also shows us how to resist further temptation by using the power of God’s Word.

May we rejoice most of all that Jesus did not succumb to the final temptation recorded in Matthew, where the devil took Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, promising to give it all to Jesus if He would only bow down to Satan. That may seem like a ridiculous temptation, because Jesus already possessed all things. But that is not entirely true. At this point in His State of Humiliation, Jesus did not possess all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. That would all be given to Him, but only after He bore the enormity of all of mankind’s sins, and suffered the unspeakable torment of God’s wrath for them all. Satan was offering Him a much easier way. He didn’t have to go through any suffering, all He had to do was bow down to Satan. Rejoice, and praise your Savior that He chose to be obedient to His Father’s will and willingly suffer all for you.

That is what Lent is all about. It may be a somewhat dark journey as we see the depth of our sins and ponder the terribleness of Jesus’ suffering. But it is there that we feel the warmth of His love for us. It is there that we understand the magnitude of God’s grace. Therefore it is in the somber days of Lent that we are truly renewed in love and commitment to our Lord and Savior.

Those somber days lead to the greatest joy and exaltation when we see our Savior rise on Easter morning to live forever and to rule in our hearts with His love. Let us go into the wilderness with Jesus now, so that we can go with Him into the glory of God’s presence forever.

David Reim is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Vernon, British Columbia.



Rejoice! Your King Comes to You.

What if I told you that the President of the United States was going to come to visit you personally, and needed you to pick him up at the Greyhound bus station? It would never happen, right? He's too busy to visit you personally and too powerful to ever ride a bus!

Observing how today's powerful people get around and who they spend their time with makes the events of Palm Sunday all the more astounding! Listen to what the Prophet Zechariah said about how and to whom the King of kings, the Son of God, your Savior, comes:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).

The One riding into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday isn't just the leader of a nation, but the King of the Universe—the eternal and almighty Son of God.

The Church (Zion and Jerusalem) is told to rejoice because the King is coming to them and He is riding . . . a *young donkey*?! That doesn't sound right. A donkey has never been a symbol of power, but rather a lowly beast of burden. *This* is the King the people of God are to rejoice over?

HOW the King comes to His people is a demonstration of what sort of King He is. He is not one who comes with strong military might. He does not come by force. He is not one that comes with a great display of wealth. He is “*coming to you . . . lowly.*” The King, riding on a donkey, comes by lowly means.

When the Son of God became man, He was not born to a noble family. Instead He was born of the Virgin Mary, a nobody girl from a poor, nothing village named Nazareth. His was not a life of being waited on hand and foot by servants, but this King came to serve—serve His Father and serve us. “*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*” (Matthew 20:28).

As we consider the events of Palm Sunday, we are struck to see a picture of Jesus Himself in the beast of burden (a donkey) He rode upon. Jesus too came to bear the spiritually enormous burden of our sins. Isaiah writes, “*The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53:6). The burden of our lust, our coveting, our selfishness, our lovelessness, our hatred, was all borne by Jesus. He lifted our burden up, took it on Himself, and by His death on the cross removed it forever. “*Rejoice! . . . your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation.*”

The King of salvation continues to come to you today in much the same manner as He did on Palm Sunday: lowly. He comes by the still, small voice of the Gospel. It may not seem like much, but neither did that colt He rode on Palm Sunday. Every time you read the good news of what Jesus did to save you, every time you hear it preached from the pulpit in church, King Jesus rides into your heart assuring you of His full and complete work to save you.

So, too, with the Sacraments. Baptism may not seem like much to the casual observer. But just as Jesus came lowly and riding a donkey, so also He comes lowly and gently through the water and word in baptism. Through this lowly Means of Grace, He rides into the heart of the infant or adult and sets up His throne to rule as He sanctifies and cleanses that person. We find the same thing in the Lord's Supper. Through the humble means of unleavened bread and wine, Jesus comes and gives His very body and blood to comfort and strengthen us.

Therefore, rejoice! The King of kings is not too busy for you. He who once rode into the capital city of Jerusalem, lowly and on the back of a beast of burden, to die for the sins of the world, continues to come to you today with salvation through the lowly means of the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. Rejoice! Your King comes to YOU!



Nathan Pfeiffer is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington.

For My Soul the Highest Good

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’” (Matthew 26:26-28, NIV).

Something pleasant can become unpleasant if you have too much of it, it has been said. Homemade chocolate chip cookies are a treat. But a child who fills his stomach with a plateful will likely regret it. Vacation days away from the daily grind are something to look forward to. Yet even these can get to be too much. Some have been known to say, “I need a vacation from my vacation! I can’t wait to get back to ‘home, sweet home.’”

How different it is with the blessings Jesus gives us in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Here the saying applies, “You can’t get too much of a good thing!” What good thing does He offer us in the Sacrament? That is shown by the words He used when He gave us this Sacrament: “This is My body given for you. This is My blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” He assures us that along with the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, we receive also the very body He gave up on the cross for us and the blood He shed to win forgiveness for our sins. Truly, here’s a good thing we can never get too much of! How could we ever receive too much forgiveness from our Savior, or too much assurance that when our life on earth ends, an eternal mansion awaits us?

