

October 2017 VOL 60 NO. 4

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



**SOLA FIDE
SOLA SCRIPTURA
SOLA GRATIA**



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“ I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen. ”

Martin Luther

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SOLA FIDE

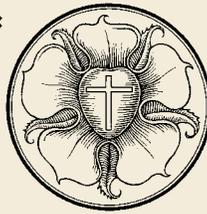
COVER STORY

Faith Alone: No Asterisks

Every year a debate rages in the baseball world: who should be admitted into the Hall of Fame? In the last few years, the debate has been particularly centered around players from the so-called “Steroid Era.” Should those who broke the rules and enhanced their performances with drugs be let in? Some voters and writers have proposed a solution: let those players into the Hall of Fame on the basis of their accomplishments, but add an asterisk to the record books to show that those accomplishments were marred by the use of performance-enhancing drugs.

As detailed in a recent issue of the *Spokesman* (July 2017, page 7), Hebrews 11 gives us God’s Hall of Faith. It is not meant to be a comprehensive list of the members, but a small sampling of both faithful people and actions from the Old Testament. However, Hebrews 11 seems to omit much of the important information we know about these Old Testament people. Instead of painting portraits as these people were, God presents us with His glorified saints as He now sees them.

These Old Testament men and women were known sinners. Their transgressions, recorded in Scripture, are clear reminders that they entered the world just as dead in trespasses and sins as any other human. They wrestled with their sinful natures throughout their lives, just as we do. Take, for example, Sarah. We know from Genesis 18 that Sarah laughed at God’s promise that she, at her advanced age, would bear a son. What an unbelievable thing for a ninety-year-old woman! Yet Hebrews 11:11 commends her for her eventual faith in that very promise of God, with not so much as an allusion to her initial unbelief: “By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.”



In God’s eyes, our sinning is past tense. We have put on Christ’s perfect righteousness through faith.

How can God list their acts of faith without also mentioning their acts of sin? Where is the mention of Abraham’s lies (Genesis 12:11-13), Moses’ excuses (Exodus 3), or David’s adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11)? Where are the asterisks in the Hall of Faith? How can these sinners be commended when “the soul who sins shall die”? (Ezekiel 18:20)

The answer to all these questions is the cross. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” (Psalm 103:12) Those sins are gone and paid for. With their sins removed, God’s perfect saints are commended for their acts of faith. These acts serve as the evidence of their saving faith in Christ.

This truth of salvation by faith alone is one of the principal truths rediscovered by Martin Luther, and one of the pillars of the Reformation. It is also recorded for us elsewhere in Scripture. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 lists and condemns sins, but continues in verse 11, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” We, too, are sinners just like those men and women we meet through Scripture. But in God’s eyes, our sinning is past tense. We have put on Christ’s perfect righteousness through faith in His saving death on the cross.

With our sins atoned for, today’s Christians are also listed in the Hall of Faith. “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” (Hebrews 11:3) Our belief in God the Creator, serving as evidence of our saving faith in Christ crucified, gives us a place among the saints.



Ross Kok is a teacher at Holy Cross Lutheran School in Phoenix, Arizona.

SOLA SCRIPTURA

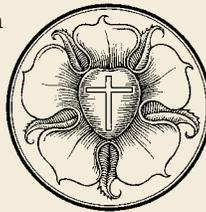
DEVOTION

Divine Treasure Map

Anyone who has ever heard of the Superstition Mountains of Arizona has most likely also heard of the Lost Dutchman's Mine. This legend, which most experts agree is based on distorted facts, is the stuff of movie plots and fantasy. Many have searched for the riches of this lost mine, some even losing their lives in the effort. However, without a clearly marked map ("X" marks the spot) the mine, with its promise of wealth, is still lost to all.

Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther was a man in search of treasure as well. He, however, was not looking for earthly gold, silver, or jewels. His search was for the spiritual wealth of the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins. Luther was a learned man. He had immersed himself in the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith and still could not hit pay-dirt. You see, the "map" that the church of Luther's day provided was not clearly marked. Surely, the correct path was there, yet it was so obscured by other markings and distortions that it was no longer easily discernible.

It is true, Luther had been taught to revere the Holy Scriptures. However, as the Roman Catholic Church became accustomed to leading the people not only spiritually, but also socially and even politically, the Scriptures alone no longer seemed sufficient to guide the masses. As time went on, the church not only added to the map of Scripture (as the Pharisees of Jesus' time did), but also obscured, and in some cases totally obliterated, the path to heaven itself. This was accomplished by elevating church doctrine, the writings of early church fathers, and the pronouncements of the Pope not just to equality with the Holy Bible, but to functional superiority over it. The primacy of the Pope, prayers to the saints, masses for the dead, the sale of indulgences, and works contributing toward salvation were only a few of the church doctrines that added layers of confusion and misdirection to



As Luther diligently searched for God's answers in the Scriptures, he made an astonishing discovery—the Scriptures themselves were the treasure!

the pure and simple path of the Gospel.

The visible church was now itself touted as the savior. A man-made organization, built on man's teachings, legends, and ideas, led by a fallible man, was being presented to the masses as the one true path to heaven. And it wasn't working. Even before Luther, many had begun to question the primacy of the pope, adherence to the church fathers when they contradicted the Scriptures, and other questionable church practices. When these contradictions arose in Luther's life, he was led by the Holy Spirit to search for the truth by immersing himself more deeply in the Holy Word of God.

As Luther diligently searched for God's answers in the Scriptures, he made an astonishing discovery—the Scriptures themselves were the treasure! Whereas man's opinions and even those of visible churches may change with the tides and time, God's Word stands the test of time, unchangeable.

