

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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





CCLC students, see page 15

IN THIS ISSUE

February 2020 — VOL. 62 NO. 8

The Inspiration of Scripture	3
“We Are Beggars. This Is True.”	4
February 18, 2020 will mark 474 years since the death of Dr. Martin Luther in 1546.	
TLH Hymn 292	
“Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide”	5
Only One Ship, Only One Door	6
Big events have big results.	
Glorious Humiliation	7
By nature, none of us consider humiliation a good thing.	
THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC Part 3	
The 1957 WELS Convention	8
Grace Lutheran Church	
Live Oak, Florida	10
BEST JOB EVER	
It Has the Best Support (“I will be with you.”)	12
IN THE PIPELINE	
Cory Drehle	13
Bread of Life Readings, February 2020	14
Update on the Congregation Confessionnelle	
Lutheranienne Du Congo (CCLC)	15
Seen in Passing / Announcements	16

Get and give the gift of the Gospel

With a subscription to the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

ORDER SUBSCRIPTION ONLINE AT:

www.lutheranspokesman.org

Or mail subscription to:

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



The Lutheran Spokesman (USPS 825580) (ISSN 00247537) 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

Periodicals postage paid at Eau Claire, WI and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701-7134

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, David Bernthal, Timothy Daub, Wayne Eichstadt, David Fuerstenau, Frank Gantt, Norman Greve, Mark Gullerud, John Klatt, Ross Kok, Joseph Lau, Delwyn Maas, Bruce Naumann, John Pfeiffer, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Sam Rodebaugh, 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 {\$36.00} for one year; \$34.00 {\$50.00} for two years; \$50.00 {\$72.00} for three years; sent in bulk to congregations: \$15.00.

Send address or payment question requests to: lutheranspokesman@ilc.edu

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 2020. 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.

The Reliable Word

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” (2 Timothy 3:16)

The simple child of God takes those words at face value and knows that when he reads the Bible he is reading the very words of God. What a glorious truth and solid foundation for our faith! Since the Bible is God’s Word, it is completely without error, and we can depend on every word.

However, the inspiration of Scripture, and therefore also its inerrancy, has always been under attack by those who don’t want to submit to every word of Scripture. Those attacks continually get more refined, therefore we must define the truth ever more precisely.

Critics and skeptics have said, “Sure the holy writers were inspired,” but they mean the apostles and prophets were inspired like an artist or novelist, not that God breathed every word into the apostles and prophets. They might even say, “God gave them the thoughts but the writers used their own words.” That is why it became necessary to speak of *verbal* inspiration, indicating that the very words are given by God.

Then some false teachers said, “Yes, the Bible is verbally inspired in the parts that are authentic.” So they will say “The Bible *contains* God’s word.” Therefore we now speak of verbal *plenary* inspiration, which means that every single word in every part of the entire Bible is God-breathed.

In more recent generations, a more subtle deception has undermined the doctrine of inerrancy even among conservatives. These false teachers admit that the “autographs” (original manuscripts) of the Bible books were verbally and plenary inspired, but use the fact that we no longer have the originals to undermine the authority of Scripture. They imply that we can’t know for certain whether the Bibles we have today, which are translations of copies of the originals, are really God’s Word.

There is no need for any of this to cause doubt.

We have Jesus’ sure promise, “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*” (Matthew 24:35) Not even the slightest jot or tittle will pass away.

It is interesting and significant to note that by the time of Jesus and the Apostles, they had only copies of the Old Testament books, and they used a translation just as we do. Yet Jesus could confidently affirm, “*The scripture cannot be broken.*” (John 10:35) And, “*Your word is truth.*” (John 17:17) The Apostle Paul could reassure Timothy, “*From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation.*” (2 Timothy 3:15)

So don’t let the rambling of the critics cause you to doubt. He who has given us His Word in marvelous ways has also preserved His Word in marvelous ways, according to His promise. When we use a reliable translation, we can be sure we are reading God’s Word. There is ample proof of that fact in archeology and history and the multitude of manuscripts, but our greatest assurance lies in God’s Word itself. For the Holy Spirit has confirmed His Word in our hearts so we know and believe that God Himself is speaking to us in every word of Scripture.

Let us all treasure God’s Word and keep it in our hearts. Let us read and study it diligently, and allow it to guide our every step through life! For it is only the Word that can make us “*wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*” (2 Timothy 3:15)

Oh, keep us in Thy Word, we pray;

the guile and rage of Satan stay!

Oh, may Thy mercy never cease!

Give concord, patience, courage, peace.

Oh, grant that in Thy holy Word we here

may live and die, dear Lord;

And when our journey endeth here,

receive us into glory there.

(TLH 292:4,9)



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

“We Are Beggars. This is True.”