How can Jesus give such priceless blessings through a ceremony that looks so ordinary? Answer: With Him, nothing is impossible. Consider how many Bible teachings soar above our power as humans to comprehend. How could a universe be fashioned by a Supreme Being in six days from nothing? How could a few loaves and fish be used to satisfy a famished crowd numbering in the thousands? How could a man’s corpse, moldering in the grave for four days, be restored to life again? So also here; how can the body and blood of a Man killed on a cross two millennia ago be present with bread and wine and convey blessings of incalculable worth? Human logic would say that it can’t be. But the Holy Spirit blesses us with the ability to accept Jesus’ words with the faith of a child, to know beyond a doubt that Jesus said what He meant and meant what He said:

“Along with the bread, I am giving you My body. Along with the wine, I am giving you My blood, shed for your forgiveness.”

But someone might ask: Doesn’t Jesus convey the blessing of forgiveness through the Word of the Gospel which people hear and read? Certainly! Every believer may draw comfort from the promise that God so loved the world that He gave us His Son so that whoever believes in Him won’t perish but have eternal life. But someone might still wonder, does the Lord mean ME? Are the blessings of His forgiving love for ME? Jesus knows how we crave tangible things that we can touch, see, and taste. So He chose to provide us with visible proof of His love. Not just a symbol of what He did for us on the cross, but the very body He gave up for us there, the very blood that flowed from His nail-pierced hands and feet. To each communicant He gives His personal pledge: I gave My life for YOU. I atoned for YOUR sins. There’s a place in heaven reserved specially for YOU.

Small wonder, then, that He invites us to be frequent guests at His holy Supper. When it comes to the good things for our soul’s eternal welfare which He offers us there, we can never get too much.

What higher gift can we inherit?

It is faith’s bond and solid base;

It is the strength of heart and spirit,

The covenant of hope and grace.

Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood

Be for my soul the highest good!

(TLH 315:9)



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

They Did Not Enter In

“For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:16-19).

We learn many lessons from the Children of Israel, but the most glaring lesson we learn is the danger of unbelief. We all started out in unbelief, doomed apart from Christ; but in His mercy and grace we were called to forgiveness and life eternal through the Gospel. The Israelites were the same. They had been called to faith, they witnessed first-hand the miraculous power of God in delivering them from Egypt. They lived under His protection, and He provided for their every need. But this didn't seem to be enough for them. Even though all the Children of Israel that went forth from Egypt heard the Word and will of God, they still deliberately disobeyed Him. *“Was it not all who came out of Egypt?”* The whole congregation of those who had been miraculously rescued were under the same condemnation. The result was that that all the men of twenty years and over that had left the land of Egypt sank into forgotten graves in the wilderness. That was God's punishment upon them because of their unbelief.

They did not reach the Land of Promise, they did not enter into the blessings of rest and peace which the Lord had promised to believing children. They could not enter in on account of their unbelief. They could not reach their goal because they refused to believe in the Lord, their God, with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their mind. This is a recurring theme with the Children of Israel. Their example should be a warning to all. Faith

must be centered in the promises of the Scriptures—the Word of God—and not permit itself to be moved from this foundation. This is where the Israelites derailed themselves. Instead of trusting God's promises, they looked away in unbelief, choosing to trust in themselves. *“To whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”* Faith in God's promise of forgiveness in Jesus takes God at His Word in any and every case!

When it comes to the grace of God and His promises to His people, we, like the Children of Israel, have hearts of stone by nature: cold, hard, and indifferent. This is the opposite of faith, which is alive and responsive. True faith desires what God graciously promises in His Word. God also comes to our rescue; He sent His Son to deliver us from sin's power and eternal death. Trusting in God's promises won for us by Jesus is not possible unless the Holy Spirit brings about this change. God's gift of faith is like the gift of a new heart—a heart that trusts in Jesus and the certainty of unconditional forgiveness and salvation. Jesus alone is our life! Faith that saves is faith that holds fast to Jesus alone! This we have been blessed with, it is ours, but we do not want to take this gift for granted as did Israel. We, by the Spirit's strength, are to *“. . . contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”* (Jude 3). May the Spirit enable us to learn from Israel the death into which our enemy seeks to drive us, and may He keep us trusting in Jesus alone. To God alone be the glory!



Jay Hartmann is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Coloma, Michigan.

Why Would a Pastor Refuse to Bury Someone?

"Since it has pleased Almighty God in His good providence to call this brother out of this present life, it is proper for us, before committing his body to the earth, to hear in our bereavement the admonition and comfort of God's holy Word."

