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# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

*I have come that they may  
have life, and that they  
may have it more  
abundantly.*

JOHN 10 : 10b

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# Luck Has Nothing to Do With It

*“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.  
And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith”*

(1 Corinthians 15:13-14 NIV).

“**G**ood luck! And, by the way, there’s no such thing as luck.” This was the parting comment a Christian friend made to us as he prepared to climb into his van and return home from the Sunday morning service. We knew what he meant. It was his way of encouraging us to remember that our lives aren’t guided by blind chance. We have an almighty Lord Who is at our side every moment, Who controls all events in the lives of His believers for their good.

Someone might ask, “What’s the guarantee of this?” A good answer (short but sweet) is, “EASTER!” We celebrate Easter with gusto and a multitude of hallelujahs because we know it is our heavenly Father’s assurance that the One Who died on the cross, Whose body was laid in the grave, also arose triumphantly. He is now orchestrating all happenings in the world at large and in our personal lives so they help us to attain a blessed end.

What would your life be like if the angel’s message, “*He is not here, He is risen!*” were a fairy tale? Then everything you believe about Jesus would be a mirage. The wall of sin that separated you from your God would still be there. Death would be pursuing you as an invincible foe. Your hope of heaven would be a delusion. The devil would have reason to celebrate, for it would mean he had scuttled Jesus’ mission as mankind’s Savior . . . IF the events of Easter didn’t happen.

But, thanks be to God, they DID happen! The crucified Savior came alive! With His rising from the tomb, the death-stinger has been plucked from our human “skin” and its poison neutralized. Through faith in the resurrected Jesus, we’ve become God’s redeemed, restored, forgiven children, heirs of life everlasting.

Think now what this means for your walk of life in this trouble-filled world. Are you suffering from a debilitating health problem? You may be sure it didn’t happen as a stroke of bad luck. Your Savior allowed it for a loving reason. He will strengthen you to bear the cross of physical pain (read Isaiah 41:10). Are you unemployed

and struggling to make ends meet? You know that it did not result from bad karma. Your Savior allowed it for a beneficial purpose. He will provide what you need, as you look to Him in faith (read Proverbs 3:5-6). Have you suffered the loss of a loved one? It was no tragic twist of fate. Jesus called your dear one to Himself. He will now apply the comfort of His Gospel to your hurting heart (read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14). Do you see others living a seemingly carefree life as you go from one stress-filled moment to another? It’s not that some are born under a lucky star while others are jinxed. The Lord allows tribulations to occur in the lives of His own in order to test their faith and strengthen it. It is a loving reminder that you’re living in a world that has an expiration date. Your permanent home is in heaven. Keep striving toward the blessed goal! (Read 1 Peter 1:7 and Hebrews 13:14.)

All these things are most certainly true just because we have a Savior Who lived, died, and is alive forever, Who is at our side continually and is guiding everything for our benefit. We’re not lucky people. We’re blessed people, people who may sing with gusto through each season of life,

**Hallelujah! Jesus lives!  
He is now the Living One;  
From the gloomy house of death  
Forth the Conqueror has gone,  
Bright Forerunner to the skies  
Of His people, yet to rise.**

**Jesus lives! Why weepst thou?  
Why that sad and frequent sigh?  
He who died our Brother here  
Lives our Brother still on high,  
Lives forever to bestow  
Blessings on His Church below.**

(*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 188:1,3)



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

# The Emmaus Transformation

“And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’” (Luke 24:32).

## Usually it is easy to tell.

There are the telltale signs that readily reveal a person’s frame of mind. You watch the youngster out in the winter cold shoveling the sidewalk. From the slouch of his shoulders to the doing-as-little-as-possible attitude, it is easy to conclude that he would rather be anywhere other than where he is. His negative attitude radiates through his lackluster actions.

On the other hand you might witness the retiree out in the summertime flowerbed. You hear her humming, see the hint of a smile playing about the corners of her mouth, while her hands busily make quick work of removing those stubborn and unwelcome weeds among her petunias and roses. You easily surmise that she is happy to be improving the appearance of her property.

Yes, it is usually quite easy to tell. A downcast—perhaps guilty, sad, or disappointed—frame of mind will be as readily obvious as a mindset of joy, happiness, forgiveness, or new life.

So it is no surprise to hear Jesus greet the two Emmaus-bound travelers the way He does. “*What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?*” (Luke 24:17). Any passer-by could tell that there was something on their hearts and minds from the disheartened drag of their feet, their slow gait, their downcast faces.

But what a difference a few hours made! Later in the evening, those same two were on their joyful return to Jerusalem. It was impossible to miss the transformation—their hearts and no doubt very tired feet were now full of joy and new energy as they looked forward to sharing their good news.

What had changed? Initially they had been under the mistaken impression that Jesus was not the One they



had been looking for. The One they had hoped was the Messiah obviously wasn’t, because His life had been brought to an abrupt end at the hands of the merciless Romans. He had died on the cruel cross and had been buried three days previous.

But under the guiding hand and Gospel-directing words of none other than Jesus Himself, they had been led to see that what He had endured had been prophesied in Scripture. And further, that He Himself was actually alive from the dead, just as they had heard (and not believed) from the early morning reports

of the women who had seen the empty tomb and heard from angels that He was alive.

They had been changed from the inside out. The fear and frustration that had first filled their hearts gave way to joy that was rooted in the Gospel good news of God’s grace. And it showed in their lives!

What is it that others see when they look at you and me? Do they see someone whose life attracts them, or someone whose whole demeanor repels them?

Certainly we want to be among those whose good works others see, so that they then “*glorify your Father in heaven*” (Matthew 5:16).

But at the same time, “life happens.” We find ourselves failing in the battle against temptation, and dealing with the results of sin in this doomed-to-destruction world.

Let’s make it our prayer that the Lord would give us His aid—that He would direct us to His Word to see both the answer to sin in the crucified Christ and His gift of life to us in the empty tomb. And then as we faith-fully realize the Gospel given to us, we will respond with living that reveals our joy in the resurrection!



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# Salvation Guaranteed!

*And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek'"), by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever" (Hebrews 7:20-28).*

**T**he certainty of salvation for all who trust in Jesus as their Savior is a guarantee, an accomplished fact! Our Savior assures us of that throughout Scripture. He gives us that certainty here as well.