February 18, 2020 will mark 474 years since the death of Dr. Martin Luther in 1546. His tireless efforts and bravery, born from a heart set free by the Gospel of full and free forgiveness in Christ, were God’s instruments to shine this same Gospel on countless hearts and lives, including our own. Among his many accomplishments are these:

- **He sparked the fire of the Lutheran Reformation with the posting of his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517.**
- **He fanned the flames of this back-to-the-Bible movement through his preaching, teaching, and writing.**
- **He made the Bible accessible to the common man and woman by translating it into everyday German.**
- **He made provision for instruction in Bible teaching, for both adults and children, with his large and small catechisms.**
- **He defended the true faith against the attacks of the Roman church, at the risk of his own life.**
- **He authored many hymns and made the worship service understandable to laypeople.**
- **He and his wife, Katherine, provided a wholesome example of Christian family life.**

Luther did not die in one of the major cities of Germany, nor in Wittenberg, the town where he served as pastor and professor. Instead, he left this earthly life for the joys of heaven in the town of his birth, Eisleben. Even though he did not feel well, Luther had traveled to Eisleben in order to help settle a financial dispute between two brothers. He preached at the local church several times during this trip, even as late as three days before his death. On the evening of February 17, he retired with the prayer *“Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.”* (Psalm 31:5)

At 1:00 A.M., Luther was jolted awake with an apparent heart attack. Despite various efforts to help and soothe him, he only grew worse. Near the end, Justus Jonas, Luther’s friend and fellow reformer, took his hand and asked him “Reverend father, are you ready to die trusting in your Lord Jesus Christ and to confess the doctrine which you have taught in His name?” Luther responded loud enough for everyone in the room to hear, “Ja!” (yes). The Lord received his spirit into heaven at 2:45 A.M.

What would be a fitting way to remember a man of such stature and accomplishments? There is, perhaps, no better epitaph than the words which Luther himself wrote last. On a table next to his deathbed were a few notes on a scrap of paper, the final words of which were “We are beggars. This is true.”

His whole life was a testimony to the undeserved grace of God. In fact, he recognized that the human tendency to seek God’s favor through our works was found also in his own heart, and he fought against it:

“The world wants to win heaven from our Lord God by right, although he is causing the message to be proclaimed aloud throughout the world that he wants to give it to us for nothing. . . . But such fools we are; we want to give when we ought to take. Here the beggar comes to the mighty king and ‘begs’ from him; but he will not take alms from him for nothing; he wants to give him four pennies or lice for them. The world is just as mad and foolish. It wants to give to him who has given all and from whom it should receive all.”

Yes, in spite of his life of service to the Gospel, Luther knew himself to be a true beggar before God, yet one who was made fabulously wealthy through Christ’s righteousness credited to him. Each of us can learn from his example to come in true repentance before our God, while pleading only Christ. With the comfort of this Gospel we can then

pray in our own hour of death, as first Jesus Himself and later Martin Luther did, “Father, into Your hand I commit my spirit.”

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



TLH HYMN 292

“Lord Jesus Christ, With Us Abide”

In the three decades following Luther’s death in 1546, the biblical doctrines he had struggled to teach and uphold came under severe attack. No less than six significant church controversies marked this period in Lutheranism. At issue were matters such as justification by faith, conversion, original sin, good works, church ceremonies, and the Lord’s Supper. On July 22, 1577, the *Formula of Concord* was published. It was a work which presented and defended the true Scriptural position on these controversies.



One of the three principal authors of the Formula was Nicholas Selnecker (1530-1592).

Selnecker was an important theologian in his day and a graduate of the University of Wittenberg, where Luther had been so influential. Much could be written about Selnecker the preacher and pastor, but for this article, we are especially interested in Selnecker the musician and hymn writer, for he was also immensely gifted in these areas. Already a church organist by the age of twelve, at one point he even assisted in building up the famous choir at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig—a choir which the great Johann Sebastian Bach would lead some hundred years later.

His music and theology come together in his best-known hymn *Lord Jesus Christ, With Us Abide* (German: Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ). First published in Leipzig in 1589, the hymn is a defense of Scripture as the Word of God and a prayer that it would guide and sustain the Christian in life and death. Involved as he was in the controversies of the church, it is easy to see how a hymn such as this would have come from Selnecker’s pen.

Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide, / For round us falls the eventide; / Nor let Thy Word, that heavenly light,

/ For us be ever veiled in night. The first verse as well as the remaining verses are simple and direct in their poetry. O Lord, stay with us and let your Word be with us always!

In these last days of sore distress / Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness / That pure we keep, till life is spent, / Thy holy Word and Sacrament. The times and days in which we live grow steadily worse. Sometimes we wonder, “When Jesus comes again, will He even find faith on the earth?” (see Luke 18:8) The Lord works through the Word of

God and the visible Gospel (the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper) to keep us faithful.

A trusty weapon is Thy Word, / Thy Church’s buckler, shield and sword. / Oh, let us in its power confide / That we may seek no other guide! The Scriptures we have been given are the very Word of God, just as God wanted them written and containing everything necessary for our faith and life. The world around us offers many different spiritual paths, but only the Bible gives us the guidance of the true God! We pray that the church would always trust in Scripture rather than in the thoughts and opinions of man.

Oh, grant that in Thy holy Word / We here may live and die, dear Lord; / And when our journey endeth here, / Receive us into glory there. As Nicholas Selnecker knew so well, Satan does not rest, so battles over the Word of God will not cease. Scripture, however, will not pass away and the Lord will continue to use it to bring us to our heavenly home.



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*.