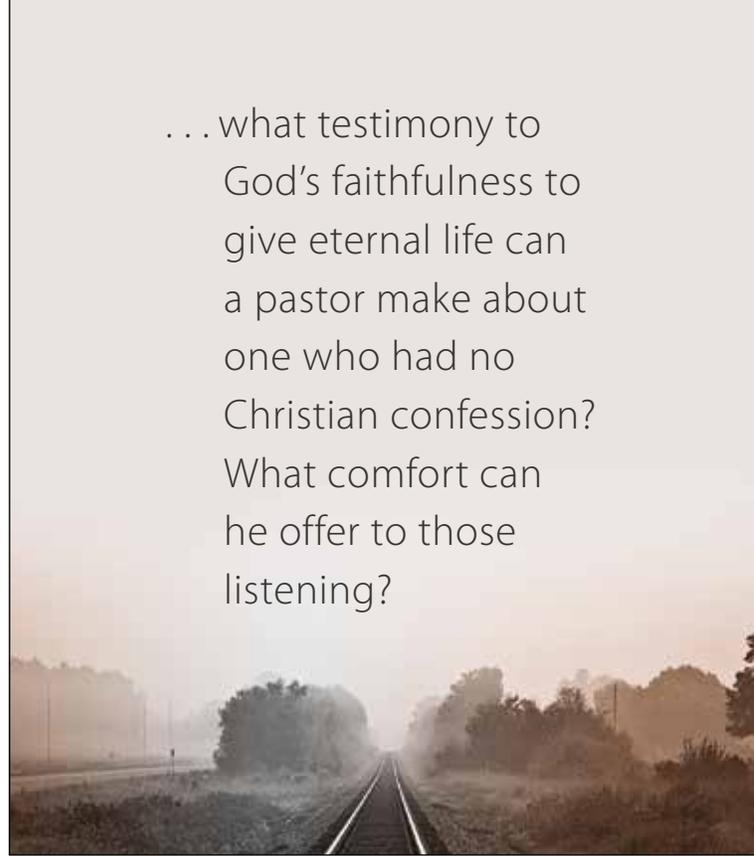
The above words are the words the pastor typically reads to the family of the deceased prior to the funeral service. While not taken directly from the Bible, they do accurately reflect precisely what a funeral service is all about: admonition and comfort. The funeral service serves to admonish those present by teaching them to prepare for a blessed departure from this world, which can happen only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The funeral service also serves to comfort those present by assuring them that the death of His saints is a precious thing in the sight of the Lord, and that it is a blessed thing to die in the Lord.

Christ did not command His Church to conduct funeral services. The funeral service is something that the Church, in Christian freedom, initiated to recognize the faithfulness of God in giving eternal life to those who believe on the name of His Son. As such, it is more than a civil ceremony conducted to show honor to the deceased. It is a testimony that what God promises in His Word to do, He is faithful to perform.

It has often been said that the funeral service is for the living, not the deceased. That is certainly true in the sense that the Word preached at the funeral is for the benefit of those who still remain in a time of grace. Yet, what testimony to God's faithfulness to give eternal life can a pastor make about one who had no Christian confession? What comfort can he offer to those listening? He might be able to invoke a few chuckles by relaying some comical event from the life of the deceased. He might get a few heads to nod affirming some kind act the deceased performed. But, at the end of the day, the deceased is still dead—the result and evidence of a life of sin.

This is where the comfort of a Christian funeral (and a *Christian's* funeral) stands out. At a Christian funeral, the pastor is able to offer genuine comfort to the

... what testimony to God's faithfulness to give eternal life can a pastor make about one who had no Christian confession? What comfort can he offer to those listening?



survivors. Even though the evidence of sin lies before the congregation in the casket, the pastor is able to say without reservation that the dearly departed has gone to be with the Lord. It's not because he did enough good things to balance out the sin he committed. It's not because he left a sizable amount of his estate to charity. It's not even because of how frequently he attended church. It's because God sent His Son to take away his sin and so also to take away his death. It's because the blood which Christ poured out on the cross was the sacrifice necessary to reconcile him to God. It's because the Holy Spirit, through the washing of water by the Word, set him apart to inherit eternal life through faith in Jesus, who loved him and gave Himself for him.

When it is uncertain whether an individual took refuge in such grace of God, and especially when an individual rejected and spurned that grace of God, a pastor might well refuse to conduct a funeral for him, lest the impression be given that God's grace isn't so important after all. God's grace is indispensable for eternal life, for it is by grace we have been saved through faith, and that not of ourselves—it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). Thus

the Christian funeral is a celebration of God's saving grace and His steadfast love.



Frank Gantt is pastor of St. Luke's Ev. Lutheran Church in Lemmon, South Dakota.

You Are Not Alone

“Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: ‘I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go . . .’” (Genesis 28:10-15).

“I feel so lost, so alone...”

Some may think that Christians ought not to feel this way, but they do. The patriarchs did. The psalmists did. The disciples did. Likely, you have also felt this way, possibly so intensely that you thought you were going to die.

Jacob took matters into his own hands to secure the blessing from his father, employing deception rather than trusting God. Now he is fleeing for his life. Rather than on his comfortable bed, he is lying on the ground with a stone pillow. What sort of mess has he made of his life? He feels so alone out under the stars! But is he?

God’s angels are there! For a few moments, Jacob is permitted to perceive them. They serve God as He works all things together for the good of His own—even when His own make a mess of their lives with poor decisions.

God did not ignore the sins of Jacob, but He did overcome them. God remains mindful of His Covenant connection with His children even when they forget. While watching over them in their individual lives, God always has His eye on the bigger story; and at the center of that story is the Promised Seed, the Messiah.

Whether from the Old Testament perspective of Jacob or the New Testament perspective of you and me, we

have a place in His story because of our faith in Christ. God is invested in each of our lives because Christ offered His sacrifice for us all.

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go . . .” The word “keep” is worth noting, for it indicates there is something precious to preserve and keep safe. Throughout the Scriptures, the Lord pledges Himself to guard us as His precious treasure. Bearing in mind who Jacob was and the kind of people we are, one may find it inconceivable that God would shower us with grace; yet that amazing, unmerited love for us was conceived in the heart of God.