We daily face many dangers from the attacks of our adversary. Very often, the thing with which our enemy tempts us appeals to our sinful nature. We see our own weakness and are led to share Paul's confession, "I am the chief of sinners." We face a constant battle against the world, the devil, and his number one ally—our flesh—to the very end. Our adversary works treacherously to try to cause us to doubt our salvation. Nevertheless, in His infinite grace, our Savior repeatedly assures us in His Word that nothing could be more certain than our salvation! The removal of all sin, guilt, and shame is absolutely assured, as is our inheritance of life eternal. That is the message He gives to us in the Scripture before us.

We are reminded that in the Old Testament, the Levitical priests would offer up sacrifices for themselves and the people. This was actually a "preaching" of the Law in all its severity and the Gospel in all its mercy and grace. It taught them they were sinners and that sin required a payment in blood in order to be forgiven. However, "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Rather, these sacrifices pointed

them ahead to the promised Messiah, Who would one day come as our High Priest and make the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice. He Himself would be the complete payment to the Father for the sins of the world.

Jesus, our High Priest, came in fulfillment of an oath that the Father Himself gave: "The LORD has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." This oath is one of the many certain evidences we have of the way in which God fulfilled His plan to provide salvation for all mankind. He appointed His Son as the Messiah of the world, the eternal High Priest. Therefore, Jesus is the "surety of a better covenant," the absolute guarantee of the Father's promise of salvation by grace through His Son. As the holy spotless Lamb of God, Jesus achieved this for all "when He offered up Himself," sacrificing Himself as our substitute. "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him." Salvation guaranteed!

Because Jesus "continues forever," lives eternally as our High Priest, the salvation He earned is complete in every detail, not lacking in any way. No other priest, sacrifice, or anything else will ever be needed. Anyone in the whole world who looks to Jesus in faith, trusting in Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, possesses that blood-bought salvation! Furthermore, since Jesus "lives to make intercession" for us, and "He and the Father are One," we again can see the certainty of salvation through His all-atoning life and death.

The Father, as if to put yet another guarantee on our salvation in Jesus, says, "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens." The Old Testament priests were sinners, just as we are. They could not win reconciliation to God by their daily sacrifices. Jesus did! The Father makes it clear that our High Priest Jesus is holy, blameless, and perfect in every aspect. His precious blood paid the full price demanded, once and for all. Jesus lives and reigns for all eternity, assuring us that no power—not even the gates of hell—can prevail against us, because Jesus has called us and made us His very own.

Salvation guaranteed!

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



## HYMN 206

# “Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense”

## EASTER

What terrified thoughts and emotions might well torture the mind and grip the heart of an unbeliever facing imminent death! While still in good health and favorable circumstances, some unbelievers—if they ever think about the afterlife at all—might for a time delude themselves that they are “good enough” to go to heaven, or even that heaven and hell are not real. Some may even express foolish bravado such as “I’ll go to heaven when I die because I’ve lived through hell here.” However, when faced with the reality of their own impending death, many unbelievers find these self-delusions fading away like last night’s dreams, and then the innate knowledge that there is a God (Romans 1:19-20) and that we are sinners (Romans 2:15) brings only fear.

Even some long-time Christians may experience misgivings when they know that their death is near. John Bunyan pictures this circumstance in his classic allegorical novel *Pilgrim’s Progress* when, after a long pilgrimage with numerous trials, marked by steadfast perseverance in the faith, Christian (the protagonist) must cross the final river (symbolizing death) before entering the Celestial City. He is daunted by the prospect, and cries out to his companion, “Ah! my friend, the sorrows of death hath compassed me about; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey; and with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him. . . . All the words that he spake still tended to discover that he had horror of mind, and heart fears that he should die in that river, and never obtain entrance in at the gate.” Hymn 206 in *The Lutheran Hymnal* also acknowledges the possibility of such last-minute anxiety

with the words “**Though the night of death be fraught/  
Still with many an anxious tho’t**” (v. 1).

I do not know with what attitude I shall face death when the time comes, but I do know that the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ gives Christians a solid basis for confidence, so that as we remember His victory over death and the fact that it was our victory also, we can approach death with confidence—even with joyful anticipation—rather than dread. The author of Hymn 206<sup>1</sup> points us to the historical fact that Christ rose from the dead, and that His resurrection carries also the promise that we, too, shall rise to eternal life: “**Jesus Christ, my sure Defense/ and my Savior, ever liveth;/ Knowing this, my confidence/ Rests upon the hope it giveth**” (v. 1). Our certainty of eternal life in heaven has nothing to do with our subjective, emotional feelings—whether at death’s door or at any other time. Rather, it is to be found in the objective, historical fact of Christ’s victorious bodily resurrection from the dead.

Verse 2 of this hymn advances a line of reasoning that may escape many today. It is the last line of the verse: “**Shall I fear, or could the Head/ Rise and leave His members dead?**” The word *members* is not used here in the modern, egalitarian sense of co-equal affiliates of some organization, as though the assurance of our own resurrection is based on our membership in that organization. The Holy Christian Church is the body of Christ. All Christians are *members* of that body (see Ephesians 5:30, “*For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,*” as well as 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, especially v.27, “*Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually*”). The word *members* is used in these Bible passages and in this hymn in the sense of bodily organs—all different, but together all making up one entire body. Now, apply that understanding to the last part of v. 2 of this hymn (“**Shall I fear, or could the Head/ Rise and leave His members dead?**”), and we understand what the hymn is actually saying. It’s assuring us that since Jesus rose bodily from the dead on Easter,

<sup>1</sup> sometimes attributed to Louise Henrietta, the Electress of Brandenburg, but not known with certainty

*Our certainty of eternal life in heaven has nothing to do with our subjective, emotional feelings—whether at death’s door or at any other time. Rather, it is to be found in the objective, historical fact of Christ’s victorious bodily resurrection from the dead.*

and since Christians are members (organs) of His body, then certainly we too shall rise from our graves to be with Him in heaven.

Death is the universal experience of all, except of course those still living when Christ returns. We will not otherwise escape it. So verse 4 of this hymn reminds us, **“I am flesh and must return / Unto dust, whence I am taken.”** However, that end to temporal life is also the beginning of a glorious and eternal life: **“But by faith I now discern/ That from death I shall awaken/ With my Savior to abide/ In His glory, at His side.”** For Christians, death is little more than a door through which we pass to eternal life. A believer on his death bed should not think “by tomorrow I’ll be dead”; but rather, “by tomorrow I’ll finally be alive!”