Only One Ship, Only One Door

Big events have big results. Generally, the bigger the event, the wider its consequences. The bombing of Dresden destroyed that city, impacted Germany, and perhaps intimidated the Soviet Union. But the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima changed our world. So also the Genesis Flood had world-wide results. All air-breathing life was destroyed, but eight people were saved alive. The topography of the earth was affected, along with weather patterns and plate tectonics. Consequential results indeed!

But St. Peter also drew a connection between that Flood and us today. Not only did the flood waters buoy up Noah's ark, saving the passengers inside, but the apostle also stated that those waters have an antitype—God's baptismal waters (1 Peter 3:21). Our Baptism does not just signify our salvation, it actually works faith and gives us salvation in Christ Jesus. Those waters do not wash our skin; they give us a clean conscience by removing the filth of sin.

Many people reject this saving miracle, even as many reject the universal Flood. Some state that almost every ancient culture had a "flood myth." So what's the big deal if Genesis adds one more? Others claim that Moses actually borrowed his account from earlier flood mythologies—namely the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. This seems implausible if not laughable. Just one detail should debunk that theory. The boat in the Mesopotamian account was reportedly cube-shaped, and not like a floating barge as was Noah's ark. God knew very well what would survive the boisterous waters of the flood. A boat shaped like a top-heavy cube would soon topple over.

No life boats needed.

Indeed, God gave to Noah instructions as to the size and shape of the ark, including the details that it was to have a window close to the top, three decks, and a single door

in its side (Genesis 6:16). Surely God knew that life boats and multiple emergency doors would not be needed—not on His boat. And all the animals that were brought into the ark no doubt were gathered up and led there by God Himself—two of each kind and seven of the clean kinds.

Only One Door.

If the ark can be likened to God's ship of eternal salvation, what remains striking is that there is only one such ship and one door by which one enters. Jesus testified that He alone is the Way to the eternal Father. St. Peter insisted that, except for the Lord Jesus Christ, *"there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12) To the minds of many, this seems outrageous, exclusive, and unfair. One TV evangelist, when asked if only Christ-believers were going to heaven (and not Jews, Muslims, and others), gave a repeated and very uncertain answer, "I just don't know." Many others voice the same opinion. What is needed is pastors and Christian people who do know. As there was one door in the ark, so there is One Door by which sinners can access heaven. And Jesus Christ is that Door, as He Himself testified.

As God rounded up and led specific animals to the ark, so also God by His Spirit calls, gathers, and leads His elect to the Door that is Jesus Christ. He is the Keel of the ship and the only Way to the Father because only He fulfilled all Law and atoned for all sin by His substitutionary death on the cross. Only He has redeemed and reconciled us to God with His own blood. Only He is our Savior, resurrected from death. Only He is the one Door in the side of the one ship of our salvation—the glorious ship named *Grace Alone!* This we must know and believe as receivers and proclaimers of righteousness.



David Fuerstenau is pastor of Holy Truth Lutheran Church in Ketchikan, Alaska.

Glorious Humiliation

“Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.”

(James 1:9-11)

By nature, none of us consider humiliation a good thing. When people say, “I feel so humiliated,” they don’t say it with a cheerful ring to their voice. In fact, the very definition of *humiliate* means “to cause a painful loss of pride.” And our sinful flesh will claw and bite and fight if the pain we experience has anything to do with our sinful pride. And so, by nature, humiliation is something that we fear and avoid. But James explains that it is in that painful, unpleasant humiliation that we can find our glory.

“Dirt poor”

James first addresses those Christians who are at the bottom of the social and economic ladder; the ones working hard every single day to put food on the table, with very few leftovers. “Dirt poor,” some would say. For those people at the absolute bottom in life, fears and concerns abound. Along with those fears comes the incredible temptation to get more, fast—by stealing, gambling, or cheating. Such hardship can cause people to become bitter and resentful toward those with greater means. And sadly, it can lead some people to absolute despair.

Instead, James tells the lowly brother, “Glory in your exaltation.” In doing so, James is pointing the lowly brother to Jesus, the One who was humiliated in the highest degree so that humble sinners might be exalted. No matter how poor or humiliated the Christian may become, he remains eternally wealthy through faith in Jesus. This is why Job could still praise God even after losing everything. It’s why Paul and Silas could sing hymns of praise while chained in prison. It’s why the early Christians could boldly walk into the Colosseum where lions were waiting to tear them to pieces. Yes, it’s in those life moments in which everything is stripped away and things are darkest that we are able to see

the riches we have in Jesus most clearly, most completely, most brilliantly.

James continues by addressing the wealthy Christian. The great and constant danger for the wealthy Christian is to think that his glory is tied to the size of his bank account. When the bank account is overflowing, there is the temptation for the rich man to think he can have anything, do anything, be anything he wants. Instead, James tells the rich Christian, “Glory in your humiliation.”

It’s a glorious thing to be told that we all pass away like the flower of the field because it reminds us of our mortality. It reminds us that we are not to live for this life only. It reminds us that since everything in life is passing away, we need to look someplace else for salvation. It reminds us that we need a Savior.

Whether a person is rich or poor does not matter. What matters is poverty of spirit. What matters is having a broken heart over sins. What matters is seeing how naked we stand before the judgment seat of God. And that ability to see one’s own nakedness and poverty and brokenness is a necessary and glorious gift from God. For when He opens our eyes to see that our hands are completely empty, He then is able to place into those empty hands the full atonement and complete righteousness of Jesus.

