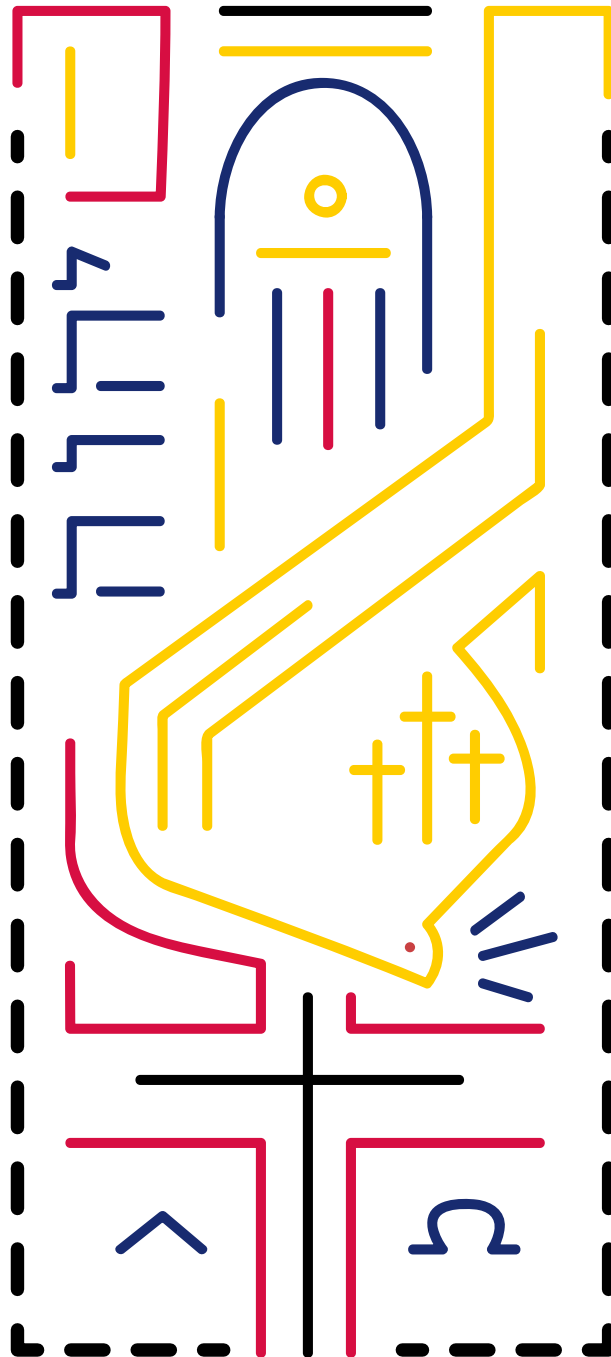


June 2018 VOL 60 NO. 12

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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





Page 12



Page 15

IN THIS ISSUE

June 2018 — VOL. 60 NO. 12

Tribulations and the Trinity	3
A Positive Outlook for the Convention	4
A Hymn of Glory (TLH 240) “Father Most Holy, Merciful, and Tender”	5
Sacrificing Love on the Altar of Misunderstanding	6
God’s Discipline Demonstrates His Love for Us!	7
“I don’t need to repent.”	8
A Challenging Year—1527	9
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church Spokane, Washington.....	10
Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession, Nepal	12
Bread of Life Readings, June 2018	14
Latest From the BELC.....	15
Seen in Passing.....	16

Get and give the gift of the Gospel

Subscription to the *Lutheran Spokesman* is \$18.00/year.

ORDER SUBSCRIPTION ONLINE AT:

www.lutheranspokesman.org

Or mail subscription to:

Rev. James Sandeen, Business Manager
501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701



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, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, 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, Ross Kok, Joseph Lau, Delwyn Maas, Bruce Naumann, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Michael Roehl, Robert Sauers, Thomas Schuetze, Chad Seybt, 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: Rev. James Sandeen, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701. E-mail to jim.sandeen@ilc.edu. 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.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New King James Version, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Lutheran Spokesman Art Direction and Design by MschaserLLC 2017. Any use of the images and/or graphics in part or whole without permission is prohibited. Contact Matt Schaser at: mschaser@sbcglobal.net for terms and usage.

Tribulations and the Trinity

The life of Job is worth our consideration whenever we feel discouraged. After being substantially blessed by God, he lost his possessions, his children, and finally even his health. All of that tribulation eventually led him to this question: “*Is it not destruction for the wicked, And disaster for the workers of iniquity?*” (Job 31:3) Thousands of years later, many people, even Christians, continue to ask, “Why is this happening to me?”

After a rebuke of his supposed self-righteousness from Job’s friend Elihu, God answers Job with a series of His own questions in Job 38-41. He demands Job answer these questions that are unanswerable to all except God Himself. This confrontation led Job to realize that the wisdom of man is nothing compared to the wisdom of God.

The doctrine of the Trinity (that three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are together one God) is not able to be explained in a way that agrees with human logic. It has no true earthly parallel. Many of the most brilliant minds on earth would, no doubt, call it foolishness. Yet it is Biblical truth, passed down to us from the Almighty Himself. Like God’s response to Job, it is a reminder to us that there is much we will not and cannot understand on our earthly pilgrimage. “*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*” (Isaiah 55:9)

However, the Trinity is not only a reminder of our own lack of understanding, but also divine truth. God tells us in Romans 8:28 that He works all things for our good. We realize when considering the Trinity and other mysteries of

The
doctrine
of the
Trinity has
no true
earthly
parallel.