The hymns in *The Lutheran Hymnal* are thoroughly biblical, and verses 4-8 of this hymn reflect the biblical teaching of Job 19:25-27: *“For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another.”* God’s revelation to us in the book of Job clearly teaches the bodily resurrection that will occur on Judgment Day. In heaven, we shall have physical bodies, and in Hymn 206 we sing that divine revelation: **“In this body I shall view/ God, my Lord, with eyes unclouded; / In this flesh I then shall see/ Jesus Christ eternally”** (v. 5), and **“Here our sinful bodies die,/ Glorified to live on high”** (v. 7).

Furthermore, the bodies we shall have in heaven, while being versions of our present earthly bodies, will be wondrously changed (Philippians 3:21). Think of it as “Bill Jones, version 2.0, final and perfected release.” In heaven, our bodies will not be heir to all the physical complaints to which the flesh is subject here. There will be no aches and pains, no chills or fevers, no faulty vision or poor hearing, no weakness of joints, not even such

bothersome inconveniences as failures of memory—our heavenly bodies will be perfect.

This freedom from earthly bodily weakness and ills extends also to a complete freedom from worrisome earthly circumstances. We sometimes hear people say, “I’m O.K.—under the circumstances.” In heaven, we will not be “under the circumstances.” Our circumstances, and especially *our fellowship with the Lord,*

then will be the very thing that gives us perfect joy, love, peace, and happiness; and gives them without waning for all eternity. **“Then the weakness I feel here/ Shall forever disappear”** (v. 6). Perhaps most comforting of all to us is the knowledge that in heaven, we shall be free also from our sin. That, too, is included in the **“weakness I feel here”** from which we shall then finally be liberated.

With what attitude, then, shall we consider our own impending death? In his most famous sonnet, “Death, Be Not Proud,” John Donne shows us. He mocks a personification of death as being powerless against him (or any other Christian). His closing couplet says, “One short sleep past, we wake eternally/ And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.” Hymn 206 does the same in verse 9: **“Laugh to scorn the gloomy grave/ And at death no longer tremble;/ He, the Lord, who came to save/ Will at last His own assemble./ They will go their Lord to meet,/ Treading death beneath their feet.”**

Death is not our end; it is our glorious beginning. On Easter morning, our Savior rose victorious from the grave, and His resurrection assures us also of our own resurrection and eternal life. *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Corinthians 15:55 & 57, KJV).



**Craig Owings** is a retired teacher and serves as assistant editor of the *Lutheran Spokesman*. He lives in Cape Coral, Florida.

# When God Walked the Line

[So the Lord said to Abram]

“Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two . . . . And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram” (Genesis 15:9-10,17-18).

**W**hen you confirm an agreement with a handshake, you put your reputation on the line. When you sign a contract, you are subject to its conditions—as well as its penalties should you fail to uphold your side. The goal is to convince the other party that you will do everything in your power to fulfill what you promise.

To Abram God made promises that would mean a great deal not only to Abram but also to all nations. Some would be fulfilled soon, others in about four hundred years, and others after twenty centuries. In Genesis 15, God determined to affirm the faith of Abram and all who are his children by faith, and He did this by doing more than making a promise. He made a covenant using startling imagery.

This manner of making a covenant was utilized back then for serious contracts. Cut the animals in half, lay each piece opposite the other, and then have both parties walk between the halves. Implicit in the action: May I so perish and be *cut off* if I do not uphold my end of the bargain.

Abram knew exactly what the pieces meant and may well have expected that God would call upon him to walk the line between the pieces. When such a covenant was made between two parties of significantly different status, only the one of lower rank was required to walk the line. The one of higher rank was showing favor by being willing to enter into the agreement and was not expected also to walk the line.

It should do no less than make our jaws drop to see God Himself—and only God—passing between the pieces! What did this mean?

In Mark 15:33 it says that a deep darkness descended [when Jesus was crucified]—not unlike what happened when God made His covenant long before.

It meant that God obligated Himself to fulfill every aspect of the covenant. He took on the full responsibility to make sure that Abram and his descendants would receive in full every blessing God promised them.

When God made this pledge, He put His reputation on the line: Abram would have a son with Sarai, and in four hundred years his descendants would return to this land from a foreign land. God’s full covenant with Abram, however, came to include much more than that. God promised that a Savior would one day come from Abram’s line, a Seed in whom *all* the nations of the earth would be blessed (see Matthew 1:1; Galatians 3:8, 9, 16, 18).

Fast forward over the centuries to when that promised Seed walked among the people. His name was Jesus, and the day came when God’s covenant with Abram was put to its greatest test. Jesus allowed Himself to be taken, beaten, condemned, and crucified. In Mark 15:33 it says that a deep darkness descended—not unlike what happened when God made His covenant long before. God’s own Son bore the brutality of the crucifixion and the agony of separation from God; and then came to pass what was foretold in Isaiah 53:8, “*He was cut off from the land of the living.*”

Jesus fulfilled every aspect of the covenant. Abram and all believers can trust the faithfulness of God; He is ever faithful to keep His promise and count their faith to them for righteousness.

When God made the covenant He was serious, and when He fulfilled it He was serious. Those who treasure His covenant will be serious with their thanks and praise.



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

AS WE APPROACH THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION, WE TAKE A BRIEF LOOK AT THE LIVES OF INFLUENTIAL AND IMPORTANT LUTHERAN LEADERS AND THEOLOGIAN

## David Henkel (1795–1831)

Everyone knows that to work efficiently, you should use the right tool for the job. Throughout the *Lutheran Leaders* series, we have seen how God made use of exactly the people He needed to preserve the true faith in a particular time and circumstance. We give glory to Him for His skill and wisdom. Nowhere are the practices of church and ministry more strange (at least to our eyes), and the challenges to the legacy of the Reformation more perilous, than the scene of early 19th century American Lutheranism. During his brief earthly life, David Henkel was just the right man for the job.

David Henkel was born to Paul and Elizabeth Henkel in Staunton, Virginia, in 1795. His father was a well-loved and respected hero of orthodoxy in his own right. He and his many pastor-sons left a legacy of confessional preaching, teaching, and publishing that preceded even C.F.W. Walther on the page of American Lutheranism.

Some of the first settlers to come to America were Lutherans. During the 18th century, Henry Muhlenberg was called from Leipzig to America, where he helped establish the first synod of Lutherans here. There was something of a golden age of orthodoxy during this period when the Lutheran confessions were held in high regard. Sadly, the influence of both pietism and rationalism quickly began to erode the right teaching. David Henkel was born into a time when, for many, feelings were held to be more important than scriptural doctrine. Others disdained any Bible claims that went beyond what could be explained by science or observed in nature. Maybe the biggest threat to right teaching

was the pressure for all Christians of the Reformation to unite, not under the banner of right teaching, but instead by “agreeing to disagree.”