Let us then glory in the necessary pain of the loss of pride, for in that glorious humiliation we are best able to see Jesus. And in Jesus, we have been given the greatest wealth imaginable: eternal redemption.



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

THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC

One aspect of the discussion surrounding the “Joint Statement,” which will again be before us at our 2020 convention, is how much importance to give to the events that took place around the period 1955-1961 that led to the formation of the CLC. In this seven-part series, Professor Emeritus David Lau provides a digest of these events, excerpted from his book, “Out of Necessity.” We urge all CLC members—and particularly convention delegates—to re-familiarize themselves with this important period in our fellowship’s history.

The 1957 WELS Convention

The Wisconsin Synod President, Oscar Naumann, reported to the (1957) convention: “Many individuals, several conferences, and one entire District are convinced that we as a synod are guilty of disobedience to God’s Holy Word, because we have not as yet applied the injunction of Romans 16:17-18 to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.”

The floor committee dealing with this matter (at the 1957 WELS convention) . . . stated in their report to the convention: “We feel conscience-bound to declare publicly, that these principles, policies, and practices create a division between our synods which The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod alone can remove. Until these offenses have been removed, we cannot fellowship together with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as one body, lest our own Wisconsin Synod be affected by the same unionistic spirit which finally weakens and destroys all true doctrine and leads to indifference and liberalism concerning Scriptural truth.” The committee therefore proposed the following resolution to the convention: “Resolved, that we now suspend church fellowship with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16:17-18, until



THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC



Pastors P.G. Albrecht and M.J. Wit

the principles, policies, and practices in controversy between us have [been] resolved in a thoroughly Scriptural and mutually acceptable manner” (*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Convention, p. 143*).

It is probably safe to say that if the convention had accepted this resolution, there would be no Church of the Lutheran Confession today. The convention, however, defeated this resolution by a vote of 77 to 61, with eight delegates abstaining. The convention resolved instead “that we continue our vigorously protesting fellowship over against The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, because of the continuation of the offenses with which we have charged the sister synod, Romans 16:17-18” (*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Convention, p. 144*).

At this point during the 1957 New Ulm convention some of the protesters believed it was time to take a stand. On the morning after the vote was taken, Edmund Reim said: “I find myself compelled to discontinue my

fellowship with the Synod. I hope and pray that the Synod may yet return to its former ways and to full obedience to the Word of God, specifically Rom. 16:17-18. I trust that you will realize that I take this step, not in anger, but in deepest sorrow, and because I am constrained by the Word of God.”

“Let the evidence of our love be clear to all.”

M. J. Witt likewise declared to that convention: “Since the 1953 convention at Saginaw, the members of Trinity Lutheran, Spokane, Washington, and I as pastor have declared ourselves protesting members of the Wisconsin Synod. This Synod convention by refusing to adopt the Floor Committee No. 2 resolutions has chosen to continue in fellowship with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. This convention has thereby not only chosen an un-Scriptural course but has also become partaker of the very sin of unionism against which she has admonished The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod during the last two decades. . . . Out of love to the Wisconsin Synod and out of love and fear of the Word of God, I am compelled to announce my severance of fellowship from the official Wisconsin Synod.”

Paul G. Albrecht stated at the close of the convention: “. . . I cannot follow the course which the Synod now has chosen; for the Synod was wrong when it rejected the Report of Committee No. 2. . . . I cannot fellowship with those who have advocated the position which the Synod made its own last night.”

In the months that followed the 1957 convention of the Wisconsin Synod, other pastors and congregations withdrew from the church body.

In his essay for the tenth anniversary of the Church of the Lutheran Confession in 1970, M. J. Witt referred to the experiences of those who were the first to withdraw from their synods. He wrote: “Many of those who became members of the Interim Conference (also known as the Lutheran Spokesman Group) after the last part of the year 1959, did not experience the forlorn loneliness and anguish in the same way as those who withdrew in 1956, 1957, and 1958. There was no church group these men could join. There was no synod in existence with which they could affiliate. Those were the days of charged emotions. There was tearful loneliness and the search for a haven.” (*Tenth Anniversary 1970 Convention Essays*, p. 1 – Archives, File A-2)

Later in the same essay Pastor Witt indicated the main reason for those early withdrawals: “It was the holy Word of God which was violated when the synods from which

we originally came, continued in a fellowship which God forbade. God made it clear to us that every deviation from the Word is dangerous. He said: ‘A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,’ and again that every departure ‘will eat as doth a canker.’ That the doctrine which was violated is a non-fundamental one is not the issue in fellowship. That the teaching because of which we separated may be referred to as a peripheral teaching does not alter God’s exhortation and admonition to withdraw. The fact is that the deviation is the beginning of an attack upon the glory of the work and person of Jesus whose Word is ignored. It is the beginning of the devil’s modification and eventual destruction of the essential doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. Every departure from God’s Word disrupts and disturbs the purpose for which God gave Scripture to us, namely, to ‘make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.’ We did not want to be partakers of the evil deed of departing from God’s clear Word, and we did not want to be joined with such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ by ignoring and disregarding His ‘avoid’ and ‘withdraw.’” (*Tenth Anniversary 1970 Convention Essays*, pp. 6-7)

