

March 2017 VOL 59 NO. 9



LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

Predicted

All

Special

Sacrifice

I am

Only Savior

Never-ending life



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2750 Oxford Street North
Roseville, MN 55113

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

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.clclutheran.org.

Editor: Paul Naumann, 3732 Claymore Lane, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, E-mail to paul.naumann@ilc.edu; Assistant Editor: Craig Owings; Art Director, Graphic Designer, Print Production: Matthew Schaser; Proofreaders: David Lau and Paula Naumann; Staff: James Albrecht, Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Timothy Daub, Wayne Eichstadt, David Fuerstenau, Frank Gantt, Norman Greve, Mark Gullerud, John Klatt, Joseph Lau, Delwyn Maas, Bruce Naumann, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, John Reim, Michael Roehl, Thomas Schuetze, Chad Seybt, Steven Sippert, Mark Weis.

Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Naumann three months before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Naumann. Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. E-mail to BennoSydow@yahoo.com. Individual subscriptions {foreign-U.S. currency only}: \$18.00 {\$22.00} for one year; \$34.00 {\$42.00} for two years; \$50.00 {\$62.00} for three years; sent in bulk to congregations: \$15.00.

Spokesman Online Version at: www.lutheranspokesman.org Printed in U.S.A.

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Christ Loves You with a PASSION

“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

(John 4:34, NIV84)

What’s your passion? Is there a hobby you especially enjoy doing? Cooking? Playing piano? Fixing cars? Long distance running? Most folks have a set of activities they choose to include in their schedules depending on their interests. It’s good to have such diversions. They have a way of adding spice to life. They can also revitalize us for the respective callings in life which the Lord has given us (in the home, at work, at church, and so on).

Speaking of “callings,” we will soon enter the season of Lent. It’s the time of year when we ponder in a special way the calling God gave to His Son, Jesus. We are reminded how Jesus’ one burning desire—His passion—was to finish the mission His Father assigned to Him for our eternal blessing. For Jesus it was, of course, more than a hobby. It was **THE** reason He was born into the world. As we meditate on His work for us, it saddens us to think how it was our transgressions that brought such woe on Him. At the same time, it makes us happy. The basis for our happiness could be pictured by an acrostic on that word *PASSION*, as follows:

The **P** in “*PASSION*” stands for **PREDICTED**. We hear again and again in the passion account that everything took place so the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled (for an example, read Matthew 26:55-56). This is important because it proves that Jesus is our true Messiah, chosen by God to serve us in love.

The **A** stands for **ALL**. When Jesus went as an uncomplaining lamb to the slaughter of the cross, He did it for the blessing of every person who ever lived or will live. No one need wonder, “Did Jesus die *for me*?” The Bible’s answer is an emphatic “Yes!” (read 1 John 2:1-2).

Jesus’ one burning
desire—His passion—
was to finish the mission
His Father assigned to Him
for our eternal blessing.

The two **S**’s stand for **SPECIAL SACRIFICE**. When Satan seduced our first parents to sin in the Garden of Eden, their relationship with God was fractured. They and all their descendants were hopelessly lost and condemned. They were separated from God, destined to suffer in hell’s misery forever. Nothing less than the precious blood of His Son, shed on the cross, had the ability to mend that broken relationship. Praise God, it did! (read 1 Peter 1:18-19).

The **I** stands for **I AM**. It can remind us of the sublime truth that He who forfeited His life on the cross is the eternal **LORD**, the faithful covenant God, Jehovah. In a world where broken promises are the order of the day, what peace is ours knowing that Jehovah Himself—He who keeps His promises unfailingly—provided for our salvation. (read Psalm 98:1-2).

The letter **O** can remind us that Jesus is the **ONLY SAVIOR**. The idea is common in our world that there are many roads leading to heaven. That’s a deception of the evil one. Scripture is clear in teaching that no system of theology based on human effort, no religion conceived in the mind of man, can redeem poor sinners. Only Jesus can. Praise Him, He did! (read Acts 4:12).

Finally, the **N** in the word *PASSION* can remind us of the blessing of infinite worth that is ours through faith in Christ Crucified: **NEVER-ENDING LIFE**. As God’s redeemed children, through faith in His Son, we enjoy the privilege of living for Him now. We look forward to the day when we’ll see Him and live in His presence forever. (read 1 John 3:1-2).

How blessed we are to have a Savior who loved us with such passion!

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



A Care Package from Jesus

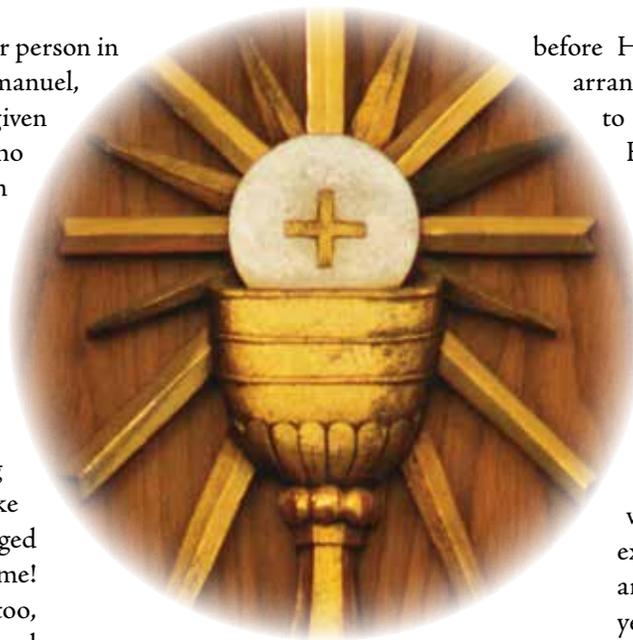
“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14:18)