What about the “strange ministries”? You’ll note I said strange, not wrong. There were synods back then, but they seem to have been more like associations than church bodies, and many clergymen belonged to more than one, like one might belong to various clubs. In many circles seminaries were distrusted. The pastors in the Henkel family, for example, were trained by themselves and by other pastors. First, pastors would be licensed, which meant they could preach and teach. This “level” of pastor was often called a catechist. Catechists were required to serve a certain period of years, then a synod would declare them to be candidates, and finally they would be ordained. Working, it would seem, just from the instruction received from his father, David Henkel began his ministry at the age of seventeen or eighteen in the year 1812 in South Carolina. He was then named a catechist by the Lutheran Synod of North Carolina, where he served many small churches in Lincoln County. He expected to be ordained by the same body, but was rebuffed because his public teachings and writings went against the type of unionism and rationalism popular among the synod’s leaders. A synodical official named Gottlieb Shober, in particular, attempted to keep him from ordination.



### The Tennessee Synod is Born

1819 was a big year for David Henkel. He anticipated ordination with the blessing of the North Carolina Synod at its convention which, according to its constitution, was supposed to meet on Trinity Sunday. Shober very much wanted to be at the founding conference of the General Synod in Pennsylvania,

which was supposed to happen at the same time, so he arranged for the North Carolina Synod to meet early. David Henkel attended this meeting, which he later considered to be out of order, and was more or less put on trial. He didn't back down from his biblical teachings, but did accept being "broken" from a candidate back to a catechist.

The North Carolina Synod next met on Trinity Sunday as planned and as called for in the constitution. Shober wasn't there, but others who opposed Henkel's teaching were. After contentious sessions, the church doors were locked, whereupon Henkel was ordained by his brother Philip under an oak tree in the church yard.

**After contentious sessions,  
the church doors were locked,  
whereupon Henkel was ordained  
by his brother Philip under an  
oak tree in the church yard.**

In July those who sided with Henkel and his faithful teaching founded the Tennessee Synod. Henkel remained an officer and leader in this group for the rest of his life.

Besides local parish work, Henkel went on frequent missionary trips to Kentucky and Indiana, and was a prolific writer.

After a year-long illness, David Henkel died on June 15, 1831, at the age of thirty-six. During his brief life, he is said to have delivered 32,000 sermons, baptized 243 adults and 2,997 infants, and confirmed 1,105 people. His opponents called him a rabble-rouser and accused him of being uneducated. Many said that he was stuck in the ways of the past and couldn't see beyond the Augsburg Confession that he often carried under his arm. We thank God that the Holy Spirit used His instrument, David Henkel, to keep the flame of Reformation truth burning in at least one corner of American Lutheranism!



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

# Can Someone who Commits Suicide be Saved?

**A**nytime someone asks, "Is so-and-so saved?" it is vital that our answer make clear what we mean by the word *saved*. When the Son of God sacrificed His perfect life on the cross, He provided complete atonement for the sins of every sinner of all time. *All* people have been justified in God's sight by that act of sacrificial love. "Behold! *The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:28). This truth is foundational to the Gospel!

What we are really asking about with this question is *final* salvation, or whether someone who commits suicide will enter heaven on Judgment Day. In other words, does such a person die in the Lord and receive the blessings of Christ's sacrifice, or has he thrown them away through unbelief?

To refine our question even further, we are really only asking this in the case of a child of God—someone who, to the best of our knowledge, has been a believer up to the time of committing suicide. Someone who is an unbeliever will be lost eternally—not specifically because of the suicide, but rather because without Christ there is no salvation (see Acts 4:12).

The difficult question arises when a confessing child of God takes his own life. Did he fall from the faith? Is his final act a damning sin that negates all else?

Suicide is a deliberate act of self-destruction. This is true whether it is an assisted suicide of someone who is terminally ill, a distraught teen, or any other condition. Regardless of cause or circumstance, taking one's own life is a sin, plain and simple. There is no circumstance when this is not true.

It is also true that suicide carries no greater guilt than any other sin, nor is it a sin for which Jesus did not die. If that were true, then Christ's redemption would not be complete or universal. While unbelief may lead someone to suicide, the converse is not true, namely, that suicide is automatically a mark of unbelief. Suicide, like all sins,

comes from the heart (Matthew 15:19), and children of God retain that sinful heart even after putting on "*the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*" (Ephesians 4:24).

This means we can simplify the question to this: Can a child of God enter eternal life if he dies while sinning—whether suicide or any other sin?

As children of God, we maintain an ongoing struggle against our flesh (see Romans 7). A child of God does not become immune to sin, temptation, the assaults of mental illness, emotional distress, confusion, or even suicidal thoughts prompted by medications prescribed for other conditions. If, in weakness, a child of God succumbs to any of these tribulations and commits suicide, it doesn't automatically mean he has fallen from grace and is lost eternally. As believers we stand in God's grace (see Romans 5:1-2) and through faith receive ongoing forgiveness while standing in that grace.

This does not diminish sin, nor the grave spiritual danger of suicide. Rather, it reveals the magnitude of God's grace which, amazingly, abounds even more than sin (see Romans 5:20). Nor do we have license to despise God's grace as if there were no consequence to sin and no reason to refrain from it. Such despising of grace is a sign of unbelief. Paul writes, "*What then: Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!*" (Romans 6:15). Those sins that are committed willfully—with forethought, intent and planning—present an especially grave risk to a believer's faith. This is also true as it applies to the sin of ending one's own time of grace. Christian, beware!

Suicide is such a tragic sin, not because it carries more guilt than another, but because of its earthly consequence. Like any other murder, suicide ends a soul's time of grace—the time on earth in which a person can be brought to faith as well as share the Gospel with others.

A word of caution: when we speak of someone's eternal condition, it is important that we be careful not to say more

**Equipped with the Gospel, we have the privilege of bringing soothing medicine and strength to someone who is struggling in crisis.**



than we know. We base such conclusions on the individual's confession; ultimately, however, we recognize that only God knows the heart and those who are His (2 Timothy 2:19). So in cases such as the suicide of a person who confessed the Christian faith, we are served well by remembering our limitations and exercising care to not declare things we cannot know with certainty.