Pastor Witt continued with these words that are surely worth remembering today: “Let others say what they wish as to the reasons why we withdrew. Let them say that it was because we couldn’t get what we wanted. Let them say that it was a matter of personality clashes. Let them say that we were bitter. But let none of us ever conduct ourselves in such a way that the opponents can have a right to such claims. The six pastors who met in pastoral conference in Spokane in the fall of 1957 cautioned one another against bitterness, and it is worth repeating. ‘Bitterness and lovelessness are unbecoming to everyone who is a recipient of God’s grace in Christ. Our conduct and behavior ought to be such at all times that others may know that the love of Christ and love for His Word dwell in us. Let the gift of grace shine; let Christ be glorified in our lives; let the evidence of our love be clear to all.’” (*Tenth Anniversary 1970 Convention Essays*, p. 7)

David Lau is a retired pastor and professor. He and his wife live in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Grace Lutheran Church Live Oak, Florida

The hand of blessing of our gracious God has been and indeed remains over Grace congregation in Live Oak, Florida. Grace Lutheran Church is located in north Florida, in the center of the state, about twenty-five miles south of the Georgia border. The I-75 (the main north-south interstate) is about twenty miles away



The work started here in the late 1970's, and in the early 80's the present brick parsonage and parish hall were built. Many hours of volunteer labor from members of Grace and other CLC congregations helped in this endeavor.

Our wondrous God also supplied faithful and talented pastors who labored here over the years. Pastors John Reim, Michael Roehl, Wayne Eichstadt, Jay Hartmann, Stephen Sydow, and Karl Stewart have served their Savior here, and our God has blessed their efforts so that many have heard the Good News of their Savior Who lived for them, Who died for them, and Who rose triumphantly for them. We also thank God for Pastor Vance Fossum, who has served the congregation when it was vacant and at other junctures.

Live Oak has a population of about seven thousand. It is a well-churched area with various Baptist, Methodist, and Church of God congregations. There are several Christian schools, including Christian high schools.

Currently, most of our members live within the town of Live Oak or in close proximity. We also have members who live in Jacksonville, Florida, on the Atlantic coast about a

hundred miles from Live Oak. We have members in Deltona, Florida (north of Orlando), almost three hours south of Live Oak. Others live in Tallahassee (the capital of Florida) about a hundred miles west. We also have a couple who make the four-hour round trip almost every Sunday from southwest Georgia. Yes, God has granted to our members a strong,

abiding commitment to their Savior and to the ongoing work and support of Grace.

An ongoing joy at Grace is the Bible studies. We have a strong core of members who come out on Sunday morning. We have studies at other times of the week in members' homes, where we meet over the dining room table. We have a bi-weekly study in Middleburg (a suburb of Jacksonville). We have recently started a bi-weekly study in southwest Georgia, in Sale City. Yes, the words of our Savior-God are bearing fruit, calling people to faith and to a greater love and trust in Him as their Redeemer.

Over the past few years at Grace, one of the major emphases has been building up the church library. There are Bible commentaries, devotional books, books on creation/evolution, children's books, books on the Reformation, and so on. We also have added DVD's on many different Christian topics. This has served as a real blessing to the members and friends of the congregation, enriching their Christian knowledge and strengthening their faith in Christ Jesus. This has also helped members feel more confident in speaking to others about Christ and what He means to them. It also helps them offer Christian support

**An ongoing joy at Grace is the Bible studies.
We have a strong core of members who come out
on Sunday morning. We have studies at other times
of the week in members' homes, where we
meet over the dining room table.**

and encouragement to one another, as well as to family and friends.

We advertise in the local papers. A few of the members have distributed flyers and done canvassing in Live Oak and surrounding communities. We have had Easter for Kids, Christmas For Kids, grief seminars, and other seminars on various Christian topics. These have given us opportunities to speak of the love of God in Christ Jesus, to answer questions which people have about the Christian faith, and to introduce young and old to Him Who died and rose for them.

This past December, Grace had a booth at the annual "Christmas in the Square" event. It was an opportunity to talk to people, to hand out Christian literature, and to acquaint our neighbors with activities at Grace. The organizers of the event estimated that some 18,000 people visited this year. Good contacts have been made and the follow-up is ongoing.

My wife Doris and I are Canadian citizens. I am currently



in Florida on an R-1 visa (for non-immigrant religious workers). We are thankful for this opportunity to serve His people here in Florida and Georgia. I also have the call to serve Resurrection Lutheran Church in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Currently we alternate, serving about three months at each location. In both congregations we have dedicated laymen who lead the service when I am serving the other congregation. We thank God for these men who are willing to serve in this way so that

both groups are served, and the Word of God continues to be proclaimed. We also are thankful to our gracious God for Pastor David Reim of St. Paul, Vernon, British Columbia for helping at Resurrection when I am in Florida.



Thank you for this opportunity to tell you a little about God's work at Grace Lutheran.

Douglas Priestap is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Live Oak, Florida, and Resurrection Lutheran Church in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

BEST. JOB. EVER!

Are you a young person pondering a career? Have you considered becoming a pastor or a Christian day school teacher? This twelve-part series is meant to coincide with the work of the President's Committee on Partners in the Public Ministry (CPPM). Its aim is to help you think more deeply about the great importance—and many blessings—of the public teaching and preaching ministry.