Jesus tells His followers, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." (Matthew 24:35) Luther discovered that the writings of man could never equal nor exceed the importance of the Scriptures themselves. This is why Luther proclaimed *Sola Scriptura* (Latin for "by Scripture alone") as an integral part of the battle cry of the Reformation, along with *Sola Fide* ("by faith alone") and *Sola Gratia* ("by grace alone").

In the Scriptures, Luther had found his spiritual treasure map. And "X" does mark the spot—when the "X" stands for the cross on which Christ paid our debt, thus earning eternal salvation for all who believe.



David W. Bernthal is the principal of Luther Memorial School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

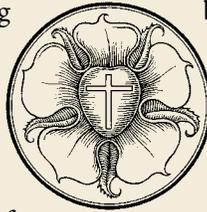
SOLA GRATIA

A HYMN OF GLORY LET US SING (TWENTY-THIRD IN A SERIES)

TLH 377, LSB 555

“Salvation unto Us Has Come”

Although there was some congregational singing before Martin Luther’s time, there is no disagreement that during the Reformation in Germany, the laity were transformed into the “singing church.” New hymnals were published as fast as printers could set up their Gutenberg presses. New hymn texts were written at a rapid pace as the treasure of the Gospel, God’s grace in Christ Jesus, was revealed to those who had long been in darkness.



Two things made Lutheran hymns different from anything that had come before. First, these hymns taught the people what was in the Bible. Second, they actually proclaimed the saving Gospel of Jesus, so the grace of God was at work in those who sang them.

The grace of God was one of the fundamental themes of the Reformation. Ephesians 2:8 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (NIV84) Because of this, *Sola Gratia* (Latin for “by grace alone”) became a watchword. It is not because of any good deeds or worthiness in us that Christ came down from heaven, was made man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate. It was because, like His Father, He simply chose to show love to the world. Our disobedience against God (there is none who is righteous) put us on a path to judgment and an eternity of torment in hell, separated from all that is good. But God said, “I am just not going to let that happen!” How do we explain it? How do we explain why God made this decision to send His Son Jesus to take our sins on Himself and suffer the torment we all deserved? We simply use the word *grace*. God in His grace—in undeserved love and mercy—did this. *Sola gratia*.

In 1519, Paul Speratus (1484-1551) was the preacher at the cathedral of Würzburg in Bavaria. His preaching, however, disturbed the archbishop (it was too “Lutheran”), and he left a year later. In 1523 he was imprisoned for three months at Olmütz on account of his Reformation teaching. It may have

been during this time that he wrote his most famous hymn, a hymn that was included in the very first Lutheran hymnal of 1524.

In beautiful and memorable words, Speratus tells the story of God’s grace. v. 1, **Salvation unto us has come / By God’s free grace and favor; / Good works cannot avert our doom, / They help and save us never.** v. 3, **It was a false, misleading dream . . . That sinners could themselves redeem / And by their works gain heaven.** v. 6, **Since Christ has full atonement made / And brought to us salvation, / Each Christian therefore may be glad / And build on this foundation. / Your grace alone, dear Lord, I plead, / Your death is now my life indeed, / For You have paid my ransom.**

The text has been in print continuously for five hundred years and takes its rightful place among the three greatest hymns of the Reformation (alongside *A Mighty Fortress* and *Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice*). J. S. Bach gave it joyful voice in his cantata for the 6th Sunday after Trinity (BWV 9) as well as in a solo organ work (BWV 638), and this author has every expectation that when our Savior comes again in glory He will still find it being sung by the faithful. The last verse is the doxology of the redeemed:

**All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise
To Father, Son, and Spirit,
The God who saved us by His grace;
All glory to His merit,
O triune God in heav’n above,
You have revealed Your saving love;
Your blessèd name we hallow.**



David Schaller is pastor of Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sister Lakes, Michigan. He also prepares the ‘Bread of Life’ devotions for the *Lutheran Spokesman*.



One Is Not Enough

There was an old Lay's commercial that challenged, "Bet you can't eat just one." The implied message was that their potato chips were so good that eating just one was impossible. You had to have more.

Apart from potato chips, David understood the wisdom that one is not enough. We remember how the young shepherd-king responded to the boastful challenge of Goliath: "*Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*" (1 Samuel 17:26) And then, refusing all conventional weaponry, he "*chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook.*" (verse 40) With these and sling in hand, he advanced on Goliath for a battle to the death.

One wonders why David chose five stones.

Obviously, for some reason he considered that one was not enough. But why? Could it have been that David was not sure of his aim and therefore armed himself with a clip of stones for his single-shot weapon? Not likely, since David had perfected his aim against lion and bear, and probably figured he'd have one shot only before Goliath was upon him. Was it because his ammunition was weak, not being of the hollow-point variety which could have done maximum damage? No, David was confident in the knock-out energy of his one loaded stone bullet, and in the power of God, for he had told Saul, "*The LORD . . . will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.*" (verse 37) Why then five stones?

Consider this possibility: David took five stones because he knew Goliath had friends—huge friends. 2 Samuel 21 reports how David's men later killed four giant Philistine warriors. One was possibly a brother of Goliath. The other three might have been relatives. Perhaps this was why David took five stones, in readiness to face the other four giants if they had attacked him after Goliath's ignominious death.