It has been said that suicide is not so much the desire to die as it is the fear of living. For anyone who is struggling with the fear of living, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the promises of God are a comfort to chase away the fear. Equipped with the Gospel, we have the privilege of bringing soothing medicine and strength to someone who is struggling in crisis. Develop a list of Gospel passages to have "at the ready" to share with others.

The rise of the suicide rate in our society may well be due to a general devaluing of life, and also to the deep spiritual darkness in which so many walk, as well as to an earthly focus with an absence of God's Truth. A misunderstanding of God's purpose for life can leave a person contemplating suicide as a solution to despair, pain, grief, or hopelessness. All of this cannot but threaten to influence believers as well. There is a great need for the lamp of God's Truth to light the way. We can bear that lamp.

If someone you know is struggling with "fear of living," seek to shore up what is weak and strengthen them. If you are the one struggling, seek counsel and help. If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, don't hesitate to enlist the help of others—your pastor, mental health professionals and, if necessary, law enforcement.

Your pastor is an excellent resource for encouragement and assistance to help you encourage others.



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

# Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church Cheyenne, Wyoming

*Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).*

With the desire among so many today to have something new, it may feel strange to be encouraged to "ask for the old paths." That is, unless by God's grace one is given faith to see that it is in the old paths "where the good way is" and where "you will find rest for your souls." Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church is a congregation that desires the "old paths" in the middle and the middle of everything new.

Nestled in the heart of Cheyenne, Wyoming's capital city, Redeemer Lutheran got its start in 1940 as a mission congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). It was served for several years by Pastor Victor Tiefel (of nearby Greeley, Colorado), but the mission closed when it was unable to acquire a permanent pastor. The desire for the "old paths" of God's truth was strong among those first faithful few, and the mission was reopened in 1949 with Pastor Winfred Schaller, Jr., being called to serve.

The Lord would richly bless the small congregation through the tireless efforts and leadership of His faithful servant, Pastor Schaller. By 1952, the congregation had built its own church/school/parsonage combination. Just two years later, in 1954, they opened a Christian day school, with a desire to seek for the "old paths" in the Christian education of its youth. The school began with an opening enrollment of twenty students, just two of whom were members. For that first



Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church

school year, Pastor Schaller would serve not only as the overall shepherd of the congregation, but also as the congregation's first full-time teacher, teaching all subjects in kindergarten through seventh grade

The congregation would be served by many different teachers over the next five decades. Sadly, in 2008, after fifty-four years of operation, the Christian day school was closed for lack of students. However, increased growth in the Cheyenne area has the

congregation hopeful that the Lord may be working to reopen the school. An exploratory committee has recently been formed to look into the possibility of reopening the K-8<sup>th</sup> grade school.

Out of its desire to cling to the "old paths" of true doctrine in Scripture rather than the appealing newness of false teaching, Redeemer congregation terminated its membership in the WELS in 1957. The following year, Redeemer served as host congregation for a meeting of the Interim Conference. This meeting continued discussions regarding the false teaching being tolerated in the various Lutheran church bodies of the Synodical Conference, and also the prospect of beginning a new church body (later the Church of the Lutheran Confession) that would be

dedicated to asking for the "old paths" of God's truth, "where the good way is." It was also this Interim Conference that gave birth to the devotional magazine which you are now reading. In fact, two of Redeemer's previous pastors (Winfred Schaller and Paul Fleischer) have served as editors of the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

Redeemer congregation has developed a few fellowship/worship traditions over the past years which assist the members in encouraging



Above: Members of Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church



one another on the “old paths” of God’s truths in Christ Jesus. Midweek Bible classes run from September through May. Every summer the congregation has an outdoor worship service and fellowship meal in the nearby Vedauwoo Recreation Area. Each winter, members of the congregation travel into the mountainous region north of Laramie, Wyoming, to a member’s cabin for the purpose of selecting the church’s Christmas tree and for a time of fellowship (see photo at right).

Redeemer is also looking at bringing the “old paths” of God’s Word to the Cheyenne community in new ways. In 2012, the congregation built a new addition onto the front of the church, thus allowing for a handicap-accessible entrance. Part of this new addition included a new mezzanine window which the ladies of the congregation use to post short statements of gospel truth. A pane of beautiful stained glass is soon to be permanently installed in this mezzanine window.

Also in 2012, a new church sign was added to the property. Because the church sits on a busy road in Cheyenne, the sign is easily viewable by the public. The congregation uses the sign to proclaim God’s Word, and to inform the community of special worship opportunities. One of those special opportunities takes place in the summer months with a Summer Lecture Series, in which the pastor takes one or two evenings to give a forty-five minute lecture on Scripture’s application to a popular topic of the day.

Also, for the first time, the congregation now has a presence on the internet in the form of a Facebook page, which it uses once a month to present devotional posts to the community. The pastor also regularly posts sermon snippets to the Facebook page, along with other devotional

posts from various sources for the spiritual edification of those who follow the church’s page.

Redeemer has a membership of fifty-six souls, with an average attendance of twenty-nine for Sunday morning worship and twelve for Bible class.

In an age when everyone seems to chase after the next new thing, Redeemer congregation is thankful to God and His grace for the eternally-reliable and ever-relevant “old paths” of unchangeable truth from God’s Word, for it is in these “old paths” that we learn of the good way of salvation in Christ Jesus and how His life, death, and resurrection have provided everlasting rest for our souls.

“I love to tell the story of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.

I love to tell the story, because I know ’tis true;  
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.”

“I love to tell the story, ’twill be my theme in glory,  
To tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.”

~A. Katherine Hankey



**Chad Seybt** is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

# Heidi Radtke



**Age:** 30

**Program:** Education

**Year in School:** Senior

**Where were you born?** Eau Claire, Wisconsin

**Where did you grow up?**

I have spent most of my life in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I did live in Altoona, Wisconsin, for five years prior to moving to Eau Claire.

**Tell us about your family.**

I have two sisters, both younger than I am. Michelle is the youngest by ten years and is still going to college at UWEC. My sister Rachel Ude is married to Pastor David Ude. They live in Appleton, Wisconsin, with my niece, Anastasia, who will be turning two in January. My parents reside in Eau Claire and attend Messiah Lutheran Church. My grandfather, Gordon Radtke, also resides in Eau Claire and is a former pastor and professor in our synod.

**What hobbies, sports or extracurriculars interest you?**

I love to go hiking, camping, and tubing in the summer, as well as visiting our farmers' market downtown. As for sports, I like to play volleyball, and watch the Packers on Sunday. My hobbies include reading, painting, and working with pastels.