It Has the Best Support

("I will be with you.")

It should be noted that, while the articles in this series are intended to encourage Christians—perhaps especially Christian young men—to consider the vocation of the public ministry, the reality is that we don't actually have a pastoral shortage problem. How could we, since it is the ascended Christ Who "gave gifts to men," and included among those gifts are "pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ?" (Ephesians 4:8,11-12) Christ has not scaled back His gift-giving, and He will not leave us short-handed in His work of gathering His elect. Jesus' words to His twelve disciples are still applicable in our circumstances: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide." (John 15:16 ESV)

If there is, in fact, a problem, then it is not with the number of pastors but with our own perceptions and attitudes concerning the necessity of, and the blessings bestowed through, the public ministry. We live in a world that is corrupted by sin, and this corruption is at work in us, too. So, while the unbeliever is consumed with thoughts of material benefits and temporal blessings, the Christian is not immune to such thoughts either. In other vocations, employers lure prospective workers with various incentives—health insurance, retirement accounts, paid vacation, and so on. Our churches have followed suit as we keep in mind the Lord's word that "those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:14) Such avenues of temporal support are our attempt to "share in all good things" (Galatians 6:6) with those who labor among us by publicly preaching and teaching God's Word.

Christ, however, does not "lure" or "incentivize" anyone into the public ministry. He uses no slogan or commission to gin up interest in this high calling. He simply takes possession of the individual's heart and mind through the



teaching and preaching of the Gospel. He then places that individual where He would have him serve in His kingdom with the promise that He will be with him and bless him in that area of service. Anyone who enters the public ministry for the kinds of material support that it affords will generally view that support with disdain, regardless how much is offered. Conversely, those who enter the public ministry for the sake of serving Christ will always find His blessings more than adequate.

Are there difficulties and stresses that arise in the public ministry? Yes, just as there are in other vocations. These difficulties and stresses, however, are always the result of sin, the very sin which Jesus died on the cross to take away. When we expose that sin through a right proclamation of God's Law and forgive that sin by preaching the message of the cross, Jesus' promise is that He is there with us, as our sure foundation, blessing His Word and building up His kingdom.

Here's the best part of this truth—the same Gospel that pastors are privileged to preach applies equally to them, because—let's face it—pastors are descendants of Adam, too. They get easily frustrated when things don't go as they plan. They get angry when someone says something mean. They get self-righteous when their faults are pointed out. They lie awake and worry about matters that are beyond their ability to control. Left to us, the church, as well as our own lives, would certainly end in ruin. How comforting it is to be able to lay one's head down each night and arise each morning knowing that Jesus, by promise, is with us through the same Gospel, forgiving our sins and preserving us unto eternal life. In that, pastors and teachers have nothing less and nothing more than what all believers have, which is Jesus.



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

IN THE PIPELINE

This series profiles the men and women who are in their final year of preparation for the public teaching or preaching ministry at our Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Cory Drehle

Age: 28

Program: Seminary

Year in School: Senior

Where were you born?

Liberty, Missouri.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in a town called Norborne, Missouri.

Where is your current home? Your home congregation?

I am a resident student on the Immanuel campus, and a member of Messiah Lutheran Church of Eau Claire.

Married? Unmarried? Tell us about your family.

My parents' names are Gerald and Kimberly. Dad does road work for the county, and Mom has been a teacher for quite a while. I also have two older brothers, Jordan and Devon. Devon is two years older than I am, and Jordan is two years older than Devon.

What hobbies, sports or extracurriculars interest you?

Fishing, football (more so playing than watching), model railroading, things like that.

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

For whatever reason, when I was in 4-H years ago, I took a clowning course. Because of that I know some basic tricks ranging from pantomime to making simple balloon animals. Unsurprisingly, there aren't many needs for these skills.

Which academic subjects especially interest you?

I found Christian dogmatics especially interesting because it covered a lot of ground on many subjects.

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

I was a sophomore in high school when the ministry first seemed like an actual possibility as a career path for me. Prior to that point, I saw ministry as a necessary job but not a job I'd be willing to even consider. I'm not entirely sure why it clicked that day, except for some of the Christian instruction I had growing up. I wasn't sure it was a good choice for me. Over the years following that



moment, I tried teaching at various opportunities, and I participated in different speech contests. To my surprise, I quite enjoyed those endeavors. These things, along with prayerful consideration, helped on the way here.

What have you appreciated most about your time at ILC?

It goes without saying that we are beyond blessed to have a school that is Christ-centered and does not budge in that stance, but I will say it anyway. The fact that all of the classes, the teachers, the students, and the staff go out of their way to demonstrate their love of God in all that they do, teach, and study both on and off the campus itself is something worth noting. To be a part of this school is an added statement to our already wonderful confessions of faith. Though we may take such things for granted, it is good to know that the Lord has blessed us with this gift.