Who is the most popular person in the dormitory at Immanuel, Eau Claire? On any given day, that would be the one who has received a care package from home. When I was in high school there and a brown-paper-wrapped box arrived from Seattle, my fellow dorm-dwellers naturally expected me to share some of the homemade goodies inside. I was genuinely glad when the box would arrive, and generally willing to share. Nothing says “love” like cookies, dried fruit and packaged soup, along with news from home! Oh, I was aware on other days, too, that my parents cared about me and were thinking of me. But the personal touch that came with a care package was an immediate and comforting expression of that love.

Have you received that kind of comfort lately from your true home—that is, your home in heaven?

It was many centuries ago, and a half a world away, when Jesus last spoke with His followers before He went to the cross. He told them *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also”* (John 14:2-3). Since that time the Lord Jesus has not been visibly present with us, His followers. Yes, He still speaks to us through the inspired Word of the Bible. Still, we long to meet Him in person, to fall at His feet in worship and praise, to hear His welcoming voice, and to take His pierced hand in our own. It is especially when we are troubled, or grieving over our sins and failures, that such a personal touch from the Lord would be most welcome.

Our Savior knows that our frail human nature benefits from such a personal touch. That is one of the reasons why,



In the Lord’s Supper
you have personal,
positive proof that
Jesus forgives you

before His suffering and death, He made arrangements for a regular “care package” to arrive in a very personal way for His believers, saying, *“Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. . . . This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me”* (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

Ever since that time, Christians have gathered together and received Jesus’ real body and blood, with the bread and wine, as an expression of His personal forgiveness and undying love. Though we cannot yet see or hear Him in person, He regularly sends us His forgiveness, comfort and love—His very self!—in the Sacrament.

Whenever you come to Communion and the pastor says “Take, eat, this is the true body of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and “Take, drink, this is the true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,” you are to hear these words as though they were spoken by Christ Himself, with the certainty that what you are receiving is, miraculously, the same body and blood which Jesus gave on the cross for your redemption.

Though the devil or even your own conscience would condemn you because of your many sins and failures, in the Lord’s Supper you have personal, positive proof that Jesus forgives you and welcomes you. Here you have the certainty that Jesus will see you through to that time when your eyes will actually see Him, your ears will hear Him, and your mouth will praise Him forever. That’s Jesus’ personal touch—that’s some care package!



Bruce Naumann is associate pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

HYMN 140

“Jesus, I Will Ponder Now”

I recently saw a social media post in which a Christian from a Reformed church disparaged Lutherans for observing what he disdainfully referred to as “forty days of Lent and only one day of Easter.” Perhaps his opinion was influenced by those unfaithful, “pop psychology,” itching-ears-appeasing preachers who avoid proclaiming any Bible truths that they consider to be “negative”; or maybe he was merely engaging in a smug variety of Reformed chauvinism. Ultimately, though, his criticism really amounts to scorning the sacrifice made by the Son of God to win our salvation.

Sometimes, the true value of a gift can best be understood by knowing not only its intrinsic worth, but also what the giver did in order to give that gift. Back in the 1940’s, a ten-year-old boy went by himself to an ice cream shop. He found a place at the counter, and eventually a harried-looking waitress asked him what he wanted. “How much does a single-scoop chocolate fudge sundae cost?” he asked. “Fifty cents” she said. The boy’s disappointment was apparent. “What about just a single scoop of plain vanilla ice cream?” The waitress, already impatient, brusquely answered, “Thirty cents. Do you want it or not? I’m busy.” “Yes, please,” he answered.

The boy quietly ate his ice cream and left his money on the counter. When the waitress saw it, she began to cry. He had left two quarters, and she realized that even though she had treated the boy gruffly, he had chosen not to get the sundae because he wanted to be able to leave her a tip. That twenty-cent tip wasn’t the largest one she received that day, but it was certainly the one that meant the most to her, because she knew of the sacrifice behind it.

If the worth of that “small” gift was properly appreciated only when the waitress knew what the boy gave up in order to give it, how much more will our gratitude be when the gift itself is of infinite intrinsic worth, and the giver had to suffer torture and death in order to give it? That’s what the season of Lent is about. That’s why Lutherans observe it.

The Lutheran Hymnal (1941) - Hymn 140 - Jesus, I Will Ponder Now

Listen to the Hymn at: <http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/140.mp3>

Text: Luke 18: 31-34 • Author: Sigismund v. Birken, 1653

Translated by: August Crull, 1923, alt.

