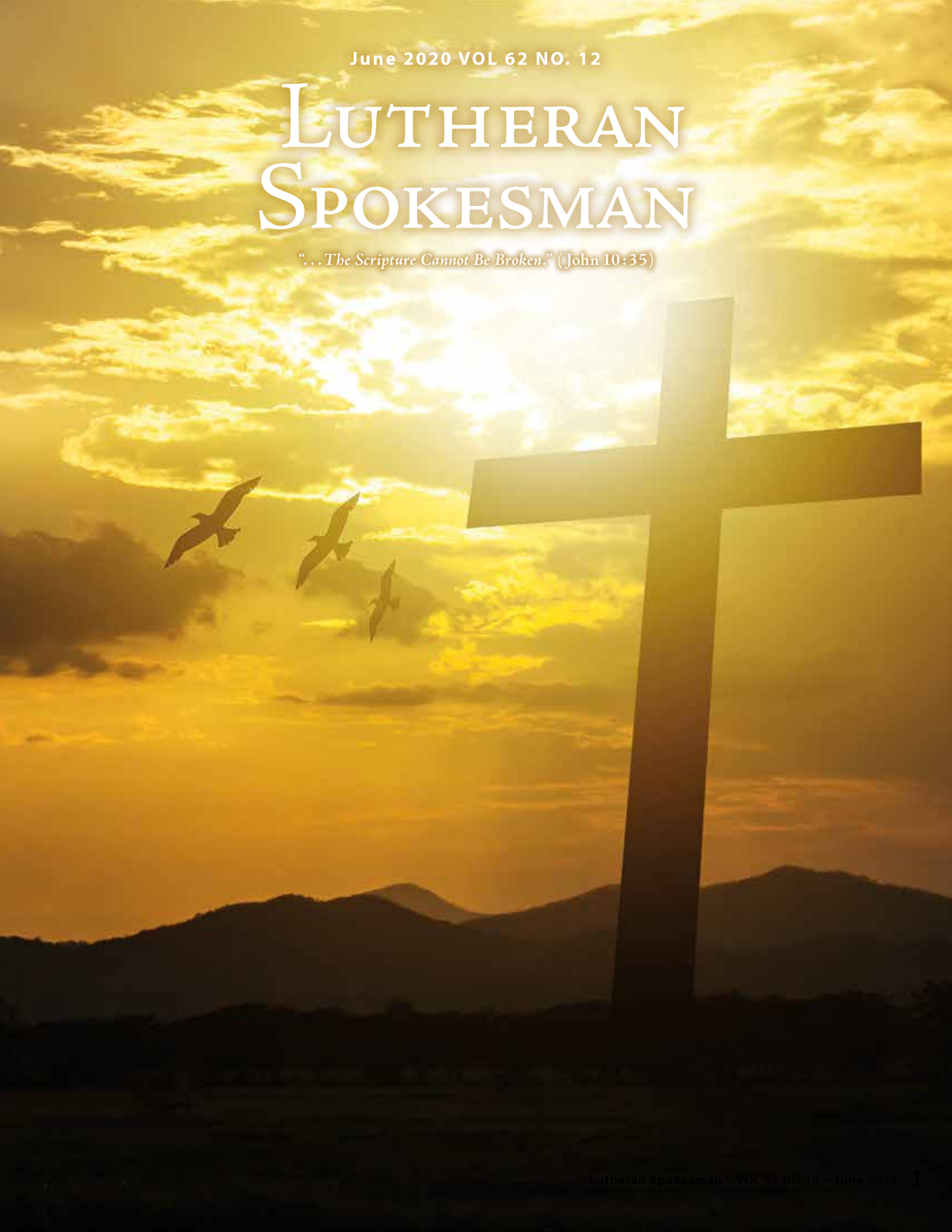


June 2020 VOL 62 NO. 12

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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





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Stand in Awe of Our Triune God

*“Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants
of the world stand in awe of Him.”*

(Psalm 33:8)

When we contemplate the greatness and glory of God, how can we do anything but stand in awe of Him? We stand in awe of His power when we see how He created the whole universe and everything in it simply with His Word. We stand in awe of His love when we consider all the good things He has created for us to use, and how He takes care of us daily. We stand in awe of His grace and mercy when we ponder how He gave His only-begotten Son into death for us rather than condemning us forever for our sins.

*There is much to stand in awe
of when we consider all the
qualities of God, not the least
of which is His triune nature.*

A couple of Jehovah’s Witnesses came to our door, and I talked to them about the Trinity. They pulled out a pamphlet to show me how artists have crudely tried to visualize the Trinity. There were pictures of three headed statues and other ridiculous things.

They suggested that the very idea of the Trinity was ludicrous because there is nothing in all the world like it. How can we believe in something we cannot comprehend?

How foolish to think that because human beings can’t relate to the Trinity or comprehend it, it can’t be true. We all believe in light. We know it is real, our lives depend on it, yet the greatest scientists still do not fully understand the nature of light. There are many things we know about it, but we can’t fully explain what it is.