Are we likewise prepared, always carrying five stones in our spiritual ammo pouch? St. Paul, writing centuries later and with the terminology of the weaponry of his day, instructed the Ephesians to suit up with the whole armor of God, including the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness,

the combat boots of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6: 13-17). David carried a sling and five stones. St. Paul urged each Christian warrior to be spiritually armored up with multiple weapons of defense and offense.

Why? Because one is not enough.

David faced one Philistine that day, but was prepared to face more. David's greater Son, our Lord Jesus Himself, used multiple slashes with the sword of the Spirit to beat back the repeated temptations of Satan and other enemy attacks. Despite being heel-bruised, the Lord gave mortal wounds to Satan, sin, and death with His redeeming death on the cross and justifying resurrection from the grave.

Thus Luther, in his great Reformation hymn (TLH 262) could write of the devil that "one little word can fell him." But he, too, knew that this world's prince is not alone; relatives he has, "devils all the world should fill." Multiple stones are needed. St. Paul explained the necessity, "*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*" (Ephesians 6: 12)

Are you prepared for the fight against these Goliaths? It starts by having the "Valiant One, whom God Himself elected," fighting for us. "Jesus Christ it is . . . He holds the field forever," delivering us from the hand of all our enemies. Second, be fully armored for all situations. In terms of the weaponry of our day, suit up with at least five smooth stones: combat boots and full body armor, a combat knife and lethal sidearm. And don't forget the assault rifle of the Spirit—the Word of God. In our deadly spiritual fight against our Goliaths, one stone is not enough!



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The Height of Faith and Love

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

(Hebrews 11:17-19)

Looking over the list in Hebrews 11 of Christians who lived by faith, Abraham stands out from the rest. More verses are devoted to him than to the others, and he displayed exemplary faith in many respects. This “father of all believers” placed implicit trust in God’s wonderful promises (see Genesis 12:1-3,7; 17:7; 22:17,18), most of which he never saw fulfilled.

Abraham not only put a confident trust in God’s keeping of all the promises He had made to him, but also displayed a preferential love for God above anything—or anyone—else (see Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 10:37). This comes into view in the Bible history account where the Lord tests Abraham by instructing him to offer up his dearly beloved son, Isaac—his and Sarah’s only son (Genesis 22:1-19).

There is no indication of Abraham questioning God or showing any hesitancy in obeying Him in this heartrending matter. Right up to the moment he raised his knife to strike Isaac dead on the altar of God, Abraham displayed a ready resolve to follow through in this act of devotion and obedient love. Holy Scripture reveals that Abraham was so committed to the Lord in this that even though God stopped him short of slaying his son, in Abraham’s mind it was as if he had completed the sacrificial act to the point of death.

Were Abraham to have slain Isaac, what would have become of those divine promises tied to Isaac? How could Abraham have had countless descendants who were to be a great and chosen people of God, and take possession of Canaan? Most



important of all, how could the promised Savior of the world proceed from Abraham’s descendants?

Abraham believed that if God commanded him to take the life of Isaac, God would raise Isaac from the dead and keep His many promises. Abraham alluded to this belief when he said to his servants beforehand, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.” (Genesis 22:5) Even as Abraham had taken the life of Isaac in his mind, in a figurative

way the Lord raised him back to life.

When meditating on this great faith and love of Abraham, we cannot help but think of the tremendous sacrifice God the Father made when He offered up His only begotten Son on the altar of the cross for our eternal redemption. What truly amazing grace God showed to the whole world of sinners like you and me! What love He showed in sacrificing the life of His only begotten, dearly beloved Son for us!

As mothers and fathers read this Bible account of Abraham, many are no doubt amazed, and wonder where Abraham found the will and strength to do this. We need look no further than the heart of God. Knowing God’s great redeeming love for him, Abraham’s heart was filled with an overwhelming spirit of love that moved him to carry out this extraordinary act of devotion.



To God alone be all the glory for the faith and love displayed here by Abraham!

Mark Gullerud is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bowdle, South Dakota, and Zion Lutheran Church in Ipswich, South Dakota.

"What do Roman Catholics mean when they say that salvation is by grace?"

Grace is a word that one will hear in almost any church that claims to be Christian. Even those denominations that deny Christ's deity as well as those who don't speak about the cross will talk about grace.

Grace is a recurring word in the Bible, and those who claim to be speaking for Christ are compelled to use it in their preaching and teaching. The problem comes when such denominations force their own definitions into the word so that it no longer represents the biblical meaning.

According to the Bible's use of the word, grace is simply a *free gift of love*. When it says that it is "*by grace you have been saved*" (Ephesians 2:8 ESV), it explains itself by continuing with these words, "*it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*" In other words, grace excludes the idea that we can do anything that results in our salvation. From beginning to end, salvation is a free gift given to us only because of God's love for us in Christ Jesus.

If the Roman Catholic Church were to teach this truth, we would most certainly rejoice. Sadly, this is not at all what they mean when they talk about being "saved by grace." In their own writings and official teachings, they not only deny salvation by grace, but also condemn those who believe that salvation is a free gift.

So, what do Roman Catholics mean when they say that salvation is by grace? From their own website (catholic.com), their understanding of grace is "a supernatural push or encouragement It's a supernatural kick in the pants." This "supernatural kick in the pants" understanding of grace betrays the whole theology of Roman Catholicism. From their theological perspective, grace becomes the motivation that spurs the individual to a life of good works so that he can be

saved. With this understanding of grace, they can still give God some of the credit, even while making their good works the cause of salvation.

In their own writings and official teachings, they (Roman Catholics) not only deny salvation by grace, but also condemn those who believe that salvation is a free gift.