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

Well, I'm pretty much an open book, but I will share one of my most embarrassing stories from grade school. I was sitting on the edge of the sink talking with the girls—Dana Wuerch, Jessi Beekman, and Gretchen Noeldner—when I laughed and fell in. I was stuck, but the nicest, kindest girl—Gretchen—came over and turned on the water so it looked like I had "had an accident." I had to walk around like that the rest of the day.

**Which academic subjects especially interest you?**

The subject that most interests me, hands down, is art; but surprisingly, I also am beginning to enjoy math, which I greatly disliked in my younger years.

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

My grandfather encouraged me from a very early age and

**Want to meet the person who may be your next pastor or Christian day school teacher?**



This series profiles the men and women who are preparing for the public teaching and preaching ministry at our Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

always said that I had the talents for the job. He opened me to opportunities such as teaching at VBS in Fairchild, as well as teaching Sunday School. I went to the Technical College for hotel/restaurant management, but found that wasn't for me. During this time I was still helping out in Fairchild and becoming more involved there. I finally decided to go back to ILC and enter the education program, but the Lord let me know that this wasn't the right time. I quit and went back to my daily factory job. As time went on, I became more serious in my desire to become a teacher, and the Lord let things fall into place. Now I've almost completed the program. The whole time He was guiding and directing my path according to His plans.

**What have you appreciated most about your time at ILC?**

It was a bit odd coming back, since I had been gone for nearly ten years. Most of the professors were the same, but a bit older. I didn't know any of my classmates, but my cousin was in the Associate of Arts program. It was nice to see a familiar face. As I got to know the other students, I found that they were friendly. The thing I most appreciate about ILC is the Christian atmosphere. After working in factories for almost eight years, you begin to appreciate your Christian brothers and sisters all the more.

**What qualities do you think will most be needed by the future leaders of our churches and schools?**

The quality that first comes to mind is the obvious—that they be grounded in the true faith that is found in the Word of the Lord. As leaders, we need to know God's Word and share that with others. We need to know why we are part of the CLC and not another synod. As our enemies approach and the world seems to get worse and churches begin to stray, we need to know what God's Word says. We need to be able to teach others what the Word of God says. The most important quality a leader must have is that of turning, in faith, to the Word of the Lord and following what He commands.

# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS MARCH 2016

TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941; WS = Worship Supplement 2000; [ ] = Biblical Events Remembered

Date	Biblical Events Noted	Verse	Reading	Comments
Mar 1		WS 786	Leviticus 2:1-13	Yeast, a picture of sin, was to be avoided in offerings (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). Salt, a picture of love, was to be added (Colossians 4:6).
Mar 2		WS 751	Leviticus 5:14-19	Even if we sin unintentionally, we are guilty and in need of the forgiveness Christ gives us.
Mar 3		TLH 390	Leviticus 9:7-24	Aaron made atonement for himself and for the people, a foreshadowing of Christ's great work as our High Priest.
Mar 4		TLH 381	Mark 7:31-37	What a beautiful confession: "He has done everything well." He has done everything perfectly, in fact.
Mar 5		TLH 379	Leviticus 11:1-8, 41-47	God gave Israel this menu because they needed to learn that one must be holy before the Lord—a lesson for all.
Mar 7		TLH 382	Leviticus 14:33-53	Mildew? Take note here of the priest's job to purify with blood, pronounce clean, and offer atonement. Sound familiar?
Mar 8		TLH 377:5-6	Leviticus 16:1-34	"Since Christ hath full atonement made and brought to us salvation, Each Christian therefore may be glad."
Mar 9		TLH 631	Mark 10:1-16	Jesus is a family man, concerned for husbands, wives, and children.
Mar 10		TLH 152	Leviticus 17:8-16	Blood (a life) was the currency used to pay the atonement price, so it was to be handled with care.
Mar 11		TLH 412	Leviticus 20:1-13, 22-26	Israel was different from other nations. They lived under the promise of a Savior, so they were to act differently, too.
Mar 12		TLH 568	Leviticus 23:33-44	We have a Thanksgiving Day, but here the Israelites have a week of thanksgiving.
Mar 14		TLH 162	Mark 10:46-11:11	Bartimaeus received sight just in time to see Jesus approach Jerusalem. With eyes of faith we see Him approach His cross.
Mar 15		TLH 326	Leviticus 26:1-17, 40-45	Repentance (confession) and faith in God go hand in hand, and a channel is thereby opened to God's blessings.
Mar 16		WS 745	Numbers 3:1-16	The Levites belonged to the Lord (12-13) and therefore served Him. In what way do each of us belong to the Lord?
Mar 17		TLH 144	Numbers 5:5-10	Lord, help me fight against temptation, correct whatever wrongs I can, and serve You and others with love and good works.
Mar 18		WS 763	Mark 12:35-37	Jesus is more than just a son of David. He is David's Lord, too, because He is the Son of God.
Mar 19		WS 800	Numbers 6:22-27	On the verge of Holy Week, we simply cannot help but rest in this spot to hear God's blessing.
Mar 21		WS 725	Numbers 9:15-23	God once came to His people in a cloud—and later on the back of a donkey.
Mar 22		WS 723	Mark 14:1-11	While the chief priests looked for a way to kill Him, a forgiven sinner looked for a way to worship Him.
Mar 23		TLH 330	Mark 14:12-72	Jesus gives Himself for you at His Table, in Gethsemane's garden, and at His trial.
Mar 24		WS 722	Mark 15:1-20	Sadly, Pilate gave the politically-expedient answer rather than the right one, but God's will would be done nonetheless.
Mar 25 [Annunciation and Crucifixion]		TLH 84:5	Lk 1:26-38; Mk 15:21-41	The King who reigns over the house of Jacob forever becomes a King on a cross for His people.
Mar 26		TLH 353	Mark 15:42-47	"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death. . . ."
Mar 28		WS 732	Lk 2:1-20; Mk 16:1-20	Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace—for He is risen!
Mar 29		TLH 199	Luke 2:25-32	Those who saw Jesus after His resurrection could well have sung Simeon's song .too!
Mar 30		TLH 204	Numbers 14:1-23	The Lord's great strength is revealed in His forgiving love.
Mar 31		TLH 245	Numbers 21:4-9	God provided a way of salvation when the people had sinned.