Titled: “Jesu, deine Passion”

Composer: Melchior Vulpius, 1609

Tune: “Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein”

Hymn 140 in *The Lutheran Hymnal* movingly expresses why we observe Lent. By meditating on what our Savior endured to accomplish our salvation, we gain a greater understanding of and thankfulness for God’s astounding gift to us. **“Grant that I in love and faith/ May the image cherish/ Of Thy suff’ring, pain, and death/ That I may not perish.”** (Verse 1)

Verse 2 continues that theme, and adds the shocking truth that this **“great distress/ Anguish and affliction, /Bonds and stripes and wretchedness/ And Thy crucifixion”** — this suffering and death of the Son of God was all willingly done—not for deserving friends, but actually **“for man Thou diedst, O God, Who with thorns had crowned Thee.”** Is this not a wonder, and something well deserving our devout meditation?

Verse 3 expands the thought. The Passion of Christ that is our focus during Lent is to be understood not only according to its severity, but also in the context of its purpose: **“Ah! I also and my sin/ Wrought Thy deep affliction;/ This indeed the cause hath been/ Of Thy crucifixion.”** I am what caused the Son of God to suffer so. It was *my* sins that led to His suffering and death. This is not some abstract proposition in a book of philosophy, this is the Son of God sacrificing Himself for unworthy me.

Contrary to how it’s portrayed by those who do not understand it, Lent is not a season of “gloom and doom.” The Passion of Christ that is our focus at this time of year is also the assurance of our forgiveness. **“If my sins give me alarm/ And my conscience grieve me,/ Let Thy cross my fear disarm,/ Peace of conscience give me.”** It is a proof: **“If His son so loveth me,/ God must have compassion.”** (Verse 5)

So then, what about that Reformed Christian I mentioned at the beginning of this article? I pray that he, and those who hold his opinion, would consider this hymn and its significance. Certainly, then, their appreciation of God’s love and grace would be increased. Maybe they would even begin to think like Lutherans.



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

“I Will Deliver You No More!”

(For context, please read Judges 10:6-16)

“Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.” (Judges 10:6)

Again? This cycle continues throughout the book of Judges, but it is not unique to that time and place, is it? In every generation, God’s people struggle against their sinful nature and the tendency to slip back into bad patterns.

When the Israelites chose to forsake the Lord and serve the gods of their neighbors, God allowed them to have exactly what they wanted—a relationship with the world instead of with Him; and their neighbors harassed (shattered) and oppressed them for the next eighteen years. When we seek something other than God, and God allows us to have it, that can be a harsh judgment indeed!

As they were severely distressed, *“the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, saying, ‘We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!’”* (10:10).

In response to this the Lord recited a list of times when He delivered them from oppressors, but then He told them to cry out to the gods they had chosen. *Let those gods deliver you this time.*

God gave them the worst news anyone could ever hear: *“I will deliver you no more!”* (10:13).

Devastating. What would you do, what could you say, if God said that to you?

Did God announce that He’s no longer a God of mercy? Did His grace vanish? No! We know that mercy and grace are intrinsic to God’s nature, so why would He ever say, “I will deliver you no more”?

It was intended to get their attention. They needed to look more deeply into their hearts. Were they truly penitent, or did they merely regret the consequences of their sin? God knew their repentance was still shallow. His firmness and apparent harshness were meant to shock and even terrify. He was

working on their hearts to bring about genuine contrition. It was not enough for them to hate the consequences of their sins. They needed to hate their sins. It was time to admit their situation was hopeless and cast themselves on the mercy of the Lord.

Sadly, there are those who profess to be Christians, go to church, and behave in certain ways because they assume that God will owe them big for their good efforts. It is one thing to desire God and honor Him because of what we hope He will give us; it is quite another to desire and honor God regardless of whether or not He gives us what we want.

Was Israel ready to trust in the Lord and serve Him without conditions? Was repentance—a genuine change of heart—going to reveal itself in their lives irrespective of being delivered from their oppressors?

Consider the change in their prayer and behavior: *“We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray.’ So, they put away the foreign gods from*

among them and served the Lord” (10:15, 16).

They said and did this even while their enemies continued to harass and oppress them. They confessed their sins; they brought forth fruits befitting repentance; and they prayed, in effect, “Thy will be done.”

The Lord, Who knows the hearts of all, saw that they were truly sorry for their sins and placed their trust in His mercy. The Holy Spirit had brought about this radical change of heart through tough reprimands and His legacy of grace; and the Lord *“could no longer endure the misery of Israel”* (10:16). He had them back where He wanted them—in His loving embrace.

Then the Lord raised up another judge to deliver His people, someone altogether unexpected and of questionable background (again), but that is a story for another day.

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



One Sacrifice for Sins

“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:26-31).

It is a characteristic of our times that many who value virtues such as mercy and kindness do not value other virtues such as uprightness and integrity.

We see this kind of thinking when those who condemn immoral behavior or religious false teachings are accused of being unkind and unloving. We see it also in modern ideas about God. People like to think of Him as loving, merciful, and forgiving; but they don’t like to think of Him as holy and righteous, threatening to punish all who transgress His commandments.

The trouble with these notions about God is that they are not based on His own revelation of Himself and His nature in the Bible. God tells us there that love, mercy, kindness, holiness, justice, and righteousness are all attributes of His. The same God Who is perfect love is also perfect justice; His justice is not inconsistent with His love. Those who reject any of God’s attributes end up with a distorted view of God. Their idea of a loving God is one Who is indulgent about sin and Who overlooks sinful behavior because they think it’s unfair to demand perfection.