God that we cannot see the full picture. Our plans are based on our incomplete view, but God’s plans are perfect.

Our faith is truly stretched and tested when considering the fact that our Triune God “*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:4), yet some “*shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.*” (2 Thessalonians 1:9) These and other spiritual truths are revealed to us in the Bible by the Holy Spirit and can only be received by faith. Believing these truths, all Christians can be confident that our Triune God will use even hardships and trials for the good of His people, always advancing the work of His kingdom. As Christ told His disciples, “*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*” (John 20:29)

We don’t see God with our own eyes on earth. We cannot fully understand the nature of our Triune God. Yet, because of God’s revelation to us in the Bible and His gift of faith through the Holy Spirit, we can

proclaim with confidence, “*I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*” (Job 19:25-27) How blessed we are that the omniscient Trinity is not a remote being,

indifferent to the plight of his creatures, but rather a gracious God Who sent His Son to save us from the eternal death that we had earned!

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





A Positive Outlook for the Convention

At the conclusion of the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys, he was in the habit of having a series of conventions of sorts. There were several positive points as to why Paul conducted himself in this manner. Perhaps we may see the same positives in attending our own synodical gatherings.

Typically, when Paul would conclude a mission trip, he would head to a gathering of believers in Antioch, Syria. Here the faithful would be treated to reports of the Holy Spirit's work, performing miracles and adding to the Church of Christ. Paul and his fellow workers would then usually travel down the coastline, stopping to give reports along the way, until they could meet with the church in Jerusalem.

Our Church of the Lutheran Confession's biennial convention will be held June 21-24, 2018, at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. There we, too, will have the opportunity to hear the reports of our missionaries. They will give us reports of the work of the Holy Spirit in both foreign and domestic fields; how He still performs miracles of conversion, adding to the Church. Some years at convention, delegates have had the added privilege of receiving visits and hearing messages from some foreign pastors.

Paul, at times, received requests from the convention held in Jerusalem. "*Remember the poor*" (Galatians 2:10) Paul was asked by the Christians in the capital city. The believers in Jerusalem were often from the lowest levels of society and living in poverty. Without the safety nets of modern society, these Christians relied on the loving generosity of their fellow believers.

At our conventions, we also talk about finances. And even though the seemingly endless discussion of numbers and dollar signs may produce some Eutychus moments (see Acts 20:7-12), money is a valuable tool for doing the Lord's work. Our financial support of the synod enables our beloved Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary to

continue to produce dedicated pastors, teachers, and laymen. Our offerings also provide support to mission congregations here in the states and abroad. Convention delegates have the important opportunity to designate funding amounts as well as give direction for the synod's spending in the future.

Church conventions were not without controversy even in Paul's day. As Paul left mission congregations, there would come in his wake those who would undo his precious work with false teaching. The believers gathered in Jerusalem deliberated at length concerning what was to be done about these false teachers and how the new brethren could be encouraged in their faith.

Our own synodical conventions have not been without disputes, controversies, and disagreements; this side of heaven, no gathering of sinful humans can be. Yet, we have the same source as the early Church did for settling all problems—God's pure and unbreakable Word, written by the Holy Spirit Himself. This summer our delegates will be considering the proposed Joint Statement of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), and the CLC. This will be another opportunity for the delegates to search the Scriptures to be sure our doctrinal practices align with the Lord's will.

This brings me to the final positive aspect of attending our conventions—the fellowship. What a joy and privilege to gather with like-minded Christians, roll up our spiritual sleeves, and get at the work the Lord has given us! The devotions, prayers, communion, and personal conversations do wonders to uplift and encourage us in our labor for the Lord.

If you have never been a delegate to our convention, speak to your pastor. Search your heart to see if this is a way you could serve our Savior. With the blessings of the Holy Spirit, the results will be nothing but positive!



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

TLH HYMN 240

“Father Most Holy, Merciful, and Tender”

The doctrine of the Trinity has been called “The supreme mystery which theology is to proclaim.”¹ The Bible clearly teaches that there is one and only one God, and that this one true God exists as three separate persons—yet each person individually is fully God, not one third of God. Martin Luther wrote and preached much on the subject, but always with the understanding that the nature of God is, ultimately, beyond human understanding. So, for example, he said with regard to this doctrine, “Here reason, corrupted by original sin, must be taken captive in the obedience of faith, nay, must be extinguished together with its light and wisdom.”