God will keep us! He is with us, faithfully safeguarding us today and tomorrow, even as we struggle with feelings of lostness and aloneness, even in our pain. We miss out on much comfort when we focus on our troubles rather than His promises.

While He works all things together for our good, He also reminds us, through Word and Sacrament, of His loving commitment and protection – that He can calm our hearts, remove our loneliness, and give us peace.

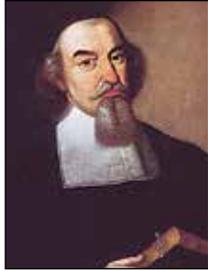
Delwyn Maas is pastor of Gift of God Lutheran Church in Mapleton, North Dakota.



Abraham Calov

INTRODUCTION

Abraham Calov was born in 1612 at Mohrungen, a small town in the Duchy of Prussia. Today this town is called Morąg and is part of northern Poland. Interestingly, Luther himself encouraged the establishment of this first Lutheran duchy, which had a largely German-speaking population. Abraham's father, Peter Calov, was financial administrator to the Prince of Prussia.



"When you're a hammer, everything looks like a nail." That expression means that sometimes people get carried away with their authority and misuse it, or employ it too often. Calov was a scrapper, theologically speaking. This historical view of his being contentious or always ready for a fight is easily explained by recognizing the enemies of the Gospel with whom he had to contend. All his life in his teaching, preaching, and administration of the churches and schools he was called to, he faced foes of every stripe: the Catholics, the Reformed, and the Socinians. In Prussia, and later in Germany, his teaching and writing upheld against all comers the truth of Scripture as rediscovered by the earlier reformers. More on Calov's foes below.

EDUCATION AND CAREER

It's hard to tell where Calov's extensive education ends and his career begins. After his grade schooling locally, he studied philosophy at Königsberg, earning a master's degree in 1632. He then taught philosophy at Rostock, Germany. In 1637 he returned to Königsberg with a degree in divinity to teach as an assistant professor. While there, he also served as a pastor, and became the superintendent of regional schools and churches. He also seems to have served in Danzig with similar duties for a time. Finally he was appointed as a professor of theology at Wittenberg in 1650, and became Dean of the Faculty. He died at Wittenberg in 1686.

HIS WRITINGS

Besides all his pastoral, teaching, and administrative work, Calov—like Luther—wrote and wrote and wrote. Among the dozens of books he authored, important standouts include a reference work of theology, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum* (12 volumes!), a commentary on

As we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we take a brief look at the lives of some of the most influential and important Lutheran theologians.

Luther's translation of the Bible, and a huge exposition of the whole Bible, with his own commentary.

HIS ENEMIES

If Abraham Calov had a main enemy, it was compromise. Forces within and outside of the Lutheran church sought to unify Christians on the basis of doctrinal compromise, just as they continue to do today. But Calov knew that giving up on a part of Scripture or a particular doctrine meant jeopardizing all of God's Word, including even the doctrine of justification itself.

Chief among the proponents of compromise within Lutheranism during Calov's day was Georg Calixtus. He was educated and later became a professor at the influential University of Helmstedt. His idea was that if the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed churches could agree merely on the Apostles' Creed, that should be good enough to unify them. Abraham Calov opposed this idea with his writings and teachings until his death in 1686, demanding that Lutherans abandon the idea of theological compromise and return to the right teaching of Scripture as put forth in the Book of Concord.

CONCLUSION

I'd prefer to report that Calov's efforts to return much of Eastern Europe to sound Christian teaching were entirely successful. Such efforts never are, as the enemies of right teaching are always active. He was the leading defender of orthodoxy during his adult lifetime, and his influence on future generations—those who would remain faithful to the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions—is immeasurable.

In the forward to his *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, Abraham Calov wrote, "What is more useful than biblical theology? Theology without Scripture is not even deserving of its name. A theologian who speaks without Scripture should be ashamed!"

We couldn't agree more, and we give glory to God for Calov's contribution to the preservation of the true Christian faith.



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

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

Lusaka, Zambia

Bakthavachalam, Moshi, Sri Kalahasti, Ibrahim, Bulawayo, Makanya, Bhitrakoti, Kalyamo, Nireekshana, Wiskey, Hattibang, Rajamani, Chennai, Malyi, Lusaka—these are the names of just a few of the many individuals and places with whom and where the Lord has allowed the CLC to share in the privilege of proclaiming the truth of His saving Word. For reasons which can only be attributed to God’s grace and mercy, many CLC members have been able to meet the individuals and visit the places listed above. Most of these meetings have taken place through the CLC Mission Helper Program. While the main purpose of the Mission Helper Program is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there are many blessed byproducts that we have come to expect from our gracious Lord. One of those blessed byproducts is the opportunity to get to know and build personal relationships with the brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we are able to work,

shoulder to shoulder, in mission fields very ripe for harvest.