Our passage in Hebrews brings us face to face with the holiness and justice of God. It warns sinners of divine

“judgment,” “fiery indignation,” and “vengeance.” The prospect that it lays before us is so terrifying that we might be tempted to turn the page and look for something about God that is more to our liking.

But it wouldn’t be right to do that, for this is God Himself speaking to us. And it isn’t necessary for us to go elsewhere in the Bible to find something about divine love and forgiveness. It’s right here. Notice what it is that brings down God’s wrath on the sinner. It isn’t taking God’s name in vain in a moment of anger, speaking an unkind word, or coveting something that belongs to someone else. It’s trampling the Son of God underfoot, despising the blood that Christ shed on the cross, and insulting the Holy Spirit. In other words, it’s rejecting Christ and despising the Gospel that exposes the sinner to God’s wrath. That’s the willful sinning that the writer is talking about here.

On Calvary we behold the holiness and justice of God and also His great love for us sinners.

The sins that we commit in thought, word, and deed are offenses against God’s holiness. His justice requires that there be punishment for them. But God Who is holy and just is also loving toward sinners, and doesn’t want to punish us. He devised a plan by which He could spare us from His terrible wrath and still satisfy His divine justice. He sent His own beloved Son to suffer His wrath in our place. That’s what we see especially during the season of Lent as we follow the Savior through His passion and death. On Calvary we behold the holiness and justice of God and also His great love for us sinners.

For the sinner who rejects and despises Christ “there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” But for the penitent sinner who trusts in Christ there remains that one sacrifice, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son that cleanses us from all sin.

John Klatt is pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Loveland, Colorado.



In preparation for the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, we are presenting a brief survey of the life of Martin Luther. The series will culminate in the October 2017 issue with an account of his posting of the Ninety-Five Theses.

Caught in a Storm (1504-1505)

Have you ever been caught in a severe storm? It can make one feel alone and helpless. It can bring home the reality of mortality. Martin Luther experienced this when he was caught in a thunderstorm as he journeyed back to Erfurt after visiting his family in Mansfeld, a short distance away. The lightning struck so close to Luther that it may have knocked him down and injured his leg. To whom did he turn for help in this imminent danger? “Help me, St. Anne, I will become a monk.” Luther uttered these words on Wednesday, July 2, 1505. They were to change his life forever.

It wasn't the first time that Luther had turned to a “saint” in time of need. A few years earlier he had accidentally cut an artery in his thigh with his own sword. As he waited for help to arrive, it was St Mary in whom he placed his trust. Later in life he remarked, “There I would have died trusting in Mary.” Luther had a lot yet to learn.

Doesn't his vow to St. Anne seem a bit rash? It seems like the desperate act of someone who is afraid to die, who feels that his best chance to pacify an angry god is to promise St. Anne that he will devote his life to the church. However, evidence seems to suggest that instead of this being a spontaneous decision, Luther had felt a strong need to change his life path in the months leading up to the storm. He had been caught in a spiritual storm for quite some time already.

Why not become a lawyer? It would have been the popular decision for him to continue with his university education. He had received his bachelor's degree in liberal arts in just three



semesters. He went on to receive his master's degree in philosophy, ranking second in his class of seventeen. A law degree is what his father wanted for him. He was popular at school, with many good friends. The Erfurt law school and faculty had a good reputation.

Conversely, his decision to enter the monastery, which he carried out just two weeks after he had taken his vow to St. Anne, was unpopular with many. His father was bitterly disappointed, and conveyed his anger in a letter to him. He also publicly announced that he disowned his son. Their relationship would be damaged for years. His schoolmates were also shocked and dismayed by what they viewed as a hasty decision. Nevertheless, on July 17, 1505, Luther

bade them farewell: “Today you see me, but never again!”

The real storm that drove Luther to the monastery was an inner crisis. He was keenly aware of his moral shortcomings. An old Eisenach mentor, Johannes Braun, once admonished Luther to beware that in gaining temporal wisdom he not lose that which is eternal. Luther took that to heart, for when he entered law school he also began to study the Bible more ardently. The copy available in the Erfurt library allowed him to search for answers to his spiritual crisis. Luther was finding no such answers in his study of law. He feared losing his salvation.

After selling his law books, Luther joined the Order of Augustinian Hermits in Erfurt, where monastic rules were strictly followed. He thought that through prayer and fasting and obedience he would find comfort and assurance of meriting eternal life. The top of his head was shaved and he occupied a 10'x8' cell. He would later reflect how his monastic experiences shook him to the core, but were essential for his eventual attack on the papacy. God was molding him for the work that lay ahead.



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

The Meaning of “Doctrinal Unity” In Our Foreign Mission Work

From time to time questions arise about the many opportunities the Lord has provided in recent years for the CLC to proclaim the Gospel around the world, and about how doctrinal unity is determined and maintained in those cases.

The CLC Board of Missions and our missionaries make a very clear distinction between those with whom we are in fellowship, those with whom we are working toward fellowship, and those with whom we are simply pursuing an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel.