Unlike most of the seventeen hymns in the “Trinity” section of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, Hymn 240 does not use successive stanzas to sing the particular work of each person of the Trinity. Rather, it is more in the nature of an overall invocation to the Triune God, offering our adoration and praise. Only verse 1, in the form of a direct address to the one true God, mentions each person individually, saying “**Father most holy, merciful, and tender;/ Jesus, our Savior, with the Father reigning;/ Spirit all kindly, Advocate, Defender,/ Light never waning.**”

Christians have been singing this hymn (“O Pater Sancte”) for more than a thousand years. It dates from about A.D. 900. Think of that. When Martin Luther was preaching and teaching, this hymn was already six hundred years old! I like that. Certainly, good Christian music is being written and performed today. Our ILC Tour Choir includes some of that in their concerts. Good CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) can have a place in our worship services; it can present the truth of God’s Word as well as “the oldies.” However, there is also a disconcerting trend in some circles to make worship services mimic secular entertainment, apparently in the ill-considered belief that doing so will bring in more people. Personally, in an age when so many of those churches known as “evangelical” seem to be huffing and

puffing to keep up with the latest fads and trends in popular culture in the mistaken idea that hipster “song leaders,” drums, and amplified guitars will attract people who are “turned off” by traditional hymns, I find this thousand-year-old link to historic Christianity to be refreshing and soul satisfying. I delight in being part of such a long and unbroken succession of believers who express their biblical faith in reverent song.

This hymn was written during what is sometimes called the “Viking Age” (ca. A.D. 800-1050) throughout much of England and northern Europe. The language the Scandinavians carried with them throughout those areas is called Old Norse, and although “O Pater Sancte” was written in Latin, it nonetheless uses one of the literary devices of the Old Norse poetry from that age. Namely, it uses kennings.

A kenning is a figurative compound term used to express a single concrete noun, without saying the noun itself. For example, in the Viking epic poem *Beowulf*,

blood is called “battle sweat,” the sea is a “whale road,” and death is “sleep of the sword.” So also in this hymn, the simple noun *God* is expressed with the figurative compounds (“kennings”) “**Light of the angels,**” “**Life of the forsaken,**” “**Hope of all living,**” (Verse 2) and “**Highest and Greatest**” (Verse 4).

Although this is a thousand-year-old hymn, the truth it expresses is both contemporary and eternal: There is one God, Who exists as three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and it is this God Who is the object of our worship. “**To the all-ruling Triune God be glory!/. . . We, too, would praise Thee,/ giving honor worthy/ Now and forever.**” (Verse 4)

Now in this Trinity season and always, may we also sing our praise to the one true, Triune God.

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



1 Koestlin-Kawerau, Martin Luther, I, 103

Sacrificing Love on the Altar of Misunderstanding

(Please read Joshua chapter 22.)

The Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh fought alongside the rest of Israel to take possession of the land west of the Jordan. When the time came for them to return to their lands east of the river, Joshua affirmed their faithfulness and sent them away with his blessing. On their way back, they stopped by the Jordan and built an impressive altar.

“And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.” (Joshua 22:12)

They abruptly went from thanking and blessing their brothers to gathering for war against them. Why? It was because they assumed their brothers were going against the Word of the Lord.

We can appreciate the fervor on the part of the tribes west of the river to be completely faithful to God and His Word. They were certainly animated by their passion not to be contaminated by what they perceived as waywardness on the part of their brothers, and they voiced a sincere desire for them to repent.

Wanting to be faithful to God’s Word, to guard against being contaminated by error, and to call upon those erring to repent are all good things. Was there, nevertheless, something missing on the part of those who were upset and spouting accusations? Before impulsively gathering to go to war against those they perceived as violating God’s Word, wouldn’t it have been appropriate for someone to go and talk with them first?

When they finally got around to sending representatives to confront their brothers east of the river, they began by fiercely accusing them of treachery and rebellion against the Lord; and they warned them of God’s impending wrath.

When the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were finally allowed to speak, they explained their reason for building the altar by the Jordan. They intended for it to be a reminder to themselves and future generations

of their connection with their brethren on the other side of the river. The altar by the Jordan was to signify that they would continue faithfully to make the trips across the river in order to go to the tabernacle and worship the Lord there according to His Word. Even though they lived on the other side of the Jordan, they still wanted to be faithful to God and remain connected to their brothers. The altar was meant to be a teaching device to remind future generations of that.

The rest of Israel had jumped to conclusions without first making sure they had all the facts. They were quick to make judgements and were ready to go to war over what they assumed to be true—rather than first finding out what their brothers were thinking when they built that altar.

“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” (James 1:19)

Beloved brethren will seek first to understand. That can happen only if we listen, really listen, to the other person. We’re not really listening if we’re formulating our rebuttal while they’re still talking. How refreshing it is when you can tell that others are truly listening to you and want to understand. That demonstrates respect and provides a helpful context in which to have a profitable discussion.

As followers of Christ, we are called to walk *“with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* (Ephesians 4:2,3) This always applies, even when it’s necessary to confront a brother.

Love is never a good reason to compromise the truth; and the desire to be faithful to God’s Word is never a good reason to neglect love.



O Holy Spirit, grant us willing ears to listen carefully *and* respond with truth and love in our interactions with others.

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

God's Discipline Demonstrates His Love for Us!

“Consider [Jesus] who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.’”

(Hebrews 12:3-6 - ESV)

“God’s disciplining you.”

I don’t know how well I’d take those words during a time I was suffering. I suppose those words could come from a kind-hearted person with good intentions. But depending on who said them and how they were said, I could take those words as the person saying, “You’re only getting what you deserve. You must have done something wrong, and now God is punishing you.”