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

Leaders of the church need willingness and humility. There must always be that willingness to study and apply God's Word daily and to do so faithfully. There must be the willingness to not only speak but also to listen, to not just teach but to be taught, to accept our wrongdoings as the past and focus on the saving words of the Gospel as the present and future. The future leaders of the church will also need humility, the recognition that God is the One in command, and that we are the mouthpieces. The focus of leaders now and in the future should always be on Christ and His message.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS FEBRUARY 2020

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Feb 1	TLH 458 (LSB 766)	Luke 11:1-13	How can we not be encouraged to pray? Jesus shows us what sorts of things we can talk to God about and assures us that He will answer us.
Feb 3	TLH 10; LSB 849	Luke 11:14-26	Jesus certainly can't be in league with Satan or under Satan's control if He is able to drive out demons.
Feb 4	TLH 283 (LSB 582)	Luke 11:27-32	Jesus' words are wiser than Solomon's and greater than Jonah's, so let's pay attention to them. Those who treasure Jesus' words are happy!
Feb 5	TLH 264 (LSB 658)	Luke 11:33-54	Who are those whose light shines into the world? Those who hear the Word of the apostles and prophets.
Feb 6	TLH 295 (LSB 579)	Judges 15:1-20	The Philistines did wrong against Samson, and he turned against them. For twenty years Samson served as a judge in Israel.
Feb 7	TLH 24; LSB 721	Judges 16:1-20	Again Samson suffered the consequences of allowing the advice of a heathen woman to influence his actions. It reminds us how important it is for men to have women who fear the Lord.
Feb 8	TLH 292 (LSB 585)	Judges 16:21-31	At the end of his life, Samson again turns to the Lord for help and strength. May we all be looking to the Lord in our last moments too!
Feb 10	WS 770; LSB 584	Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23	The Word of God is powerful and active, but when people reject it they lose out on its benefits. Blessed are those who receive it with joy.
Feb 11	WS 775 (LSB 578)	Matthew 13:10-17, 34-35	The Holy Spirit must give understanding of the Scriptures. Although the parables made it easier for Jesus' disciples to remember His Word, they didn't help those who had already rejected it.
Feb 12	TLH 574 (LSB 892)	Matthew 13:24-29, 36-43, 47-50	It's not our job to rid the world of the unbelieving, for God will eventually bring judgment on them Himself. In the meantime, pray for them and try to turn them from their evil ways.
Feb 13	TLH 505; LSB 654	Matthew 13:31-33	The Lord's work through the Gospel often starts small, touching only a few people, but over time more and more are brought to faith.
Feb 14	TLH 347 (LSB 743)	Matthew 13:44-46	Jesus, priceless treasure! We love Him above all else!
Feb 15	TLH 153 (LSB 451)	Matthew 13:51-58	Jesus brought saving truth, but the people would not listen.
Feb 17	TLH 651 (LSB 752)	Psalms 42	In days of trouble we long for the Lord to come and help us—even thirsting for Him, and He sends His faithful love.
Feb 18	TLH 329 (LSB 607)	Judges 20:1-36	This sad account leads up the end of the book of Judges. Israel descends again into the darkness of corruption and unbelief, so much so that God brings judgment on one of the tribes.
Feb 19	TLH 3 (LSB 902)	Psalms 43	When people around you are unfaithful, unjust, and deceitful, turn to the Lord and let Him be your dwelling place. Put your hope in Him and call upon Him.
Feb 20	TLH 568 (LSB 785)	Psalms 44	Israel complains of the troubles they have to face, but at the end of the Psalm an appeal is made to "God's faithful love." That's the right place to go looking for help!
Feb 21	TLH 557; LSB 539	Matthew 8:14-34	Jesus heals the sick and drives out demons, showing Himself to be the Messiah Isaiah had spoken about (Is 53:4).
Feb 22	TLH 385	Matthew 14:1-21	Although saddened by the death of John the Baptist, Jesus' compassion for souls is so great that He preaches the Good News to over 5,000 of them—and gives them dinner besides.
Feb 24	TLH 649 (LSB 715)	Matthew 14:22-36	When Peter's faith began to falter, Jesus was there immediately to rescue Him. Isn't that how it is with us too?
Feb 25	WS 798	Psalms 45	This is a wedding song for a great king. As all the wonderful things about this king are listed, it is hard not to think also of Jesus, the greatest King of all.
Feb 26	TLH 262 (WS 774)	Psalms 46	After Psalm 23, this is probably the most frequently sung Psalm in the world today—thanks to Martin Luther.
Feb 27	TLH 388 (LSB 570)	Matthew 15:1-20	The Pharisees thought they were especially holy in the eyes of God because they went above and beyond the requirements of the commandments. The problem was that inwardly their hearts were still full of sin.
Feb 28	WS 779 (TLH 32)	Matthew 15:21-28	In contrast to the Pharisees, here is a woman with true faith in her heart, as shown by her unshakable confidence in Christ's grace.
Feb 29	TLH 31; LSB 535	Matthew 15:29-39	Again Jesus has compassion on a great crowd of people. Again He gives them dinner too!

Update on the Congregation Confessionnelle Lutheranienne Du Congo (CCLC)

For the first time since January 2012, a CLC missionary was able to visit our fellow Christians in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Missionary Todd Ohlmann had been unsuccessful over the past few years in his attempts to obtain a visa to enter the DRC due to political unrest in the country. Finally, in September, Missionary Ohlmann was granted a visa. In November he, along with Missionary Peter Evensen, traveled to the DRC.