In the first category are those who have gone through rather lengthy doctrinal discussions, involving the Board of Doctrine, before being declared to be in fellowship with us by our CLC President and the church body in convention.

Because of the Internet, CLC pastors are routinely contacted with many types of requests from all around the world. These contacts are typically forwarded to the chairman of the Board of Missions, who then begins an initial series of email questionnaires to determine the intent of their contact. If the contact expresses a sincere desire and a willingness to take the necessary time to study and exchange email to get to know one another’s doctrinal position, then the correspondence continues. Sadly, most of these contacts are simply fraudulent attempts to get money. But every now and again, the Lord does open an apparent door of opportunity for us to assist and work together in proclaiming the Gospel in a foreign land in a way that is God-pleasingly consistent with Scripture.

After the initial phase of correspondence, the process of online theological studies begins. During this time a personal visit is also scheduled so that a CLC Missionary

and a representative of the Board of Missions can have the opportunity to meet face to face with the individual or individuals. These face-to-face visits are extremely valuable, as they provide the opportunity to discuss Scripture as well as verify first hand the ministry and organizational structure of the church body. Once the missionary and the Board of Missions determine that there is doctrinal unity, then the Board of Doctrine and the CLC President are brought into the process and given the opportunity to review the materials studied along with the colloquy questions and answers that were used to determine unity of doctrine.



Missionary Ohlmann with pastors in Livingstone, Zambia, July 2015

It can take several years of correspondence and face-to-face meetings before the Board of Missions feels comfortable in even discussing a declaration of fellowship. As long as the pastor, church body, or group is not working with or affiliated with another church body or mission organization, has demonstrated a willingness to submit to Scripture, has not rejected the truths that are taught in Scripture, and continues to request further instruction from us in the truth with the goal of being faithful, confessional, Lutheran preachers of the Word, we continue to work with and instruct them. But, until fellowship has been officially declared by the CLC president, we do not commune with them or offer them any type of ongoing financial assistance for their ministry.

What a privilege to be about our Father’s business of proclaiming the saving truth of His Word, and to assist like-minded Christians in that proclamation as well!



Todd Ohlmann is a full-time visiting missionary for the Church of the Lutheran Confession. He is a former chairman of the CLC Board of Missions.

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

White River, South Dakota

The nearly hundred-year history of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church is one that stands as a testament to God's enduring grace. It is a history that goes back almost as far as the town of White River itself, which was founded in 1911 (population 581 according to the 2010 census). St. Paul's had its beginning in the Wisconsin Synod. In August of 1919, Pastor Theodore Bauer of Mission, South Dakota, began serving Lutherans in the White River area with occasional services. The congregation called its first full-time pastor in 1922, and after steady growth officially organized on November 16, 1924.

In those early days, services were held in various members' homes, in the Congregational Church, and even down under the cottonwoods along the banks of the Little White River. In 1926 work was begun on the present church building. In January, 1927, the church building was finished and was dedicated to the glory of God.

The congregation went through some very hard times in the 1930's and 40's. The combined plagues of the Great Depression and drought hit the White River area hard, and many of St.

Paul's members moved away to different parts of the country. At one point in the 1940's, the average attendance at worship services was only six, and there was talk of closing St. Paul's doors. But the Lord's sufficient grace was with this small group, and membership rebounded.

Under the guidance of Pastor Kenneth Hallauer, St. Paul's left the Wisconsin Synod in 1959 and eventually joined the newly formed Church of the Lutheran Confession as one of its founding members. From 1959 onward, St. Paul's and Peace Lutheran Church of Mission, South Dakota, began to be served as a joint parish. The downstairs of

Peace's church building served as the parsonage until 1974, when a parsonage was built in White River. This would be the home of the pastors serving the joint parish of Peace and St. Paul's until 2002. Currently, the parsonage is being rented out to a local family.

Over the years the beautiful old church building has seen a number of renovations and improvements. In June of 1982 the old church bell tower and entryway were removed. In November 1982 the new entryway, which provided easier access both to the church sanctuary and church basement, was dedicated. Over the past five years other improvements have been completed, including a new steel roof, new church sign, and replacement of the sanctuary windows.

Since 2002 St. Paul's Lutheran Church has been part of a "tri-parish" along with Peace of Mission and Grace of Valentine, Nebraska. They have been jointly served since that time by the pastor from Valentine. For the past six-plus years, St. Paul's has had combined worship services with Peace, Mission. For a few years St. Paul's church building went unused and worship



St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, circa 1926



White River
 (Lakota: Makhízita wakpá; "White Dirt River") is a city in, and the county seat of, Mellette County, South Dakota. The population was 581 at the 2010 census.
Wikipedia



Exterior, St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, White River, South Dakota



Current members of St. Paul's

services were only being held at Peace in Mission. Since 2011, however, St. Paul's church building has hosted the worship service for both Peace and St. Paul's congregations on the last Sunday of every month at 8:00 A.M. (the other Sundays of the month the worship service is held at Peace, Mission). We praise God that attendance at the monthly St. Paul's worship services has been consistently good, with an average attendance of eighteen. The combined membership of St. Paul's and Peace currently stands at forty souls. This small, but faithful and close-knit group cherishes its worship time together with their brothers and sisters in Christ from Peace each Sunday.