That is not the message of Hebrews 12. Rather, the Holy Spirit is using these words to give us comfort, courage, and the strength to patiently endure the trials and tribulations we face. He wants us to understand that God uses discipline to demonstrate His love for us.

Let’s be clear, first of all, that the discipline of the Lord is not punishment for our sins. The trials that come into our lives are not God’s way of demanding that we make atonement for our sins. The beginning of our text above encourages us to “consider [Jesus] who endured from sinners such hostility against himself.” Those words point us to the cross, where Jesus made atonement for the sins of the world once and for all. No further payment is necessary.

While punishment focuses on the past and penalizes for past offenses, discipline focuses on the future and instructs and corrects for future growth. God disciplines us out of His great love for us. And His discipline reminds us of who we are: sons and daughters of God. We are not disciplined by some far-away deity who punishes us at a whim, but we are

disciplined by our heavenly Father. He treats us as His dear children, and what child is not disciplined by his parents?

The gracious purpose of God’s discipline is to cause us to focus less on ourselves and more on our God. We all know when things are sailing along smoothly in our lives, we tend to forget about God and believe that things are going well because we are so good. So God allows or even sends affliction into our lives to drive us back to Him. He does this so we are more aware of our need for Him.

As He disciplines us, He reminds us, as He reminded the Apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) We are directed back to the cross where Jesus died for us—where He gave His

life for our sin and weakness. The Lord’s discipline drives us back to the empty tomb from which Jesus rose to life, conquering sin and death for us.

God’s discipline should cause us to be confident in God’s love, “for the Lord disciplines the one he loves.” We never outgrow our need for the Lord’s discipline this side of heaven, and so He continues to correct us. Why? It’s because He wants to keep us close to Him. It’s because He doesn’t

want anything to get in the way of our salvation. God’s discipline demonstrates His love for us!

Robert Sauers is pastor of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Morris, Minnesota, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions.



“I don’t need to repent.”

Our conversations around God’s Word vary. Sometimes witnessing to the truth of God’s Word is new instruction. Sometimes it is correction, and at other times it is offering a new insight or application. Our witness to someone who is impenitent takes a rather different shape even while the truth remains unchanged.

If someone refuses to acknowledge his sin and repent of it, he risks everlasting condemnation. This is what gives such urgency to God’s exhortation that those who are spiritual are to correct such a one (Galatians 6:1) and regain a brother (Matthew 18:15-20). Using God’s Word to bring someone to repentance is the spiritual equivalent of rescuing him from death row. It is something over which the angels in heaven rejoice (Luke 15:10).

Repentance is a change of mind and heart that recognizes sin, genuinely sorrows over it, and trusts Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Turning away from sin and living for Christ are the fruit this repentance bears. The Word of God is the only tool that can effect such repentance in the heart of a sinner.

We are commissioned by our Savior to “preach the Gospel,” but the impenitent heart is not ready for the Gospel. An impenitent heart needs to hear God’s Law to understand sin and its consequence. As Jesus said, “go and tell him his fault.” (Matthew 18:15)

Once the Law has revealed sin and the sinner sorrows over it, the Gospel salves the wound opened by the Law. Jesus told the Emmaus disciples that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.” (Luke 24:47)

If you are speaking to someone who is impenitent, begin with prayer—even if it’s just a quick internal prayer in the middle of an outward conversation. Use God’s Law to identify sin and rebuke it, to show the reality and consequence of sin, and to explain God’s seriousness about sin. Then also be ready with the Gospel to lift up the broken-hearted.

Different words from God can be used to directly rebuke specific sins, but the following passages are a general place to start in prayerfully leading a fellow sinner to godly sorrow producing repentance leading to salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10).

1 John 1:8 —“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Scripture abounds with passages that reveal the sin and natural depravity every one of us shares (for example, Romans 3:10ff, Psalm 51:5). There is no escape from that harsh reality.

If anyone believes his sinful rationalization and suggests that he has no sin—or that whatever sin he may have doesn’t rise to the degree necessary for judgment—then that soul is deceived, is a liar, and makes God a liar too (1 John 1:10). (When it’s time for the Gospel, the very next verses, 1 John 2:1-2, provide the means to dry a convicted soul’s penitential tears.)

Ezekiel 18:30-32 —“Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit For why should you die . . . turn and live!”

The words “ruin” and “die” impress upon us the seriousness of each sin. Salvation by grace does not diminish the seriousness of sin. No one can say, “My sin was serious, but Jesus forgives me.” Sin is always a serious affront to God and worthy of death (Exodus 20:5, Romans 6:23). The Gospel message is not that sin was diminished, but rather that the Son of God paid the full penalty of sin.

Each of us is a sinner. Therefore, day by day and as we seek to lead the impenitent to repentance, we also pray, “Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.” (Psalm 51:1)



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

Using God’s Word to bring someone to repentance is the spiritual equivalent of rescuing him from death row. It is something over which the angels in heaven rejoice.

“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Luke 15:10

THE ROAD TO REFORMATION

In observation of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, we are presenting a brief survey of the life of Martin Luther. The series continues with major events in the life of the Reformer that took place after 1517.

—1527—

A Challenging Year

Historical events do not take place in a vacuum. Famous people are human, and as humans their lives are complicated. What they say and do is often influenced a great deal by their circumstances. Martin Luther is no exception.