Besides the fact that the Christian needs no motivation for a life of good works (he simply performs good works because he is a new creature in Christ), those good works are not the *cause* of one's salvation, but rather the *result* of it. Roman Catholicism's theology of salvation amounts to a driver looking at the speedometer and believing that the movement of the needle is what makes the car go faster.

Ultimately, what Roman Catholicism teaches the sinner to do is to look away from Christ and His cross and look instead to himself for salvation. If he produces enough good works, then he will be saved. Jesus and the Gospel become nothing more than a motivating factor that will allow the individual to do what is necessary to be saved. They call it "salvation by grace" because grace kicks them in the pants to perform good works so that they will finally be saved.

The Bible's presentation of salvation by grace is far more wonderful than that. It leaves our salvation completely in the only place it is secure, which is in Christ, whom God gave to be our Savior because of His great love. With this understanding, grace is most definitely a sweet sound, for only by it can a "wretch like me" be saved.

Your pastor is given by Jesus to help you in your study of God's Word, especially when it comes to this central teaching of grace. If you have more questions or would simply like to study this topic in more detail, let him know. He will be happy to study it with you.



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

THE ROAD TO REFORMATION

In preparing for the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, we have presented a brief survey of the life of Martin Luther leading up to the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses. The series culminates in this month's issue.

Life of Luther—1517 “Just leave me alone!”

A disgruntled child stomps away when angry. You decide to tackle projects alone rather than with impossible people. Life's problems often seem easier in isolation.

By 1517, Luther thought he had tucked himself away from trouble. He grieved that the Bible commentaries he read were filled with men's babble, but he could always close them and teach Scriptural truth in his tiny lecture hall. In Rome, he had seen gross doctrinal error; but far to the north, with the Alps in between, he could just focus on his little world enclosed by Wittenberg's walls. And although confusion abounded among the people, he could take the time to counsel them one by one.

But then Tetzel arrived.

A Dominican monk with a flair for the dramatic, Johann Tetzel brought Rome's very worst to nearby Jüterbog, where many people from Wittenberg went to purchase his indulgences (Frederick the Wise had forbidden him from entering Saxony). A sales slogan Tetzel used best illustrates his guile: “As soon as the gold in the coffer rings, the rescued soul to heaven springs.”

Luther learned that many residents of Wittenberg were flocking to Tetzel. Souls he knew and loved fell for the lie that a few coins got them closer to heaven. In private, Luther had sought to convince them of God's love. In public, they had the fear of God pressed back upon them. The ringing of coins in the collection box would have sounded like fingernails on a chalkboard to poor Luther.

With All Saints Day looming, the fevered pitch of Tetzel's false preaching grew, deceiving the people into believing that purchasing his pieces of paper could finally release their loved ones from purgatory. The day before that feast, Luther produced his now-famous Ninety-Five Theses. They outlined the inherent contradiction of burdening already-repentant souls with relentless fear and dread.

Although these theses were publicly displayed, Luther purposely wrote them in Latin. They were not meant for everyone to read, just the educated and ruling class.



Luther did not intend to agitate the people with his Ninety-Five Theses. They were a statement directed to those who tried to impose Rome on Wittenberg. In a way, their posting was meant to shout, “Just leave us alone!”

The Ninety-Five Theses spread like wildfire. God's hour had come. Luther could no longer hide.

The Savior Himself had hidden away at times, but only to allow His Word to work on the hearers' hearts. And He was completely alone when forsaken on the cross. But when Christ rose triumphant from the grave, there was no more

hiding. His resurrection was the public declaration that the forgiveness of sins won by His blood is the immediate ticket to eternal life.

From 1517 on, Luther ever more openly proclaimed this good news. God had used the events of that year to force His chosen instrument out of hiding, “*having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth.*” (Rev. 14:6)

Luther's 1517 lectures on Hebrews reveal a personal reflection on God's work in his life. He talked at length about the duty of a “preacher of the Gospel” to point a burdened soul away from the Law and to Christ's work alone.

What followed was a very public Luther. No more private lectures. Instead, a German Bible to be heard and read by the people. Countless letters sent throughout Europe expounding what the Scriptures truly teach. And as a traveling preacher, he openly proclaimed God's Word wherever called, right up until his final journey home.

This everlasting Gospel brings you out of isolation, too. Christ crucified gives you the comfort of freedom from all that makes you want to hide away. And wherever God leads you, He takes you there to share your hope with other souls

burdened by sin. May the good news in Jesus' name carry you on each day until His promised heaven is yours.

Timothy Daub is pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Hecla, South Dakota.



A Difficult Mission

Working with our brethren in the Nigerian Church of the Lutheran Confession (NCLC), our fellowship made a prolonged attempt to establish a mission in northern Nigeria. The NCLC sent a missionary, Patrick Johnny Ekpo, to the northern city of Bauchi. But it was not easy for him. He knew Hausa, which was the language of the dominant tribe. He had worked for a company there and was familiar with the area. Despite these advantages, we had no Muslim converts. No group was gathered about the Word by Pastor Ekpo, and we eventually had to bring him back down to our headquarters in the south.

Historically, outreach to Muslims has been one of the most difficult of Christian mission fields, due to Muslim hatred, arrogance and intransigence. Our little synod and sister church in Nigeria has experienced what Christian missionaries down through the centuries have learned about working with Muslims—it is far from easy. The following, adapted from an article in “Voice of the Martyrs” magazine (May 2002, pg. 10ff), tells of the efforts of Raymond Lull, an early Christian missionary to North Africa during medieval times:

At age 55, Lull believed he was ready to go to northern Africa to share Christ with Muslims, who were filled with bitterness toward Christianity because of the Crusades. Friends gathered at the ship to see him off. But the ship sailed without him when he panicked. Lull overcame his terror and boarded the next ship for Tunis. He announced his presence to learned Muslims there, and offered to debate them in public. He promised he would become a Muslim if they proved to him that Islam was superior to Christianity. As a result of the debates, some Muslims became interested in learning more about Christianity. Others, however, did not; and these had Lull thrown in prison. He was deported, and stoned on the way to the ship.