This small, but faithful and close-knit group cherishes its worship time together with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

St. Paul's also joins with Peace and Grace, Valentine for the "Tri-Parish Mission Festival" worship service and potluck meal each fall. Its members have also supported and participated with Peace and Grace in other worship services and church activities such as summer Vacation Bible School and the Arise and Shine 20's - 30's Retreat in Pillager, Minnesota.

The town of White River itself is located on US-83 approximately 45 miles north of the Nebraska border. It overlooks a breathtaking vista of a deep valley to the west filled with rolling hills, buttes, ponds, and streams. It is named after the nearby White River (and Little White River, which runs just north of the town), and yes, the river does look "white" (or at least

white-gray) from the eroded sand, clay, and volcanic ash carried by the river from its source near the Badlands. Ranching is the major industry in the White River area, and the region is known for producing some of the best beef in the country. Many of the members of St.

Paul's and their extended families are ranchers as well.

Since 1912 White River has been the home of Frontier Days, a community celebration held each August that attracts people from around the world. In 2016 Frontier Days celebrated its 105th year. The rodeo is the main attraction of the festival and features all of the major rodeo events as well as a wild horse race. Also incorporated into the celebration are a parade, wagon train, 5K run, arts festival, dances under the stars, and a traditional Lakota powwow.

You would be hard pressed to find more kind-hearted, down-to-earth, and generous folks than the people of St. Paul's and the White River area. The next time you are traveling on US-83 in South Dakota I encourage you to stop by and join us and see for yourself!



Luke Bernthal served as pastor of the tri-parish of Grace Lutheran Church of Valentine, Nebraska, St. Paul's Lutheran Church of White River, South Dakota, and Peace Lutheran Church of Mission, South Dakota.

"What Are Our Concerns about the American Legion?"

Whenever a secular group or organization tries to inject a spiritual component into its activities or purpose, there is cause for concern. A secular group is ill-equipped to provide spiritual ministry, leadership, instruction, or worship in a God-pleasing manner.

Secular groups may have members ranging from atheists, to various Christians, to worshipers of false gods. A group with such a blend of gods and beliefs simply cannot properly speak to matters of the soul, God, or His Word.

Invariably, when God and His Word are brought into a secular organization, any spiritual content is diminished to the lowest common denominator among the participants. This usually comes in the form of a nameless god who might include Jesus, could be Allah, a generic Christ-less god, or something entirely different. All of these conflict with what God says: *"I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another"* (Isaiah 42:8).

In addition, scriptural truth is reduced to the natural religion of man—Law-oriented and built on works. The result is a sense of religious spirituality and morality that doesn't proclaim Christ, and therefore, does not offer any genuine spiritual benefit. The Gospel of Christ alone is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16).

The American Legion is this sort of organization. It was chartered as a patriotic veterans' organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. Positive secular and civic efforts on the part of the American Legion include a variety of youth programs and other community programs, providing for veterans' well-being, and a place of camaraderie for veterans to share in their mutual history.

There are, however, concerns about some of what the American Legion supports and sinful behavior at Legion events. The greatest concerns center on the American Legion's attempts to be spiritual, although doing so in a God-pleasing manner is beyond its capability.

The Legion states, "The American Legion recognizes the influence of Almighty God in all worthwhile endeavors." It further states, "It is the aim and objective of [the Legion's *For God and Country* program] to bring God to the foreground in American life."



A group with such a blend of gods and beliefs simply cannot properly speak to matters of the soul, God, or His Word.

The natural recognition of an almighty god, the knowledge that this higher being must be involved for anything to succeed, a desire for morality, and a sense of spiritual need is what prompts the American Legion to have a chaplaincy program that conducts prayers, rites, and other religious services.

However, because the American Legion is not able to administer the Gospel faithfully for reasons presented above, the Legion's efforts result in a generic and nameless view of God that affirms all faiths as equal and can involve its members in a universalistic view of God, and in unionistic worship.

When the American Legion focuses on the earthly, it has done some good things; but its desire to also delve into the spiritual is what prompts great concern.

As Christians in the world but not of the world, we engage in ongoing evaluation and prayerful decisions regarding our involvement with the world. It is important that we not try to establish a list of approved and disapproved associations, but it is also important that we use God's Word and its truth in evaluation and faithful application in our walk with Christ. Because of the concerns surrounding the American Legion, pastors in our fellowship seek to give patient and evangelical guidance to any in our congregations who are members of The American Legion, with the goal of leading them out.

Your pastor is ready to discuss these matters with you and provide guidance in evaluating earthly associations as you mutually grow and serve one another.