In 1527 Luther turned forty-three years old. It had been ten years since the posting of the Ninety-five Theses. He had weathered many political and theological storms. He was living with his wife of two years, Katerina, and their young son, Hans. Luther was preaching and teaching at the university at Wittenberg. He had developed a large following of those who agreed with him in doctrinal matters. However, many challenges yet remained. In some ways, 1527 was his most difficult year yet.

Physical Health

Luther had long been afflicted by poor health, particularly digestive problems. New health concerns arose in 1527. While preaching a sermon on April 22 he suffered a dizzy spell and had to stop. A few months later on July 6, he experienced a roaring in his left ear that led to an intense illness that caused him to feel his death was near. Similar attacks occurred intermittently throughout the year. He confided to Melancthon, "I spent more than a week in death and hell. My entire body was in pain, and I still tremble." Modern doctors believe Luther suffered from Meniere's Disease, a chronic inflammatory disease of the middle ear that can cause fatigue, vertigo, anxiety, and depression.

To make matters worse, the bubonic plague struck Wittenberg on August 2. Many evacuated, but Luther and his family felt it their duty to stay and care for the sick. Their home became a hospital. Within a few weeks, eighteen had died, including several close to Luther. Luther's son Hans contracted the plague, but survived. Katerina was pregnant at the time, later delivering their daughter Elizabeth on

December 10. Elizabeth was a sickly child and died within a year. Some feel Katerina's exposure to the plague was a contributing factor in Elizabeth's death. Perhaps to come to grips with his own decision to stay in Wittenberg, Luther published an essay—"Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague." (It is worth a read.)

Mental Health

Perhaps of greater significance was the ongoing depression that Luther faced. These bouts were a familiar nemesis that went back to his monastery days. His depression included profound loneliness, doubt, and despair that he called *Anfechtung*, an "assault" made by the devil against the hope of the Gospel. He did not lash out at God, however, for allowing such pain, but rather warned Christians to be on guard against Satan. "It is the devil who stirs up such abhorrence, fear, and loathing in his heart [and] . . . takes delight in making us deathly afraid, worried, and apprehensive." By turning to Scripture, Luther was able not only to endure trials, but also to thank God for using them to strengthen his faith. "One Christian who has been tried is worth a hundred who have not been tried, for the blessing of God grows in trials."

A Mighty Fortress

Luther was able to use the lessons of his own trials to write a hymn to comfort others in theirs. "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" was most likely penned in 1527. Although often referred to as the battle hymn of the Reformation, it was written at a time when the doctrinal enemies Luther faced were primarily other Protestants whose teachings threatened the truth of God's Word.

Knowing the personal trials that Luther experienced in 1527 may give one a new appreciation for this hymn, based on Psalm 46.

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



A SLICE OF LIFE IN THE CLC

SNAPSHOTS OF CONGREGATIONS FROM AROUND THE CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church Spokane, Washington

“Then He said, ‘What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.’” (Luke 13:18-19)

A mustard seed is not much to look at. Its diameter measures between one and two millimeters (that’s about the same as the thickness of a quarter). Yet from this small seed springs a bushy tree so large and sturdy that birds can actually build a nest in the branches.

In Luke 13, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to that small mustard seed. As we look at Bible history and Church history, we find God using that seemingly small voice of the Gospel to demonstrate His great power and great grace. God promised that through one man, Abraham, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Through that one little Baby lying in a manger, God promised to overcome death and hell. And by one Man’s death on the cross, God was reconciling the whole world of sinners unto Himself.

From the small mustard-seed message of that one Man, Jesus Christ, sprouted the New Testament Church.

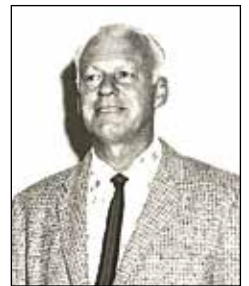


Millions of souls from all over the world have nested securely in the sturdy branches of the Gospel. All this has been accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the seemingly small voice of the Gospel.

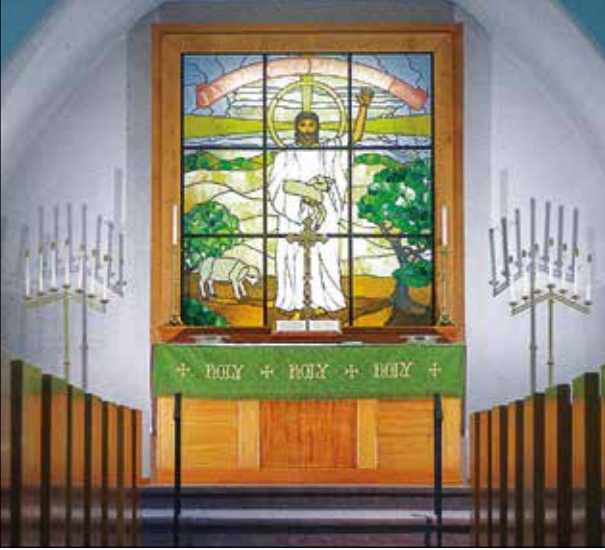
The history of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington is a history of the Lord of the Church accomplishing great things from small beginnings. A thorough canvassing

of the north Spokane area in 1942 offered promising results. An abandoned store was purchased and cleaned up for the first service, held on September 20, 1942. Though there were encouraging responses from Lutherans in north Spokane who were interested in attending, only eight souls were present for that first service.