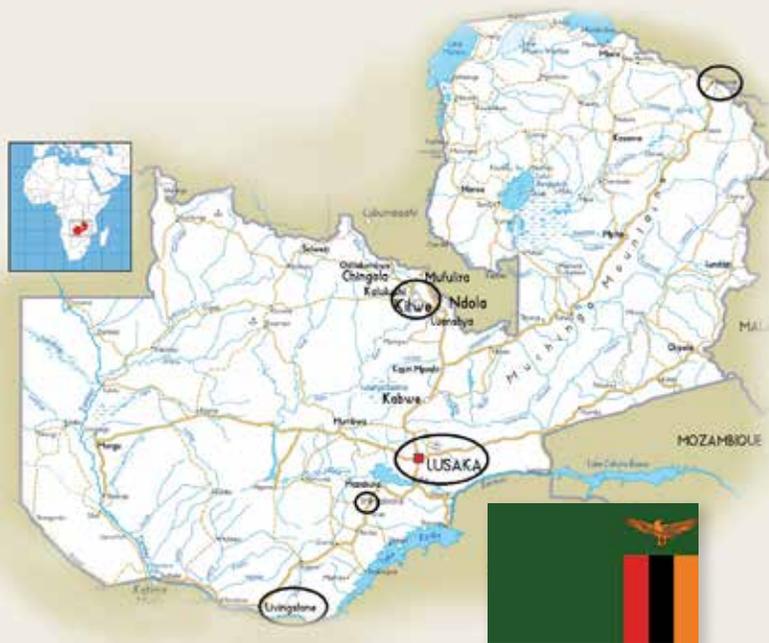
One of these brothers in Christ is Pastor Ibrahim R. Lyimo. He has been working independently in Zambia, Africa since 2010. Pastor Ibrahim is thirty-eight years old.



Pastor Ibrahim

He holds degrees in elementary and secondary education and has course work completed toward another degree in school administration. For several years he taught at a public secondary school in Tanzania.

In 2006, Pastor Ibrahim began thinking that the Lord wanted him to use his teaching skills to proclaim God’s Word. This is what led him to attend a Pastoral Training Seminar that was being conducted by Missionary Koenig during one of Missionary Koenig’s visits to East Africa. In 2007 Pastor Ibrahim was one of the first students to enroll in the seminary in Himo, Tanzania. When that seminary was forced to close a few years later, Pastor Ibrahim was just a semester shy



Lusaka: Capital of Zambia

Lusaka is the capital and largest city of Zambia. One of the fastest-developing cities in Southern Africa, Lusaka is located in the southern part of the central plateau at an elevation of about 1,300 metres. Area: 139 sq miles *Wikipedia*

of graduation. The next few months left him wondering what the Lord had in mind for his future. By this time, he was fully convinced that the Lord wanted him to dedicate his gifts and abilities to sharing the “one thing needful.” It was during this time that he received a phone call from a friend named Peter. Peter and his family had moved from Tanzania to Lusaka, Zambia, for work opportunities. Peter explained to him that he could not find a church in Lusaka that taught the truth of God’s word. He asked Pastor Ibrahim to come to Zambia to start a congregation and to begin training evangelists to help spread the Word of God. That was in late 2010. Pastor Ibrahim says that it didn’t take long for him to make the decision to leave his home and move to Lusaka. He knew in his heart that the Lord was calling him there.

It was about one year later when representatives from the CLC came to Lusaka, at Pastor Ibrahim’s invitation, to investigate an apparent opportunity for the CLC to proclaim the truth of God’s Word in Zambia. What the visitors found was a dedicated and faithful servant of the Word who was sacrificially serving the Lord.

That is how Pastor Ibrahim came to work in Zambia. Today he still lives in a small room in an out-building on the property of his friend Peter. He serves three small congregations. One congregation is in Lusaka where Peter and his family attend. The second congregation is in a town called Nakonde near the Tanzanian border. The third congregation is in a rural village southwest



Pastor Ibrahim with children of the congregation.

of Lusaka called Shimabala. He serves a total of fifty-nine adult souls and many children in these three congregations. He is also training six young men as evangelists to work with him in spreading the Gospel to more rural villages. His weekly schedule also includes evangelism visits to a shanty town that is built on a local dump on the outskirts of Lusaka. Additionally, he makes evangelism visits to an AIDS hospice facility where those nearing death are kept comfortable.

Pastor Ibrahim also travels to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe every other month, at the request of the CLC Board of Missions, to work with Pastor Liberty Atawa and a few other pastors in the area who have completed extensive correspondence courses with the Board of Missions. Their desire is to establish a confessional Lutheran church body in their country. Pastor Ibrahim has made several contacts in the towns and villages that are along the bus route that

takes him from Lusaka to Bulawayo. He reports that he has established a preaching station in Livingstone, Zambia. He is hopeful that a congregation will be started there soon.

There is also work being done in northern Zambia just over the border from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the towns of Ndola and Kitwe. This work is a project of Pastor Yumba, who lives and serves as the chairman of the CCLC in Lubumbashi, DRC. Pastors Yumba and Ibrahim meet together when our CLC visiting missionary makes his annual visit to the DRC.

Pastor Ibrahim receives no salary, either from the congregations he serves or from the CLC. His only compensation is room and board from families of the congregations he serves. He does receive a small subsidy from the CLC Board of Missions that provides for his travel expenses to Zimbabwe, along with a few teaching supplies and transportation costs for the six young men he is training to be evangelists in the Lusaka area.