*In the first of this four-part series, Director John Reim shares his unique insights into the highly-regarded choral group that is the Tour Choir of Immanuel Lutheran College.*

# The Moving Gospel

The Gospel has been on the move from the day it was initially proclaimed. He Who walked in the cool of the day brought needed spiritual refreshment to the sin-parched souls of our first ancestors. To fallen Adam and Eve came the message that one of their descendants would restore peace with God. And the march of that Gospel has continued.

Faithful parents in Old Testament times taught the precepts of the Lord to their children on the road as well as at home. Moses directed, *"You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house,"* as well as *"when you walk by the way"* (Deuteronomy 11:19). The Son of God Himself traversed the highways of Judea, Samaria and Galilee to proclaim the arrival of God's gracious kingdom. *"I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also,"* He said, *"because for this purpose I have been sent"* (Luke 4:43). Inspired apostles took to the streets of more distant lands, proclaiming to Jews and Gentiles alike the love of God in Christ. *"Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord'"* (Acts 15:36). And the Gospel is on the move still today, in many lands and in many ways.

One such way is found in the singing of the Good News by traveling students of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and



Seminary. Each spring, students set out to sing the message of salvation to congregations near and far. And when they do, they continue a tradition which has been part of the Lutheran education scene for decades.

Shortly after Immanuel College was established, Robert Dommer brought to the school the tradition of singing on tour which he had experienced as a college and seminary student. In the early years, the choir traveled to congregations relatively close to the school, which was located in Mankato, Minnesota, at the time. But soon thereafter Professor Dommer designed a three-year cycle of routes: one which circled

Lake Michigan, another which traveled to congregations in Minnesota and the Dakotas, and a third which reached as far west as Colorado. With only occasional adjustments in those itineraries, Professor Dommer led the choir on those routes through much of the 1960's, the 1970's, and up to 1984.

For the four tours which were conducted from 1985 to 1988, Dean Carstensen served as the director. It was under his leadership that the size of the choir was increased and some expansion of the routing was undertaken.





From 1989 to the present, John Reim has been directing. During the past twenty-seven years the number of choir members per tour has generally hovered around thirty-two. The choir has been blessed with safe travels to nearly every CLC congregation in the contiguous states, where they have had the privilege of presenting God's gift of song combined with the Word of life.

It's not that the Gospel needs music to reach, awaken, inspire and console. It does all that and more whether or not it is coupled with notes. But the apostle Paul, a traveling singer himself (Acts 16:25), demonstrated the usefulness of enlisting music in the service of the Gospel. Echoing the numerous directives of the Psalms to sing to the Lord, he directed also the people of God in these New Testament times to combine God's Word with His gift of music. *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Colossians 3:16). A rapid succession of notes can convey excitement, such as that which was felt by the shepherds and angels over the news of the Savior's birth. Dissonant chords can reflect distress, such as that which was experienced by the Lord when He went to the cross in our stead. Crescendos at cadences can communicate success, such as that which was put on display when Jesus conquered death. And plaintive progressions of chords can suggest peace, such as that which the Spirit provides

through the message of forgiveness. The Gospel and music go hand in hand.

**And so do fellow-Christians.**

Going on tour also provides a unique opportunity for students to meet other believers in other locations and, in connection with such meetings, to encourage and be encouraged. The departing embraces of newly-acquainted Christians have been witnessed time and time again through the super-sized window in the front of the tour bus. Blest is the tie that binds. Blest is the message which unites God with man and Christians with Christians. Here. There. Everywhere. Whether spoken by one or sung by young Christians, the moving Gospel of Christ continues to be on the move.



**John Reim** is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and is director of the ILC Tour Choir.

Photos, clockwise from top left: a choir concert at Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire; former director Robert Dommer; the 1979 Tour Choir; the 1972 Tour Choir; the 2015 Tour Choir.



# Aid for Victims of India Flooding.

## DOMESTIC MISSIONS:

Appleton, WI  
Atlanta, GA  
Detroit, MI  
Mapleton, ND  
Sioux Falls, SD  
Tacoma, WA

## FOREIGN MISSIONS:

Congo  
Ghana  
India  
Kenya  
Liberia  
Mexico  
Myanmar  
Nigeria  
Nepal  
Peru  
Sudan  
Sweden  
Tanzania  
Thailand  
Togo  
Uganda  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe



At the end of last year (November and December, 2015), southern India was affected by rainfall totals that had not been seen there in more than a decade. The result was devastating flooding in the regions of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The city of Chennai (which has a population of about five million people) was particularly hard hit. Over five hundred people were killed and almost two million displaced as a result of the flooding. You may be familiar with Chennai, and the regions of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, because our brethren in the Berea Evangelical Lutheran Church (BELC) have their headquarters in Chennai, our CLC missionaries live there, and there are many BELC congregations in these two Indian regions.

As you can imagine, the flooding also caused damage to the property (walls, floors, roofs) of BELC congregations, and the homes of pastors and members.

In response to the needs of our brethren in the BELC, in January the CLC Board of Missions sent \$4,000 in disaster relief from the Mission Development Fund to help purchase needed items for BELC members who were affected.

Pastor D. Paul and the leaders of the BELC have visited many of the affected areas and assessed the damage. They have used the funds to help thirty-six pastors in the Chennai area where property of our BELC brethren was damaged by the flood. Supplies like blankets, material for clothing, and rice were distributed to each of these thirty-six pastors, as well as a small amount of cash to help with other needs.



There is much more that needs to be done to repair churches and homes. Remember in your prayers the pastors and members of the BELC, and their work of preaching the Gospel to the lost souls of India.

**Nathanael Mayhew** is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, and a member of the Board of Missions of the CLC.

# What If...?

**W**hat if . . . ? What if you had been born a hundred years earlier? What if you had chosen a different career path? What if you had never met your spouse? Or broaden the scope. What if world history had turned out differently? What if the U.S. and its allies had lost World War II, and we were now living under a dictatorship rather than in a republic? It's more than an intellectual exercise. Considering "what ifs" can help us see and appreciate God's gracious direction of our lives and all of history.

That is just what the Apostle Paul does in 1 Corinthians 15 by presenting the most far-reaching and startling "what if" of all. What if there were no resurrection of the dead? The consequences would be staggering! If there is no resurrection, Paul states, then Christ is not risen. The apostles' preaching is pure fabrication. Faith in Jesus is worthless. Mankind is still under the curse of sin, and those who died trusting in Christ are eternally lost. Hope in Jesus would be mere self-delusion. There would be nothing to live for beyond the passing treasures and hollow joys of this earth. What's more, we would have no purpose as a church beyond that of all the other organizations which strive to make the world a better place in which to live. The "what if?" scenario Paul paints is the desperate condition of the world without a Savior.