At the age of 75, Lull returned to North Africa to try again to reach the Muslims there. He invited Muslims in



Bugia, east of Algiers, to a public debate. He was soon back in prison. Lull returned to Europe, but traveled again to Bugia in 1314 when he was more than 80 years of age. He visited a small group of former Muslims he had led to Christ, and tried secretly for ten months to draw still more to his Lord and Savior.

“I had been fairly rich,” Lull wrote late in his life. “I had a wife and children. I enjoyed the pleasant side of life, but I gladly renounced all this to tell Muslims the truth about Christ. I studied Arabic. They put me in jail and flogged me. Now I have gotten old, but I don’t give up hope. God willing, I wish to persist until death.”

Zwemer said of Lull, who grew tired of hiding and spoke again in an open market: “He pleaded with love . . . but spoke plainly the whole truth . . . Filled with fanatic fury at his boldness, and unable to reply to his arguments, the populace seized him, and dragged him out of town; there by the command, or at least the connivance, of the king, he was stoned on the 30th of June, 1315, and died shortly thereafter.”

Here is a final fact to pray about. You won’t read about it in the media, but it is true nonetheless: in 2015, Nigeria accounted for more than half the worldwide killings of Christians.

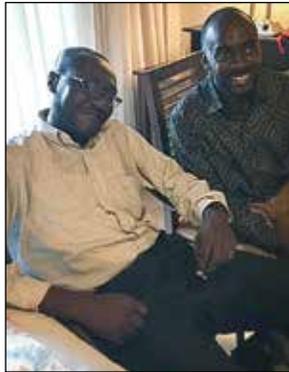
**May our zeal to help the heathen
Be increased from day to day
As we plead in true compassion
And for their conversion pray.
For the many faithful heralds,
For the Gospel they proclaim,
Let us all be cheerful givers
To the glory of Thy name. Amen. (TLH 483:5)**



David Koenig has served as a foreign missionary in Africa, India, and elsewhere. Though officially retired, he continues to be active in the synod’s mission endeavors.

Visitation to Haiti

This past May/June, Board of Missions chairman Joel Krafft and Missionary Todd Ohlmann made a trip to visit Pastor Emmanuel Julien, a man with whom we have been in contact for over four years. Pastor Julien began his contact with the CLC through an email from Haiti in February 2013. From the beginning, Pastor Julien's desire was to learn and study the Scriptures through whatever means we had available to teach him. He worked through correspondence courses with Pastor Mark Gullerud over the course of several years, though contact was somewhat spotty due to lack of materials and infrastructure on Pastor Julien's end.



By 2016, the Board of Missions was planning a visit to Haiti to meet and speak with Pastor Julien. He had requested a laptop computer and printer so he could copy and distribute the lessons he had been working on over the years, being convinced that they were a help to him and knowing that this material would assist him in teaching the pastors he was instructing for the work in Haiti. He had never asked for money and always put the learning and studying of God's Word as his first priority.

The CLC Board of Missions generally follows a five-phase approach to new contacts in foreign fields in the hope of establishing fellowship in the future. The first phase involves lengthy correspondence over email or Skype, followed by a thorough discussion of doctrine through various materials and studies. The third phase is an initial visit to the contact. A six-day trip was planned so we could meet Pastor Julien, observe his work, and also meet some of the men with whom he was working.

While they were there, Mr. Krafft and Missionary Ohlmann visited an orphanage where Pastor Julien cares for approximately twenty-five orphans. They also visited two other locations where Pastor Julien had arranged for some of the pastors in training to meet with them. Missionary Ohlmann conducted the lessons, with six or seven men

Above: Pastor Emmanuel Julien (left) and Thomas Stanglais.

Top right: children at the orphanage awaiting lunch.

Bottom right: study group listening to Missionary Ohlmann.



attending each day. Mr. Krafft wrote, "They all seemed eager to hear the Word and asked questions of Missionary Ohlmann which were translated back and forth between English and French by Pastor Julien."

Chairman Krafft concludes, "From this point we are continuing to instruct Pastor Julien via correspondence courses. We are hoping to visit again soon in order to strengthen the ties and to provide a laptop and printer. The process of study and being sure of our agreement based on the Word of God takes time. We pray the Lord keeps this door open and allows His Word to reach souls otherwise lost."

The events in Haiti are another example of the slow but diligent process that we take to follow up with overseas contacts. Many of these contacts do not turn out to be interested in fellowship based on the truth of God's Word, but some are; and we thank the Lord for the privilege of being used by Him in such a way.



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

A SLICE OF LIFE IN THE CLC

SNAPSHOTS OF CONGREGATIONS FROM AROUND THE CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the San Francisco Peninsula—Mountain View, California

This month's unique "Slice of Life in the CLC" is the testament to God's grace that is St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the San Francisco Peninsula—Mountain View, California. The congregation is most commonly known among us as St. Stephen—West, or St. Stephen—West Bay (to differentiate it from its sister congregation across the Bay in Hayward: St. Stephen—East Bay).