In 2012, a Mission Helper Team visited Tanzania. They had the opportunity to work closely with Pastor Ibrahim when he returned to Tanzania for a month to serve as a translator for the team. These few individuals had the privilege of getting to know a truly inspiring and dedicated servant of the Lord. If all goes as planned, another team of Mission Helpers will travel to Zambia in July of 2015 to work alongside Pastor Ibrahim in the harvest fields. He is eager for their arrival and has lots of work planned. Pastor Ibrahim reports that there are several areas in and around Lusaka and on the way to the Zambia/Zimbabwe border where he would like to conduct child evangelism. What an opportunity for these Mission Helpers to share in the privilege of proclaiming God's saving Word as they also get to know and learn from this faithful man of God!



Todd Ohlmann is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Manchester, Missouri, and serves as chairman of the CLC Board of Missions.

Pastor Ibrahim conducting training for other pastors near Lusaka.

Morning Star Lutheran Church—Fairchild, Wisconsin

Fairchild lies thirty miles southeast of Eau Claire at the junction of Highways 12 and 10 among the woods, hills, and farmland of northwestern Wisconsin. Fairchild was founded in the 1870's and became a thriving sawmill and railroad town. For years, Fairchild boasted The Big Farm Store, "one of the biggest retail mercantile institutions in northern Wisconsin" (*The History of Eau Claire County, Wisconsin, Past and Present*, 1914, pp. 615-618).

The decline of the timber industry led to the decline of a bustling Fairchild. The high school graduated its last class in 1968. Front Street has only a post office and bank remaining. There is little in the way of employment. The current population is five hundred, many of whom struggle financially.

What is the story behind Morning Star's beginning? In the 1990's, Messiah congregation of Eau Claire (see the January 2015 Lutheran Spokesman) was seeking to serve its members living in the small communities southeast of Eau Claire along Highway 12. Weekly Bible classes were held at Fairchild. Messiah also conducted vacation Bible school in Fairchild. Five Messiah youngsters attended, while forty-five other children joined them! Soon Sunday services began. Those leading the services included ILC Professors John Reim, David Lau, and Gordon Radtke, ILC seminary student Mike Schierenbeck, and others. Prof. Radtke began his ministry to the group in January of 1995. He retired as a professor that summer, but continued to serve the

Fairchild outreach group as a part-time ministry.

Worship services had been held at various places, but soon after start-up were moved to a mobile home converted into a church. The "trailer" continued to be their home until December 19, 1999, when a new church was dedicated. The structure was built by volunteers under the leadership of CLC member Jack Mayhew, of Valentine, Nebraska.

In January 2000, the Fairchild group filed the necessary papers to become an independent congregation, and picked the name *Morning Star*. Morning Star called Pastor Gordon Radtke to continue his ministry among them. This he did until August of 2009, when he retired at the age of ninety! The ensuing vacancy was filled by Professor John Ude.

During all the years of outreach services, development, and growth, Morning Star was not funded by the synod's Board of Missions. It was entirely a mission effort of the members of Messiah in Eau Claire. Morning Star is indeed a daughter congregation of Messiah and expresses its thanks!

In the spring of 2010, Morning Star called Richard Kanzenbach of Watertown, South Dakota, to serve as its pastor. He accepted the call. Peace with God of Onalaska, WI, agreed to form a dual parish with Morning Star in late 2011. Pastor Kanzenbach was able to quit his part-time secular employment and devote himself to the ministry full-time.





Sunday school students



Worship Service



After service candle extinguishers



Filling children's Christmas Eve treat sacks

Morning Star has approximately eighty members. Average attendance is thirty-five. Sunday School and Friday School (a repeat of the lesson for those who missed) averages eight. Most members live within a forty mile radius of Fairchild—thirty souls in Fairchild, twenty-five in Eau Claire, and the remainder scattered about.

The message of sin and forgiveness of sin in Jesus continues to be preached at Morning Star. Whether the community of Fairchild is in its glory days or not, glorious Good News is being proclaimed by Morning Star—Jesus of Nazareth, true God and true man, has set us free from the guilt of our sin and the due condemnation it deserves: death and hell! *“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:5-6, KJV). The refreshing message—that Jesus was righteous in our place, died to pay the penalty for our sins, and rose again in victory, for us!—is being announced to Morning Star’s members and to the Fairchild community. *“The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). Morning Star is and remains a home for sinners.

Morning Star’s efforts to share the Gospel are surely

small and weak, but we ask the Lord to guide us and bless us, and to give us strength and wisdom to move ahead. The congregation sends out three mass mailings a year to the larger Fairchild area containing simple messages of Jesus the Redeemer from sin and hell, inviting recipients to join us for Christmas, Easter, or VBS. We also have two sets of small roadside signs bearing simple Law and Gospel messages with our name, phone, and website. Recorded Sunday sermons are available at our website, www.fairchildlutheran.com. The seeds of Law and Gospel are being sown.

It is impossible to know what will happen in the next twenty years of Morning Star’s existence. However, we do know, *“[My Word] shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please”* (Isaiah 55:10). We move ahead by the grace and mercy of Christ, privileged to be His children and His servants, proclaiming His saving Name!