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

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS MARCH 2017

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

Date	Verse	Reading	Comments
Mar 1	TLH 166; LSB 418	Psalms 51:1-6	Upon recognizing our sin, we trust ourselves to God’s mercy and unfailing love.
Mar 2	TLH 144	Psalms 51:7-12	With sins forgiven and clinging to the joy of salvation, we ask God to help us lead a holy life.
Mar 3	TLH 498	Psalms 51:13-19	The joy of salvation doesn’t stop with us, but we share it when we open our mouths to declare God’s praise before others.
Mar 4	TLH 411	Ephesians 1:1-8	God gave us the riches of His grace and arranged for us to be brought into His spiritual family.
Mar 6	TLH 37; WS 776	Ephesians 1:9-14	Do you ever doubt God’s love for you? In Christ He chose you to be His very own—even before the beginning.
Mar 7	WS 752	Ephesians 1:15-23	Since He has brought us to Himself, we give thanks and pray that we grow in knowledge and faith.
Mar 8	TLH 342	John 15:1-8	Without Jesus, we are nothing but branches for the fire. So don’t drop off the vine, but remain in His word.
Mar 9	TLH 150; LSB 542	John 15:9-17	The highest expression of love is to lay down your life for another. This Jesus did for you. Now you can bear fruit that will last.
Mar 10	TLH 524	John 15:18-27	It comes as no surprise that Jesus’ followers are persecuted by the world, but they are also supported by the Holy Spirit Himself.
Mar 11	TLH 335	John 16:1-4	We see so many go astray and fall from the faith. Jesus earnestly preaches to you and sends the Spirit to keep you strong.
Mar 13	TLH 224	John 16:5-16	After His ascension, Jesus would not see His disciples face to face, but the Spirit would guide them by the Word of Christ.
Mar 14	TLH 592	John 16:17-33	Our difficult times last only a little while and then they are replaced with joy—finally with joy everlasting!
Mar 15	TLH 152	Genesis 22:1-5	This may seem a surprising way for God to strengthen Abraham’s faith, but that was at the heart of what God was doing.
Mar 16	WS 722; LSB 547	Genesis 22:6-14	It is hard to look at the ram in the thicket without thinking of Jesus, Who became the sacrifice in place of us.
Mar 17	TLH 442	Genesis 22:15-19	God showers His dear children with blessings.
Mar 18	WS 795	Hebrews 11:1-16	We live by faith that one day God will take us to a “better country.”
Mar 20	TLH 381	Hebrews 11:17-31	To believe in God is to hope in His Son, the Messiah, which these faithful all did (v. 26).
Mar 21	WS 768	Hebrews 11:32-40	All the faithful had their struggles, as do we. Yet together with them we are all blessed.
Mar 22	TLH 153	Genesis 6:1-8	By nature we are not inclined to good, but to evil. In Christ, however, we find favor with God.
Mar 23	TLH 433	Genesis 6:9-22	Noah trusted the covenant God made with him that he and his family and every kind of creature would be kept alive.
Mar 24	TLH 296	Genesis 7:1-5	Noah did all the Lord commanded of him, even though others surely must have questioned his building project.
Mar 25	TLH 157; LSB 597	Genesis 7:6-24	Noah and his family entered the ark to escape God’s judgment and waters of the flood. What is your ark?
Mar 27	WS 756	Genesis 8:1-5	For 150 days the waters flooded the earth, but “God remembered Noah.” He remembers us when the waters rise too.
Mar 28	TLH 149	Genesis 8:6-14	The olive leaf represented a ray of blessed hope. God indeed kept His covenant and saw Noah safely through the flood.
Mar 29	TLH 158	Genesis 8:15-22	Noah praised God for the great deliverance by building an altar and offering sacrifices. How do you praise God when He delivers you?
Mar 30	TLH 148:1-4	John 17:1-5	The work of Jesus is to give eternal life!
Mar 31	TLH 148:5-8	John 17:6-23	Here’s something to comfort you: The very Son of God prayed for you before you were ever born (v. 20).

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.

Sam Rodebaugh

Age: 24 **Program:** Seminary

Year in School: Senior

Where were you born?

Iowa City, Iowa.

Where did you grow up?

I spent a few years in Wichita, Kansas; but grew up in Franklin, Wisconsin (Milwaukee area).

Married? Unmarried? Tell us about your family.

My parents, David and Rebecca, brought four sons into the world: Josh, me, Noah, and Nathan. Noah joined the Lord after a day. Josh married Kelsey Albrecht, and they have three children. I married Jessica Schaller on March 18, 2016. We're growing!

What hobbies, sports or extracurriculars interest you?

I love watching football, baseball, and basketball; but my playing days are mostly behind me. I also enjoy building/making things at my wife's request.

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

I served as a freelance sportswriter for a Brewers blog at SB Nation for a while, but I usually choose homework over writing now.

Which academic subjects especially interest you?

I've really enjoyed Hebrew, Greek, Pastoral Theology, and Evangelism.

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

I had always considered the preaching ministry as a possibility, though an unlikely one. In the spring of my senior year of high school, I realized I didn't want to be an engineer, a career that for several years I had assumed I'd pursue. After reevaluating my gifts and the things that were important in my life, I just couldn't think of a more worthwhile calling and better fit than the preaching ministry. I prayed that the Lord would agree, and I returned to ILC for Pre-Theological Studies. Whenever I had doubts during the last seven years, I was tremendously blessed to have supportive friends and family.

What have you appreciated most about your time at ILC?