Location

Mountain View is in the heart of the "Silicon Valley" and is home to the corporate headquarters of Google as well as numerous other high-tech corporations. The word *silicon* in that term originally referred to the large number of silicon chip innovators and manufacturers in the region, but the area is now home also to many of the world's largest technology companies.

According to a recent report by the Barna Research Group, the Silicon Valley and the surrounding San Francisco Bay Area is the least "church going" metro area in the United States. It is also the most "de-churched" metro area in our country (meaning that it has the largest percentage of people who have consciously decided to stop attending a church).

History

It was in this unique and challenging region of the country that God saw fit to plant, develop, and preserve the St. Stephen congregation. The earliest roots of the congregation go back to 1963, with worship services being conducted in the home of CLC members in San Bruno. In 1965 Pastor Rollin

Reim was installed as the first full-time pastor of St. Stephen and missionary to the San Francisco Bay Area. This was an incredible step of faith since the group initially was made up of only nine adults and seven children! This small but dedicated group took on half the costs involved, while the CLC Mission Board provided the other half. The church constitution was signed in 1967. In 1968, through Pastor Reim's radio ministry, contact was made with Don Luebke, and the East Bay congregation was begun and developed.

The congregation worshiped in several rented facilities before the Lord raised up a sanctuary of their own (literally!) "from the dead." In 1985 the congregation was able to acquire a mortuary building that was about to be demolished in Mountain View. Six months later it was moved three miles down the road to its current site on Moorpark Way, where the Lord had already provided the congregation with land. In February of 1986, the congregation dedicated this remodeled sanctuary and facility with thanksgiving to the glory of God. A funeral parlor that had once housed the dead was now dedicated to the Lord, and to the proclamation of eternal LIFE!

St. Stephen was faithfully served by Pastor Rollin Reim from 1965-1990, and from 1996-2000 when he was called back into the full-time ministry. Pastor Reim currently lives in a retirement home in the area and remains an active member of the congregation.

In late 2016, it was agreed that it was in the best interest of both Bay Area congregations to enter into a dual parish arrangement. St. Stephen West-Bay and St. Stephen East-Bay each issued a divine call to Pastor Luke Bernthal, who accepted both calls and began his service in January of 2017.

School

In 1995, under the leadership and encouragement of Pastor Bruce Naumann, and with the dedicated efforts of the congregation, the Lord provided St. Stephen with a Christian day school for the children of the congregation. Sara Pfeiffer was the first full-time teacher called to the school, and for twenty-one years taught and served as principal. Her talents and passion for teaching children and bringing them God's Word were instrumental in the establishment and growth of the school. Many other full- and part-time teachers have



St. Stephen Lutheran School students and staff.



Above: Some members of St. Stephen Lutheran Church.
 Right: St. Stephen's chancel.



served the school over the years, with a number of them coming from within the congregation.

From its inception, the school has also served as an incredible outreach tool not only to the children and families of the Silicon Valley, but also to others from around the world! Because families who live in this area come from all over the world, our school truly is an “international” school. In the school’s current enrollment of fifteen students, ten countries are represented (not including the United States): India, Great Britain, Nigeria, China, Korea, Ukraine, Tonga, Indonesia, New Zealand, and Germany.

St. Stephen Lutheran School (SSLS) is in its twenty-third year of existence. By God’s grace and guiding, the congregation called and installed a second teacher this summer, Mrs. Rebecca Lillo. She joins the teaching staff with the current principal, Kirsten Gullerud, who is going into her fifth year at SSLS. The school continues to serve as a vibrant and visible witness of the Gospel to our community and beyond!

Congregational Life

St. Stephen has always had a dedicated and active membership. From the building of the church facility, to the building of the parsonage, to the establishment of the school, to hosting congregational meals as well as other church and school events, St. Stephen is a congregation that loves to serve, and loves to serve with each other!

Current congregational activities and outreach efforts include the following:

- The “Ambassadors,” a congregational mission society, led by the congregation’s Mission Board, that encourages both “in-reach” (within the congregation) and “outreach” (to those outside our congregation).
- Distributing “blessing bags” with food and other helpful items (including a New Testament) to individuals in the ever-increasing homeless population in the area.

- Serving CLC members who live in Southern California (Los Angeles and San Diego areas). This group is known as St. Stephen–South.
- Vacation Bible school, which brings a number of non-member contacts to hear the Gospel message, is held during the last week of July each year. This year we were blessed with a very talented and dedicated teaching team from the Traveling Vacation Bible School (TVBS) program.
- Planning and building a new church sign.

St. Stephen is currently planning its fiftieth anniversary celebration, to be held on Sunday, July 29th, 2018. The theme of the celebration includes something that has been a part of the congregation’s logo and mission: “Fifty Years of Lifting High the Cross.”



There is still much more “Lifting High the Cross” that needs to be done in our area. The good news is that Jesus has already done all the “heavy lifting”! We pray with confidence and optimism that He will continue to bless the proclamation of His cross and resurrection in this mission field that is so ripe for harvest.