Richard Kanzenbach is pastor of Morning Star Lutheran Church in Fairchild, Wisconsin, and Peace with God Ev. Lutheran Church in Onalaska, Wisconsin

April 2015

TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941; WS = Worship Supplement 2000; SC = Martin Luther’s Small Catechism;

[] = Minor Festivals or commemorations in the Christian Church Year

Date	Reading	Verse
Apr 1	John 19:17-30	WS 723
	The King lays down His life for His subjects. What wondrous love is this!	
Apr 2	1 Corinthians 10:16-17	TLH 164
	The Lord’s Supper is both communion with Christ and fellowship with one another.	
Apr 3	Isaiah 53	SC Apostles’ Creed II
	He was crushed for our iniquities and familiar with suffering, but He would also see the light of life.	
Apr 4	Luke 23:50-56	SC Commandment III
	Make this Holy Saturday a day of spiritual rest for your soul.	
Apr 6	Mark 16:1-8	PS 16
	“What heavy stone You cannot roll from off the prisoned, suffering soul! Alleluia!” (Johann Heermann)	
Apr 7	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	PS 118
	The heart of the Gospel is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.	
Apr 8	Exodus 15:1-11	TLH 211
	At the Red Sea was a great deliverance. Surely Jesus has also delivered us from our enemies by His resurrection!	
Apr 9	1 Corinthians 5:6-8	TLH 195
	New life for Christ means new life for us, too. So let’s walk in newness of life, purging away the old yeast of sin.	
Apr 10	John 20:1-18	TLH 205
	Jesus’ resurrection turns our sorrow to joy.	
Apr 11	Acts 13:26-39	WS 759
	All happened as foretold: He suffered, died, was buried, and rose again for the forgiveness of our sins.	
Apr 13	1 John 1:1-2:2	PS 143
	The Lord is living, therefore walk with Him in the light each day and enjoy that fellowship.	
Apr 14	John 20:19-31	SC Keys I-II
	The greatest treasure Jesus has to give (the forgiveness of sins), He gives to His believers to administer. Amazing!	
Apr 15	2 Samuel 12:1-10	SC Commandment V
	David had done great wrong, but God, in His great mercy, would call him to repentance.	

Date	Reading	Verse
Apr 16	Ephesians 2:11-18	PS 122
	By the cross of Christ anyone from any walk of life can have access to the Father.	
Apr 17	Acts 4:32-35	PS 96
	Unbelievers’ threats didn’t stop the apostles from continuing to testify of the resurrection—and many were blessed.	
Apr 18	Matthew 12:38-42	WS 729
	Jesus is greater than Solomon, Jonah, and all. So listen to and trust in the One who rose the third day.	
Apr 20	Acts 3:11-21	TLH 189
	It was by the power and in the name of Jesus—whom the Jews had killed but whom God raised from the dead—that the lame man was healed.	
Apr 21	1 John 3:1-7	TLH 411
	What do children of God look like? They are sorry for their sins and seek to do what is right.	
Apr 22	Hebrews 4:1-13	WS 795
	Not all people will enter God’s rest (heaven), but it is certain Jesus gets us there—so cling to Him in faith.	
Apr 23	Luke 24:36-49	PS 116
	The disciples were told to stay in Jerusalem until the Spirit came. Sometimes Jesus has us wait for His blessings too.	
Apr 24	Isaiah 25:6-9	TLH 206
	By His resurrection our Savior destroyed death, the shroud that enfolds all peoples.	
Apr 25	Mark 16:14-20	WS 773
	[Festival of St. Mark] Almighty God, You have enriched Your Church with the proclamation of the Gospel through the evangelist Mark.	
Apr 27	John 10:1-10	TLH 431
	The Good Shepherd lives not only to call us to Himself, but to go before us to lead and protect.	
Apr 28	John 10:11-18	WS 783
	Think about it: A typical shepherd would not actually die for his sheep. Jesus is not your typical Shepherd, is He?	
Apr 29	1 John 3:16-24	PS 36
	Christ’s love moves us to do more than just say, “I love you.” Let us love with our actions too.	
Apr 30	Acts 4:1-12	TLH 196
	What disturbed the crowd? The truth that people can rise from the dead. It still disturbs the world today.	

THE 3 R'S OF EVANGELISM

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19).

Jesus’ words are painfully simple. What Christian hasn’t at one time or another read those words with a certain amount of guilt? “This is a Christian mission, and what have I been doing about it? Nothing! Or very little.” It’s not that God’s people don’t *want* to; often it’s that they don’t know how to.

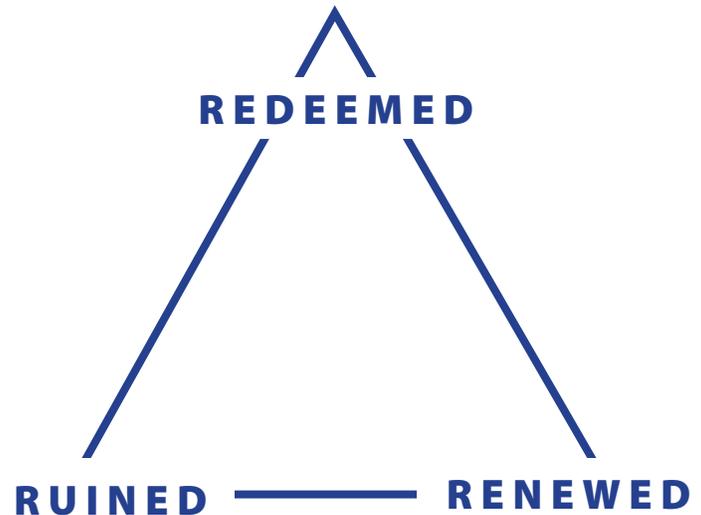
There are, and there should be, many methods of Christian witness. God’s people come with different gifts, personalities and preferences. What works comfortably for one may not for another. “The Lord’s 3 R’s of Evangelism” is offered as one approach among many to equip and enable Christian witness. As with any outreach method, we must remember that the power lies in God’s Word, not in our own skill or ability. Always get back to the Word of God!