Though attendance was small, that mustard seed of the Gospel had sprouted. After playing a game of touch football with some high school boys, Pastor M.J. Witt started the first instruction class with two of the boys and another man. This group chose the name *Trinity Lutheran*



Above: some members of Trinity. Above right, founding pastor of Trinity, Rev. Maynard Witt.



Church. On June 6, 1943, four souls were received into membership—the first on Trinity’s roster. The mustard seed was beginning to grow.

Trinity was incorporated in 1944, and it purchased property on the northeast corner of Wall and Wellesley in North Spokane, where the current church and parsonage are located. The new church was dedicated on November 16, 1947, with the choir of St. John’s Lutheran Church of Clarkston singing for the service. By 1950, 184 souls were nesting safely at Trinity, as the Word of God and the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ were being proclaimed. On July 1, 1957, Trinity was taken off mission subsidy and became a self-supporting congregation.

Also in 1957, out of love for the truth of the Word, Pastor Witt (who at the time was a district president for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) and Trinity withdrew from membership in the WELS. Trinity would become a charter member of the Church of the Lutheran Confession in 1960, and host CLC conventions in 1961 and 1966.

Over the years, Trinity has expanded its building size with a larger entryway and two basement classrooms. At one time, when a large number of children were in the congregation, Trinity explored the idea of establishing a Christian day school. While that never happened, Trinity has been thankful to have a sister congregation with a school—Gethsemane, only eleven miles away in Spokane Valley.

As Trinity approaches her seventy-fifth anniversary as a congregation, the names and faces have changed both in the pulpit and in the pews, but praise be to God that the mustard seed has not. The seemingly small voice of the Gospel continues to be proclaimed in north Spokane and beyond. Each summer, our vacation Bible school is thrilled to share the Word of God with over twenty children from the congregation and surrounding neighborhood. Like many of our smaller CLC congregations, Trinity is thankful to be able to share the Word with a larger audience through our YouTube and Facebook pages. Once a month, Trinity serves a preaching station in Withrow/Mansfield, a small farming



Teachers and children of the 2017 Vacation Bible School at Trinity.

community in central Washington. Trinity prays that this planting of the small seed of the Gospel in Mansfield will result in more souls finding a safe nesting place on the broad, strong branches of the Gospel.

Throughout the year, members and friends of Trinity enjoy gathering together for family time and fellowship. Notable among these occasions is our Ladies’ Appreciation Luncheon, served by the men of the congregation in February. In December, our Women’s Circle does a great job putting on a Christmas party and “white elephant” gift exchange.

Servants of the Lord at Trinity have included M.J. Witt (1942-1981), Kurt Luebke (1981-1989), Paul Schaller (1990-1996), Terrell Kesterson (1996-2011), and Nathan Pfeiffer (2011-present).

Should you find yourself passing through the Inland Northwest of eastern Washington on Interstate 90, stop by for services at Trinity, meet your extended church family, and join us as we nest in the branches of our Savior’s love.



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

Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession, Nepal (HCLCN)

[The following is a report from Pastor Raju Bhitrakoti, in his own words, about current activities in the HCLCN. The report is lightly edited for clarity.]

Working Experiences in Nepal

Nepal is one of the poorest and least-developed countries in the world. It is a mountainous country and life is challenging in the rural areas. Many places where we work do not have road access at all. The government is working to improve road connectivity. Rural roads are being constructed.

Politically, now the country has a strong and stable government. They are left-wing parties. The country is implementing federalism. It is new to Nepal. People are watching and hoping the new system does better for the people's rights and for development of the country.

Growth of HCLCN Churches in West Nepal.

HCLCN has been working in the central region of Nepal. Most of our churches are in the central region. However, the Lord has blessed us with some churches in the west. Western Nepal is least developed among all other parts of the country. We have new contacts in Dang, Rolpa, Salyan and Humla districts in the mid-west. Here are short notes on each district in the region.

Dang district:

The Lord has blessed us with a faithful man. His name is Nawaraj Dangi. He is learning at our institute. He is a hard-working person for the church. There is an expansion of the work in his area. People are coming from faraway villages. We had [stateside] mission helpers evangelize at the church. It is located in the center of other districts where we have churches. We plan to start a Bible institute at the church.

Salyan district:

There is a young man, Choodamani BK who is giving his full-time for the church. His church has about thirty



members. The church in this village is growing. People come to church for healing and deliverance from the bondage of devil. The Lord has worked in this village. The believers are healed and they are becoming strong and faithful members at the church. There is a need of training from the Word so that the congregation could have depth of spiritual teaching.

Rolpa district:

A faithful man named Bhog Bahadur Gharti started the church in the village. It was established about two years ago. There are about 26 members at the church. Since there are few churches here, the church seems to be growing soon. They need a roof for the church, and asked us to help them. We pray that the Lord provides the needs at the church and helps the leader at the church.