Luke Bernthal is the pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the East Bay in Hayward, California, and St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the San Francisco Peninsula in Mountain View, California.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS OCTOBER 2017

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

| Date | Verse | Reading | Comments |
|--------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Oct 2 | TLH 278 | Matthew 5:21-26 | The Law reveals our inward sins as well as our outward ones, sins such as anger in the heart. |
| Oct 3 | TLH 623; LSB 860 | Matthew 5:27-32 | The marriage relationship is to be guarded and protected at all costs. |
| Oct 4 | TLH 279 | Matthew 5:33-37 | Needless swearing is a misuse of God’s holy name. |
| Oct 5 | TLH 402 | Matthew 5:38-42 | When someone hurts us, our sinful nature wants revenge, but the Spirit leads us to show love “above and beyond”—even for our enemies. |
| Oct 6 | TLH 403 | Matthew 5:43-48 | Be perfect in love even toward your enemies, thinking of how your Father in heaven shows love to you even though you are a sinner. |
| Oct 7 | TLH 258 | 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 | Notice that the description here of the Antichrist, the “man of lawlessness” (v. 4) fits whoever the Pope is at any given time. |
| Oct 9 | TLH 259 | 2 Thessalonians 2:5-12 | The Lord Jesus will eventually overthrow the lawless one who tried to take His place. |
| Oct 10 | TLH 260 | 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 | God called you by the Gospel to believe the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore hold to the Good News of justification and forgiveness that has been passed on to you. |
| Oct 11 | TLH 660 | 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 | Oh, how we long to be in heaven one day, living a new life in our eternal home! |
| Oct 12 | TLH 265 | 2 Corinthians 5:11-15 | Paul defends His Gospel preaching and teaching—that Christ died for all and we live for Him. |
| Oct 13 | TLH 372 | 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 | Here is the Great Exchange: Jesus took on our sin, and we were given His righteousness! |
| Oct 14 | TLH 291 | Psalms 119:105-112 | God’s Word is a light that leads us to our Savior, Jesus Christ. |
| Oct 16 | TLH 264; LSB 583 | Psalms 119:113-120 | The world puts its hope in the word of experts like scientists and doctors, but our true hope is in the Word of God. |
| Oct 17 | TLH 263 | Psalms 119:121-128 | We ask the Lord to uphold and sustain those who trust His Word. |
| Oct 18 | WS 775 | Psalms 119:129-136 | The Word of the Lord gives us understanding that we would not have otherwise. |
| Oct 19 | TLH 269 | Psalms 119:137-144 | Trouble may come to us, but the Word of God has proved itself time and time again and its promises can be trusted. |
| Oct 20 | TLH 267 | Psalms 119:145-152 | When you need help, you need not be afraid to fly to the Word. It is not too much even to meditate all night on the Good News from God! |
| Oct 21 | TLH 38; LSB 558 | Psalms 119:153-160 | God truly cares for those who love His true and faithful Word. |
| Oct 23 | TLH 266; LSB 584 | Psalms 119:161-168 | The Spirit works in us to hate what is evil and love the good things that the Lord wants us to do. |
| Oct 24 | TLH 292 | Psalms 119:169-176 | We praise God for His precious Word and sing of His righteous decrees and His love. |
| Oct 25 | TLH 378 | Leviticus 16:1-10 | Our sins separate us from God. A sacrifice of atonement must be made to bring us near to Him again. The Day of Atonement foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus Himself. |
| Oct 26 | WS 777; LSB 588 | Leviticus 16:11-19 | Without the shedding of blood (death) there is no making up for sin. The blood of bulls and goats was a reminder of that. |
| Oct 27 | TLH 371 | Leviticus 16:20-34 | Christ is our scapegoat, who became guilty of all our sin and then shed His blood as a sacrifice of atonement for us all. |
| Oct 28 | TLH 387 | Romans 3:1-8 | We can make no excuses for our sins. God is surely right when He judges them. |
| Oct 30 | TLH 377 | Romans 3:9-20 | Nobody can be counted righteous by observing the Law because nobody observes it perfectly. |
| Oct 31 | TLH 262 | Romans 3:21-31 | There is a righteousness outside of ourselves. It is the righteousness of Christ which we receive by faith. By faith we are justified, not by our own works or effort! |

I Could Never Do That!

Publicly post ninety-five theses critical of the church's money-making practice of indulgences. Question and eventually oppose the Pope himself. Stand before the Holy Roman Emperor and other powerful officials and when ordered to recant, instead state, "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason . . . I cannot and I will not recant anything. . . Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen." Continue preaching and teaching under constant threat of arrest, imprisonment, and even death. Martin Luther did all that and much more. By any measure, his words and actions were bold and decisive.

Luther's biography reads like a thrilling adventure novel.

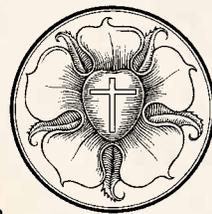
Against all odds, he accomplished amazing things. But does his life seem so different and far removed from ours that there is no comparison? Do you ever look at Luther in awe and think, "I could never do that! No way!?" I know I have. Instead of taking a stand on the truth, aren't we often more like Peter, who quickly crumbled under the relatively mild interrogation of a servant girl in the high priest's courtyard and denied even knowing Jesus? Aren't we more likely to keep quiet about our faith than tell the next-door neighbor, "I believe Jesus is the Son of God and the only Savior from sin and death"?

Five hundred years later.

We still look back in wonder at the Reformation and thank God for the courage and faithfulness of Martin Luther. But the lesson to come away with is not simply "Luther was amazing, his work awesome. I could never do that. Thank God the Reformation is accomplished history." What about the future? The attacks of Satan on Christ and His Church have not stopped. He



What about the future? The attacks of Satan on Christ and His Church have not stopped.



may have altered his tactics somewhat to maximize the damage he can inflict, but his objective is still the same: to drag as many souls as he possibly can into hell with him. The fight for the truth of salvation by God's grace alone through faith alone as revealed in Scripture alone will continue to be waged until the end of time.

Luther would be the first to stress that he could not take any personal credit for his role in the Reformation.