The point of reference in this technique is a triangle. It fixes in one’s mind an organized way of telling God’s great message. At each point of the triangle is one of the Lord’s R’s.

We begin with **RUINED**—the condition of life and the state of humanity since the fall of Adam and Eve into sin. Evidence of the ruin exists in every newspaper, honest heart, and personal experience. Let each person make the point his own way. The Bible verse to associate with **RUINED** is Romans 3:23: “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” Isaiah also writes “*I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips*” (Isaiah 6:5 NIV).

Here is the horrible consequence of sin. We’ve ruined our lives, our world AND our future. We don’t measure up. We can’t save ourselves. Thank God the message doesn’t end here.

These brief topics were written to help Christians think about the ways in which they share the Gospel with others. Cut this page out if you like and post it on your refrigerator. Decide for yourself whether this is a helpful addition to your “outreach repertoire.”



God didn’t abandon us to sin’s ruin. He **REDEEMED** us through Jesus’ blood. Jesus paid the penalty for all sin. Because of His life and death in our place, God’s “glory” has been met and God’s justice satisfied. He has declared sin forgiven. John 3:16 is the verse most easily associated with **REDEEMED**: “*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.*” The beautiful truth is that forgiveness and everlasting life are God’s gift to all in Jesus. God simply invites people to believe it.

Such God-given faith in Jesus changes one’s whole life. We believe the Gospel and, as a fruit of faith, want to live for our Savior. We are **RENEWED** by the Holy Spirit. There is new joy amid the old, depressing problems. There is new strength to cope with old headaches and temptations, new love for those unlovable and loveless feelings. We pray for ongoing renewal each Sunday when we sing, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me*” (Psalm 51:10 KJV).

The whole purpose of this witness technique is simplicity. There are only three passages to remember. The triangle is an easily-remembered symbol to provide order to a witness. The Law and Gospel can be shared within a few minutes.

SEEN IN PASSING

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

Romans 12:2 Most Popular Scripture Passage in 2014.

End-of-year analysis from 164 million users of the popular YouVersion Bible app revealed that Romans 12:2 led all others as the most-bookmarked passage on the internet: “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*” The second- and third-most popular were both from Philippians, 4:8 and 4:6, respectively. Rounding out the top ten (in order) were Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:7, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:34 and Proverbs 3:6. Zylstra, Sarah. ‘Sorry Again, John 3:16!’ Gleanings. *Christianity Today*, 17 Dec. 2014. Web. 24 Dec. 2014.

Stained Glass, Traditional Church Architecture Making a Comeback with Younger Worshipers.

Church architectural firms have reported a recent resurgence of requests for stained glass and classic church architecture, in contrast to the trendy, theater-style worship spaces of the

80’s and 90’s. Recent survey results from the Barna Group indicate a desire among so-called “Millennials” for a more traditional spirituality. “It’s tempting to oversimplify the relationship between Millennials and sacred space,” says Dr. Clint Jenkin, vice president of research at Barna and the lead designer of the study, in a statement released last November. “Most Millennials don’t look for a church facility that caters to the whims of pop culture. They want a community that calls them to deeper meaning.” Gryboski, Michael. ‘Stained Glass Windows For Churches May Make Comeback With Younger Generations.’ *The Christian Post*. N.p., 6 Jan. 2015. Web. 9 Jan. 2015.

Atlanta Fire Chief Terminated For Christian Beliefs.

Kelvin Cochran was fired Jan. 7, 2015, after he published controversial comments about homosexuality in a book titled “Who Told You That You Were Naked?” Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed said the book was “... inconsistent with the administration’s work to make Atlanta a more welcoming city for all citizens.” Several

faith-based associations have posted appeals supportive of Cochran and urged members to contact the mayor demanding Cochran be reappointed. “In our country we don’t punish people for the potential to discriminate,” said one, “we punish them for actually discriminating.” Wolfe, Julie. ‘Fire Chief Fired After Gay Comments In Book.’ *Usatoday.com. Gannet Co.*, 7 Jan. 2015. Web. 9 Jan. 2015.

Important Church-State Decisions in D.C.

Two recent decisions in the nation’s capital have been virtually ignored by major media, but may loom large in church-state discussions in the near future. On December 2 and 17 the District of Columbia Council ruled to end conscience-based exemptions that protect religious groups opposed to same-sex relationships and abortion. These exemptions are widely expected to be restored by congress, but could be removed again if the President vetoes the legislators’ action. Ostling, Richard. ‘Seriously Neglected Church-State Drama In The District Of Columbia.’ *GetReligion.com*. N. p., 6 Jan. 2015. Web. 9 Jan. 2015.



A sampling of TVBS teams, and a few of the many children they have served over the years.



The Traveling Vacation Bible School (TVBS)

committee has begun planning for the upcoming summer session. If you are considering holding VBS this summer and would like the assistance of TVBS, please contact Professor Ross Roehl at ross.roehl@ilc.edu.

For more information you can visit

www.clctvbs.org.

We hope to hear from you soon!