Humla district:

We have a leader who works at the local church. As the crow flies it is not very far, however it takes about five days just to get to the local church. There is a small number of Christians in the district. We hear the people come to believe in Christ and the number is increasing.



Left: four Nepalese women who were recently baptized (Pastor Bhitrakoti left). Top: attendees at a seminar in the Dang district. Above: attendees at the 2018 HBI graduation ceremony.

Himalayan Bible Institute (HBI)

HBI was established in January 2016. Back then we graduated five students who came to study from the Word with us for several years. The Lord has blessed the HBI and gave more students to study with. Over time, some of the people quit and others weren't regular in attending the classes. Starting with about fourteen, we ended with four students. We graduated four students on March 7, 2018. As we graduated five in 2016 the total number of graduates is nine.

We are planning to train ten students at the HBI this year too. We have six people ready and there are a few interested and we hope we get the ten students. We are also praying to start another training program for the churches in the west.

HBI aims to produce more workers for the harvest. We are praying and hoping that the Lord gives us faithful men

that would give their time for spreading of the Gospel to the millions of unreached and lost people in Nepal.

Challenges for Nepali Churches

Working in Nepal is becoming more challenging because of the anti-conversion law. The law forbids evangelism and conversion. There may come a time in Nepal when we would not be able to proclaim the Gospel publicly. We have heard of cases of arrest for sharing Gospel to the non-Christians. There are such reports now and then. It is discouraging news to all Christians, especially pastors and leaders of the churches.



Therefore, we would appreciate more prayers that would strengthen us to work for the Kingdom.

Raju Bithrakoti is a pastor and missionary in the HCLCN. His home is in Nepal.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JUNE 2018

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

Date	Verse	Reading	Comments
Jun 2	TLH 393	Jeremiah 51:42-50	Babylon would conquer Judah, but the victory would not last. God would rescue and restore His people.
Jun 3	TLH 396	Luke 8:40-56	Jairus and the the afflicted woman both found that those who depend on Christ are not left disappointed.
Jun 4	TLH 370	Galatians 3:1-11	We do not gain peace with God by human effort such as observing commandments, customs, or traditions, but through faith—just like Abraham.
Jun 5	TLH 42; LSB 721	Exodus 40:34-38	When the tabernacle and its furnishings were finished, the Lord made His presence known and demonstrated that He would lead His people.
Jun 6	TLH 454; LSB 914	1 Kings 8:20-30	When Solomon completed the temple (as God had promised he would), he prayed for God’s ever-present mercy and forgiveness.
Jun 7	TLH 457	Psalms 68:19-20	Even as troubles beset us daily, so also we have a Savior who daily shoulders those burdens for us.
Jun 9	TLH 318	Luke 9:46-48	If you think you are the greatest, it’s a sure sign that you are not!
Jun 10	WS 741	Galatians 5:13-18	We don’t use Christ’s forgiveness as an excuse to sin. Would that be any way to thank Him?
Jun 11	TLH 386	1 Kings 11:9-13	Solomon’s heart was not fully devoted to the Lord, but the Lord would still honor the promise He had made, in spite of the king’s unfaithfulness.
Jun 12	TLH 394	Psalms 71:9-18	Our confidence is in the Lord, no matter how young or old we are.
Jun 13	TLH 296	Proverbs 4:1-9	Pay attention to the words of people who are wiser than you are—God put them in your life to help you.
Jun 14	TLH 491	Ezekiel 2:1-7	We, too, speak God’s Word at times to those who rebel against it, but the fact that they rebel need not discourage us. Our responsibility is to speak.
Jun 16	WS 786	Luke 11:33-36	If you catch “darkness” coming out from you, then repent and look to Christ for forgiveness so that your whole body can be full of light.
Jun 17	TLH 398	Ephesians 2:1-10	God cleansed you and made you alive in Christ so you can do the good works which He has planned for you to do.
Jun 18	TLH 170	Leviticus 4:1-12	Just as the bull carrying the sins of the people was burned outside the camp, so Jesus, carrying our sins, suffered outside Jerusalem.
Jun 19	TLH 336	1 Kings 15:9-15	God was “number one” in Asa’s heart, even over his family. Wherever we find this kind of commitment, it is Spirit-worked.
Jun 20	TLH 217	Psalms 72:1-19	Jesus, our King, shall reign forever and ever! Hallelujah!
Jun 21	TLH 406	Proverbs 5:1-14	When God corrects you, understand that it is for your good—even for your eternal good.
Jun 23	TLH 320; LSB 762	Ezekiel 11:11-21	Yes, God would bring judgment against sin, but He would also be working to restore His people and give them new hearts of faith.
Jun 24	TLH 317; LSB 511	Luke 13:1-9	It is critical to recognize that you, too, are a sinner, not just “the other person.” All of us are called on to repent and believe the Gospel.
Jun 25	WS 790 LSB 738	Ephesians 5:22-33	God’s plan for marriage relationships echoes the relationship Jesus has with His believing children.
Jun 26	TLH 33;	1 Kings 19:9-18	Elijah is ready to give up, but the LORD is ready to lift him up! Isn’t that how it is so often with us, too?
Jun 27	TLH 431	Psalms 75	We give thanks to God who does not let the wicked utterly destroy the righteous.
Jun 28	TLH 331	Ezekiel 18:14-24	Unbelieving actions reveal an unbelieving heart, but the Lord does not want us to die in unbelief. He draws us away from evil to trust in Him.
Jun 30	TLH 281	Luke 15:1-10	It can be difficult and embarrassing to admit our sins, but to God it is cause for joy and celebration when a sinner repents.