However, Paul stresses in his resurrection chapter that this "what if?" is not reality. *"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"* (1 Corinthians 15:20 NIV84). Jesus suffered and died according to the Scriptures. He fully paid the enormous debt of the world's sin. *"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—*

**Jesus' cry:**

***"It is finished!"***

**was completely validated by  
the angel's declaration:**

***"He is not here; he has risen"***

(Matthew 28:6 NIV84).

*that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death"* (Hebrews 2:14-15 NIV84). Jesus' cry: *"It is finished!"* was completely validated by the angel's declaration: *"He is not here; he has risen"* (Matthew 28:6 NIV84).

Let's not live, then, under the shadow of "what if?" Jesus lives. Death is defeated. Satan is

crushed. The resurrection to life eternal is the future of all who believe in Jesus as Savior. Let's live in hope and with purpose. Even in the face of sickness, financial struggles, old age, and finally death, our hope is sure. Jesus lives. *"Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us"* (Romans 8:18 NIV84). Whether we spend our days at home, in the classroom, or in the workplace, we have a compelling reason to be there. We are members of the living Christ. We live to serve and glorify Him. As a church body we don't have to search for an identity or reason for our existence. We have been entrusted with the Gospel good news of Christ crucified and risen to share with fellow sinners around the world.

Finally, consider some additional "what ifs?" What if we were to pray all the more for Christ's kingdom to come to us and many others? What if we were to ask the Lord to give us greater zeal for the Word and more fervent love for souls? What if we were also to pray that He would open more doors for us to speak to those around us? And what if we were to continue asking for the material gifts and the men to carry His Word to places where we cannot personally travel? What might happen?

Let's find out!



**Michael Eichstadt** is pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, and president of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

# Lutheran Spokesman

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

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

**Dear Mainstream Media: Stop Lecturing Christians on Their Faith.** “Every journalist in America has been secretly attending seminary.” That’s the only conclusion that author Shane Morris can come to after being bombarded with lectures about the “true” meaning of the Christian faith, delivered by mainstream media commentators (almost none of whom are Christians). Recent months have seen a cascade of verbal attacks on any traditional believers who have dared to question so-called “gay marriage,” or who support the bakers, florists or county clerks who want to exercise their faith somewhere other than the inside of a church. Morris cites a multitude of articles in the “*Christians-are-meanies-and-I-know-the-Bible-better-than-they-do genre*,” especially the furious backlash that resulted when Wheaton political science professor Larycia Hawkins was suspended from the faculty. Administrators at the evangelical college said that Hawkins violated their statement of faith when she stated that “Muslims and Christians worship the same God.” Sorry, said Morris, that won’t fly. “Here’s a heads-up for the media: We believe the Trinity is an actual thing—a description of God’s being—and not some footnote or

appendix that won’t be on the test. It’s the first thing we confess every Sunday in our creed. We, as Christians, do not worship a generic God-of-the-philosophers, non-trinitarian, and infinitely customizable to various faiths. Our God insists on being known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as revealed in the New Testament. When a Christian or a journalist demands we ‘act like Jesus’ and just get along with everybody, I remind them that Jesus wrecked the Kumbaya of first-century Jewish theology by making exactly the claim about himself I’m making now: *He is God in human flesh*. Do Christians and Muslims worship the same god? Well, is Jesus Christ God? You can’t answer ‘yes’ to both, no matter how loudly the theologians in the media insist otherwise.” Morris, G. Shane. “Dear Media: Stop Trying To Teach Christians Theology.” *Religion*. The Federalist, 31 Dec. 2015. Web. 6 Jan. 2016.

**“Human Rights” a Poor Substitute for Religion in Society.** In a lecture for the Heritage Foundation, author and senior ethics analyst Roger Scruton commented on a shift in moral foundations that is nearly complete in Europe—and is gaining ground in the United States: “Europe is rapidly jettisoning its Christian heritage and has found nothing

to put in the place of it save the religion of ‘human rights.’ I call this a religion because it is designed expressly to fill the hole in people’s worldview that is left when religion is taken away. The notion of a human right purports to offer the ground for moral opinions, for legal precepts, for policies designed to establish order in places where people are in competition and conflict. However, it is itself without foundations. If you ask what religion commands or forbids, you usually get a clear answer in terms of God’s revealed law or the Magisterium of the church. If you ask what rights are human or natural or fundamental, you get a different answer depending on whom you ask, and nobody seems to agree with anyone else regarding the procedure for resolving conflicts. Consider the dispute over marriage. Is it a right or not? If so, what does it permit? Does it grant a right to marry a partner of the same sex? And if yes, does it therefore permit incestuous marriage too? The arguments are endless, and nobody knows how to settle them.” Scruton, Roger. “The Future of European Civilization: Lessons for America.” *Lecture #1265*. Heritage Foundation. 8 Dec. 2015. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Peace with God Ev. Lutheran Church—Onalaska, WI** is meeting at a new time. Worship is on Saturday at 3:00 P.M., with Sunday school and Bible class at 4:15. The address is 816 2nd Ave. S., Suite #700 in Onalaska.

**Candidates for Immanuel Professor:** The Board of Regents announces that the following nominations were submitted to fill the professorship vacated by the impending retirement of Professor John Pfeiffer at the end of the 2015-16 academic year: Dwight (Frank) Gantt, Paul Naumann, David Reim, Peter Reim, Michael Roehl, David Schaller, Stephen Sydow, Paul Tiefel, Jr., Matthew Ude, and Mark Weis. The individual would teach at the high school (potentially), college, and seminary levels with an emphasis on courses in Hebrew (college) and Old Testament theology (seminary) and also in other theological disciplines. Other assignments will be determined upon mutual agreement in accordance with need and corresponding ability. Comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates was previously solicited, with a deadline of February 12, 2016.

**Nominations for ILC President:**

The Board of Regents announces that the following nominations were submitted for the office of President of Immanuel Lutheran College: Jeffrey Schierenbeck, Steven Sippert, Paul Sullivan, and John Ude. The term of this call is for two years, extending to the end of Academic Year 2018. Comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates was previously solicited, with a deadline of February 12, 2016.



Engagement picture of Raju Bhitrakoti and Sanju Khatri. Raju graduated early from Immanuel Lutheran Seminary so that he could return to his native Nepal and help with earthquake recovery efforts. He and Sanju were married on January 31.