His courage came from the Lord, Who promised to be with him always. His rock-solid conviction that while popes and councils could err, the Word of God stands true forever, was worked by the Spirit. Luther's calmness of heart, undisturbed regardless of how much turmoil swirled around him, flowed from the peace of God, the reconciliation between sinners and God, won by Jesus on the cross.

This Reformation season, let's look beyond Martin Luther to the Lord Jesus, Who died for him and all people, Who clothed Luther in His own perfect righteousness, and Who made him a messenger of light in a world filled with the darkness of error and unbelief. May we look to the same Lord for our peace, courage, and boldness. Then when witnessing opportunities come up at work or school, when we are in the right place at the right time to stand up for the truth of the Word, when the Lord opens doors for us as a church body to preach the truth of the Gospel in far-flung corners of the world or inner cities, instead of saying, "I could never do that!" may we pray, "Lord, all things are possible with You!" and eagerly get to work.

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



SEEN IN PASSING

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

Late-Night Host Attempts to Convert Renowned Atheist.

There are three talk-show hosts—Jimmy Fallon, Stephen Colbert and Jimmy Kimmel—whose late-night programs compete for television ratings. All are comedians, all are politically liberal, and all have been sharply critical of the current President. There’s one big difference, though—Stephen Colbert is a committed Roman Catholic, and isn’t shy about discussing his faith on-air. In November of last year, one of his guests was fellow talk-show host and vocal atheist Bill Maher. He said to Maher, “The door is always open. Golden ticket, right before you. All you have to do is humble yourself before the presence of the Lord and admit there are things greater than you in the universe that you do not understand. Take Pascal’s wager. If you’re wrong, you’re an idiot, but if I’m right, you’re going to hell.” Maher’s response was a snide rejection, as might be expected. But the mere fact that a mainstream media personality like Colbert is willing to introduce such topics in a public forum today is interesting, not to say refreshing. Merritt, Jonathan. “Is God boosting Stephen Colbert’s ratings?” *Analysis*. TheWeek.com. 10 Jul. 2017. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.

Dangers of Running a Church Like a Business

The church is described as many things in the New Testament, says *Christianity Today* columnist Karl Vaters. “It’s a family, a body, a fellowship, a holy people, a flock, and more. *But not a business.*” Yet more and more American churches, especially among Protestant evangelical denominations, are adopting one of several business models for their churches. In some, says Vaters, the pastor acts like an owner or CEO of the church, employing the most sophisticated and up-to-date marketing strategies; the downside comes when members

begin to act like customers – demanding better and better entertainment and constantly-improving levels of “customer service” or they’ll take their business elsewhere. In other churches, the pastor acts like middle management and treats the members as employees, ordering them around as if he were their boss; this is not, Vaters says, what Scripture means by “equipping the saints.” The third scenario is the reverse, where church members act like stockholders and treat the pastor as an employee, a worker who is beholden to their wishes rather than to the Word of God. All three are bad, says Vaters. “Businesses have employees and customers. The church has family members. Businesses have bosses. The church has a Lord. A head. A savior. And a king.” Vaters, Karl. “3 Big Problems With Running A Church Like A Business.” *Pivot*. ChristianityToday.com. 10 Jul. 2017. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.

Kenya Public Schools Hire Chaplains to Improve Discipline

“Religious leaders in Kenya have welcomed a government move to recruit chaplains for all public high schools as a measure intended to improve discipline and staunch unrest. The leaders say such a move would help promote good morals. Education Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiangi’s announcement that the government was prepared to fund the chaplaincies was greeted warmly. ‘This is a welcome move and we encourage it,’ said Anglican Bishop Joseph Kagunda of Mount Kenya West Diocese. The bishop said the presence of chaplains at two schools this past year helped reduce discipline problems. ‘We have also learned that the students open up more to the chaplains than their teachers,’ said Kagunda. The chaplains will be recruited, hired and paid by the government. Kenya, which is 83 percent Christian and 11 percent Muslim, has no state religion in its constitution.” Nzwilli, Fredrick. “Kenya to add chaplains to public high schools to improve discipline.” *Church and State*. Religious News Service, 7 Jul. 2017. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In accord with our usage and order, **Rebecca Lillo**, who was called to be the second teacher at St. Stephen Lutheran School, Mountain View, California, was installed on Sunday, July 30th, 2017. Members of the Board of Education, as well as Rebecca’s father, Kirk Kesterson, participated in the service.
— Pastor Luke Bernthal

In accord with our usage and order, **Ross Kok**, who was called to be the principal and K-8 teacher of Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran School, Phoenix, Arizona, was installed on Sunday, August 13th, 2017.
— Pastor Michael Gurath

Married Priests?

As a partial solution for the Roman Catholic Church’s shortage of clergy, Pope Francis recently declared that he would be open to married men becoming priests. “We need to consider if ‘*virī probati*’ could be a possibility,” he said. “If so, we would need to determine what duties they could undertake, for example, in remote communities.” *Virī probati* is the Latin term for “tested men” or married men of outstanding faith and virtue. However, those who are already priests would not be allowed to marry. “For the time being,” the Pope said, “I am in favor of maintaining celibacy with the pros and cons that it has, because it has been ten centuries of good experiences more often than failure.” For over a thousand years, Roman Catholicism has insisted its clergy be celibate, a teaching based in church tradition rather than Scripture, and one that has by all accounts given rise to fearsome abuses. Gallagher, Delia. “Pope signals he’s open to married Catholic men becoming priests.” *Europe*. CNN.com, 10 Mar. 2017. Web. 9 Jun. 2017.