Missionaries Ohlmann and Evensen spent seven days working with Pastor Gaston Yumba Lumbala, president of the Congregation Confessionnelle Lutheranienne Du Congo (CCLC). The visit included a three-day pastoral training seminar at the new seminary facility in Ntonda, evangelism outreach, and a full day of meetings and discussion with Pastor Yumba and the CCLC leaders.

Over the past four years, the Mission Development Fund (MDF) has sent \$50,000 to help the CCLC develop and build a facility for the training of pastors. The plan was to build the seminary in the village of Ntonda, but Pastor Yumba could not get permission to build there. So, he used about \$3,000 to construct a temporary building in the village of Whisky to serve as the seminary. Classes are held five days per week at Holy Trinity Lutheran Seminary from April through October. Seven students completed their third and final year of classes this past October.



They are now serving congregations under Pastor Yumba's supervision. They will be ready for graduation/ordination in March. Missionary Ohlmann is planning to attend the service.

Eventually, Pastor Yumba was permitted to build in Ntonda. He is currently constructing a large building that will serve as seminary classrooms, dormitories, offices, a library, a kitchen, a chapel, and the CCLC headquarters. This is being paid for, in part, with funds from the MDF. Once this building is completed, the building in Whisky will be used as a parsonage/office/classroom for the resident pastor of the church there.

Pastor Yumba reports that there are as many as fifteen men willing to begin seminary classes in April. In December, the Board of Missions approved sponsorship of up to fifteen new students through KINSHIP. We praise the Lord that there are so many men willing to train to be faithful preachers and teachers of God's saving Word.

We pray that the Lord would continue to bless the work of the CCLC and that the door would remain open for our missionaries to make regular visits.



Robert Sauers is pastor of Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions

Top: a seminar being held for pastoral students in the new seminary building in Ntonda. Above: exterior of the new building.

Lutheran Spokesman

501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701

SEEN IN PASSING

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

Evidence Found for Biblical Account of the Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians.

"Archaeologists excavating on Mount Zion in Jerusalem have uncovered evidence of the Babylonian conquest of the city, appearing to confirm a Biblical account of its destruction. Academics from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte made significant finds, including ash deposits, arrowheads and broken pieces of pots and lamps. The most surprising discovery, however, was an item of jewelry, which appears to be a tassel or earring with a bell-shaped upper portion, the researchers said. Shimon Gibson, co-director of the university's Mount Zion archaeological project, told CNN that the recovery of the rare piece of jewelry is the first time that archaeologists have uncovered signs of the 'elites,' appearing to confirm Biblical descriptions of Jerusalem's wealth prior to the conquest in 587-586 BC."

Ashes are not uncommon in archaeological digs, said Gibson, and may indicate refuse from ovens, or burned garbage. But there would be no reason – other than a violent battle – for such ashy layers to contain weapons or jewelry. "Nobody abandons golden jewelry and nobody has arrowheads in their household garbage," said the archaeologist. Robinson, Matthew. "Archaeologists find evidence of Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem -- as told in the Bible." *Travel*. CNN.com, 12 Aug., 2019. Web. 3 Dec., 2019.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Great Lakes' Teachers' Conference "Winter Retreat" will be held Friday, February 14, 2020, at Boerner Botanical Gardens, 9400 Boerner Dr, Hales Corners, Wisconsin. Messiah Lutheran School will serve as host. Greeting will be at 8:30 followed by presentations from 9:00 until 3:00. Lunch will be provided. Additional information is available by contacting Principal Ted Quade at tedquade@gmail.com.

Nominations for ILC President: The Board of Regents invites nominations for the office of President of Immanuel Lutheran College. The current term of Professor Steven Sippert concludes on June 30, 2020. He has requested that he not be considered for another term. We thank him for his faithful service in this key administrative function at our campus. All pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of the CLC are entitled to nominate a man from the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College to serve a two-year term beginning July 1, 2020. Nominations are to be received by email or letter no later than midnight February 15, 2020 (extended deadline, letters postmarked February 1, 2020) to: Mr. James Burkhardt; 217 Windy Lane; Rockwall, TX 75087; email: jeb6217@yahoo.com. — James Burkhardt, Secretary, ILC Board of Regents

Call for Nominations: Pastors, professors, male teachers, and voters of congregations within the Church of the Lutheran Confession are invited to nominate individuals for the following synodical offices to be elected at the 2020 CLC Convention:

- CLC President
- CLC Vice-President
- CLC Moderator
- CLC Secretary
- Board of Trustees—Called Servant
- Board of Trustees—Lay Member
- Board of Regents—Called Servant
- Board of Regents—Lay Member
- Board of Missions—Called Servant
- Board of Missions—Lay Member
- Board of Education—Teacher Member
- Board of Education—Lay Member

Member nominations will be received January 1, 2020 through March 31, 2020. Nomination forms, lists of eligible called servants, and submission information are available on the clclutheran.org website. — Pastor Paul D. Nolting, Moderator

Correction: In the December profile of Gift of God Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia (LS Vol 62, No. 6, pp. 10-11), we omitted that fact that Pastors Ralph Schaller and Michael Wilke were also among those who faithfully served this congregation over the years. We regret the omission. - Ed.