Latest From the BELC

The largest church body with which the CLC is in fellowship is Berea Evangelical Lutheran Church of India (BELC). The BELC currently has 716 ordained pastors serving 442 churches and 1,284 preaching stations. There are approximately 38,000 members. The BELC currently ministers to people in four states in India: Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Odisha.

The main focus of the work in the BELC is the training of pastors to serve congregations and preaching stations so that they may equip their members to spread the Gospel throughout southern India. Training begins with two years of study at Martin Luther Bible School in Andhra Pradesh. The subjects taught at MLBS are similar to those taught at Immanuel Lutheran Seminary in Eau Claire. Around twenty students are accepted into the program every two years. In the spring of 2017, eighteen new pastors graduated and are now serving congregations. Twenty new students have just completed their first year of studies and look forward to graduating in the spring of 2019.

Training does not end once these pastors leave the classroom. The six district chairmen of the BELC organize and conduct monthly training seminars in each of the twenty-two districts to further equip these men to shepherd their flocks. A main focus of the work Missionary Peter Evensen does involves traveling to the various districts to teach at these seminars.

There is great willingness and desire to expand to include even more districts.

A new district of twenty-four pastors was started in Chengalpet in July of 2017. At our spring Mission Board meeting, we approved the addition of twenty new pastors in the Madanappalli district. There are many pastors who would like to take this training, but limited resources restrict the number of new men and new districts that can be added.



The BELC is also involved in various outreach programs. In 2017, around 14,600 children enrolled in annual VBS programs. The BELC also carries out a film outreach ministry in remote rural villages, tribal areas, and urban centers. Currently, they are showing the *Jesus* film (JesusFilm.org) which has been translated into Telegu and Tamil (the primary languages spoken in southern India). After showing the video, pastors preach the Gospel in detail. In 2017, the film outreach ministry was conducted in approximately fifty locations.

The CLC supports the work of the BELC in a number of ways.

- Through the general budget, the district chairmen receive a subsidy which finances monthly district trainings and travel to visit with the pastors. It also allows the chairmen to concentrate on their ministry work full time.
- Through project KINSHIP, MLBS students are sponsored, medical aid is offered, and widows are supported.
- The Mission Development Fund (MDF) helps fund a number of projects including VBS, church roofing, the purchase of bicycles and motorcycles for pastors, Bibles and Christian literature, and more.

A pro-Hindu majority party currently controls India's national government, and this has led to a crack-down on Christianity. Despite this, there are many open doors for the training of faithful pastors who will proclaim the truth of God's saving Word and start new congregations. There seems to be no end to the opportunities before us. We pray that the Lord would provide the necessary resources, manpower, courage, and zeal to continue in this field that is so ripe for harvest.



Robert Sauers is pastor of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Morris, Minnesota, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions

SEEN IN PASSING

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

Possible Seal of the Prophet Isaiah Found.

A bulla (impression of a seal in clay) discovered by archaeologists in Jerusalem has been identified as referencing the name of "Isaiah the Prophet." In a recent article, author and archaeologist Eilat Mazar argues that the broken piece of pottery bearing the seal may be the first known reference to the Prophet Isaiah outside the Bible. The artifact was discovered with 34 other bullae in a 2009 excavation between the Temple Mount and the City of David in Jerusalem. Another bulla, found only ten feet away, contained a clear reference to King Hezekiah, a contemporary of Isaiah. Mazar, Eilat. "Is This the Prophet Isaiah's Signature?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 44.2 (2018): 64-73,92. Print.



Photo by Ouria Tadmor, © Eilat Mazar.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Stephen Lutheran Church 50th Anniversary – July 22nd, 2018 – In grateful thanks and praise to the Lord for His grace, St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the San Francisco Peninsula (West Bay) in Mountain View, California is planning a 50th Anniversary celebration on Sunday, July 22nd, 2018. All are invited to attend, especially those throughout the CLC who are former members of St. Stephen – West. The schedule for the day is as follows:
Theme: "50 Years of Lifting High the Cross"
10am - 50th Anniversary worship service

(Guest Preachers: Pastor Bruce Naumann & Pastor Neal Radichel)

Noon - Meal & 50th Anniversary Presentations at the Adobe Building in Mountain View.

If you are planning on attending we ask you to please RSVP so we know how many to plan for the meal. Please contact Leslie Horrillo Phone: 408-891-3325
Email: lehorrillo@aol.com
-or- Pastor Luke Bernthal
Phone: 402-389-2147
Email: LBernthal@live.com



In accord with our usage and order, **Neal Radichel**, who was called by Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota, to be its pastor, was installed on April 7, 2018. Pastor Joseph Naumann preached. Assisting at the service were Pastors James Albrecht, Nathanael Mayhew and Robert Sauers, Pastors Emeritus James Sandeen, L. Dale Redlin and John Schierenbeck, and Teacher Douglas Libby. —Pastor Joseph Naumann.