The relationships I've built with professors, fellow seminarians, and many younger students have been a very valuable benefit of returning to college at ILC. I've cher-



ished the pastoral insights from my seminary professors as well as the thousands of Gospel-focused chapels I've heard from them in eleven years. I've grown a lot since high school, as everyone does, and I'm thankful to have spent that growth period among the examples of so many strong, Christian men. The thing I appreciate most, however, is the constant emphasis on the importance of Law and Gospel—this is priceless.

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

To hold Scripture as the dearest treasure and to faithfully preach Law and Gospel are the most important qualities of any future pastor in the CLC. After that, I'd say tact and empathy when dealing with others is imperative. I pray that every future pastor in our synod has a willingness to serve the congregation in every capacity, the desire for outreach and evangelism, and the readiness to practice soul care among members of his flock. If he can do all of that, he can (as Luther once remarked) go home, drink his beer, and entrust the rest to the Lord.

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

North Hall Upgrade

On the beautiful campus of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, various buildings help to serve the unique circumstances of our Immanuel program. Immanuel exists to provide our students with a biblical foundation, based upon their Savior, Jesus Christ.

In order to accommodate students who come from various parts of our nation, dormitories are needed for housing. South Hall serves as the female dormitory, and North Hall the male dormitory; both are masonry structures that were built since the CLC acquired the property. A few male college students reside in West Hall, an original building that once housed servants for Erskine Ingram, the former owner of the property.

North Hall was built in 1980, and was designed with a unique heating system that utilized solar energy. This system was designed to passively circulate heated air around the building. Much of this solar system has not been functional since 2005, leaving the building to be heated by a supplemental electric baseboard system. Furthermore, deterioration has led to a number of energy deficiencies in North Hall. The building now consumes about 20-25% of the total energy costs on campus, adding approximately \$20,000 annually to the ILC budget.

The 2016 CLC Convention directed the Board of Regents to proceed with an upgrade to North Hall in order to address these issues and to install a natural gas boiler system along with updated water heaters. Part of the project was begun in



Top: North Hall, the boys' dormitory. Above: facilities manager Paul Heinze showing where the new boiler will be installed.

November of 2016. The solar panels and circulation systems on the roof were removed and replaced with regular roofing. Most of the remaining work will occur during Immanuel's summer break when the dormitory is vacant. At that time there will be a flurry of activity as windows are replaced and the new heating system installed. The plan is for the project to be completed before students arrive for the fall 2017 semester.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$300,000, which includes contingencies. The ILC facilities manager, Paul Heinze, is attempting to accomplish this project for much less. Normally such capital projects (like paving, remodeling, and professorage upgrades) are funded through donations to the ILC Improvement Fund (IIF). Due to the magnitude of this project, however, the Convention directed that this cost be added to the loan which financed the Academic Center built a few years ago. This loan

is paid off through donations to the ILC Building Fund.

Dormitory life has always been a large part of a positive Immanuel experience. We thank the Lord for giving us the means to provide comfortable, efficient dormitories, and for the many lifelong Christian friendships which are established there.



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

Immanuel Lutheran College Tour Choir 2017 Concert Schedule:

Sunday, March 5
10:00 a.m. Trinity;
Millston, WI

Saturday, March 11
1:30 P.M.
Redeemer;
Bowdle, SD

Saturday, March 11
7:00 P.M.
St. Luke's; Lemmon, SD

Monday, March 13 7:00 P.M.
Gethsemane; Spokane Valley, WA

Tuesday, March 14 7:00 P.M.
St. John's; Clarkston, WA

Wednesday, March 15 3:00 P.M.
Ascension; Tacoma, WA

Wednesday, March 15 7:00 P.M.
Redemption; Lynnwood, WA

Thursday, March 16 7:00 P.M.
Trinity; Spokane, WA

Saturday, March 18 7:30 P.M.
St. Paul; Bismarck, ND

Sunday, March 19 10:00 A.M.
Our Savior's; Jamestown, ND

Sunday, March 19 7:00 P.M.
Grace; Fridley, MN

Sunday, March 26 6:30 P.M.
Messiah; Eau Claire, WI



ANNOUNCEMENTS

In accord with our usage and order, **Douglas Libby**, who was called by Living Savior Lutheran Church of Eden Prairie, Minnesota, to be its pastor, was installed on January 1, 2017. Also participating in the service were Pastors Em. Daniel Fleischer and Paul Fleischer, Pastor John Hein, and Steven Sydow.
—Pastor David Schierenbeck



In accord with our usage and order, **Matthew Ude**, who was called by Faith Lutheran Church, Markesan, Wisconsin, to be its pastor, was installed on January 8, 2017. Preaching for the service was Pastor David Ude. Also participating in the service were CLC President Michael Eichstadt, Professor John Ude, and Pastors Terrel Kesterson and Neal Radichel.
—Pastor Mark Bernthal

From the Desk of the CLC President:

To prevent or correct misunderstandings, it should be noted that **the Church of the Lutheran Confession is not at this time in fellowship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)**. A Joint Statement produced by a committee made up of representatives from the CLC, WELS and ELS was submitted to the CLC Convention in June 2016, and will be studied more closely by the General Pastoral Conference in June 2017. As yet, however, our church body has taken no action, either on the Joint Statement or on other issues possibly relating to the question of fellowship.

— Michael Eichstadt, President
The Church of the Lutheran Confession