God is so vastly greater than we are that we should not expect to be able to comprehend Him. King David writes, “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable.” (Psalm 145:3)

**There is something wonderful
and reassuring about knowing that
God is beyond our comprehension.**

The fact that He is so much greater than we are makes Him truly worthy of our worship and praise. It also makes us confident that He is able to handle all the problems and questions that are greater than we are. We can fully rely on Him.

The Bible emphasizes over and over that there is only one God, and that God is One. Yet it routinely speaks of three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as God. The three are not identical, they are distinct and have their own areas of work for our salvation, yet they are one God. They don’t each make up a part of God, for we read that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ (Colossians 2:9). How this can be we leave to Him. We simply stand in awe of Him in childlike faith.

When Solomon dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem, he said, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath.” (1 Kings 8:23 ESV) How wonderful to know and trust the one and only God over all! We stand in awe of Him, trust Him completely, and give all praise to Him with joyful hearts.



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

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS — COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The following was written by Pastor Bruce Naumann as a response to a request posted on an online forum frequented by CLC members.]

God-Given Rights and Responsibilities During the Pandemic

Dear Christian Friends,

I've been asked to provide some brief comments concerning our government's instructions, during this time of preventing the spread of COVID-19, to refrain from public gatherings. How are we to respond to this, when our Lord instructs us to gather regularly for Christian fellowship?

Various news sources have reported concerning congregations who have held regular worship services and have been cited by authorities for disobeying the government's stay-at-home orders. It is disturbing to read of whole congregations, for instance, receiving fines for participating in drive-in services during which the people all remain in their cars with the windows rolled up. Some pastors have even been threatened with arrest. Should we not "obey God rather than men"? (Acts 5:29) There are several principles that come into play as our CLC congregations consider these matters.

1. We certainly do have clear directions from God's Word to gather regularly for worship and Christian fellowship:

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

2. We also have the Lord's instructions to honor and obey our God-given government:

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves." (Romans 13:1-2)

3. The same government which the Lord tells us to obey has spelled out our freedom of religion, and the right to peaceably assemble, in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,

or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

4. We have directions from our Lord to consider the safety and well-being of our neighbors, in a spirit of self-sacrifice:

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

(Philippians 2:3-4)

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

(Matthew 22:39)

Given these principles, some of which seem to conflict with others, what is our best course of action? This is a matter of Christian reflection and good judgment, one that each congregation must consider for itself. One example of how to do that is found in the carefully-worded announcement by Messiah, Eau Claire, on its website:

"Messiah's 'in-person' worship services have been suspended until further notice, in cooperation with coronavirus prevention efforts."

In cooperation with is the key phrase. We reserve our privilege to obey God rather than men, according to the Bible. We reserve our right to peaceably assemble, according to the Bill of Rights. At the same time, we recognize our obligation to help our fellow citizens by participating in efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. For that reason we are willingly cooperating with anti-infection efforts. Meanwhile, we are thankful to our Lord that He has given us the means to help support each other with the Word of God, even at a distance, through online services, phone contacts, and regular mail.

We eagerly look forward to the day when we can assemble together for worship once again in person, after the danger is sufficiently past. When that day comes, we will be gathering because of the Lord's direction, not because governmental regulations allow it.



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

TLH 245, LSB 571

“God Loved the World So That He Gave”

Jesus ended His Sermon on the Mount with an illustration involving two men who built houses; one built on rock, the other on sand. The house built on rock withstood the onslaught of rain, flood, and winds and remained standing, while the one built on sand was destroyed. Whoever hears His Word and takes it to heart, Jesus says, is like the wise man who built on rock (Matthew 7:24-27).

The unknown author of our hymn used the same picture of faith and trust in Jesus Christ, describing Him as the “Ground of faith,” (stanza 2) and again, “the firmest ground of faith” (stanza 5). When our trust for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life is in Jesus, it is founded on ground that is rock solid, that will never give way. He is such firm ground for our trust because He is the only Son of God, sent by the Father to save the lost.

*Christ Jesus is the Ground of faith,
Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All that confide in Him alone
Are built on this chief Cornerstone.*

This hymn is based on John 3:16; the opening stanza is a paraphrase of that precious summary of the Gospel:

*God loved the world so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save
That all who would in Him believe
Should everlasting life receive.*

The Lutheran Hymnal includes this hymn in the Trinity section. This placement is appropriate because in John 3:16 Jesus teaches that it is God the Holy Trinity that is the sole source of our salvation. God the Father out of love for the lost and condemned world of sinners sent His only Son to redeem them. And He ordained that it should be by believing in His Son that sinners should be justified. That believing is the work of the Holy Spirit.

*God would not have the sinner die,
His Son with saving grace is nigh,*

*His Spirit in the Word doth teach
How man the blessed goal may reach.*

This Trinitarian expression of the Gospel shows the importance of the teaching of the Trinity in Christian theology. In the Bible God reveals His nature as three Persons in one Godhead. The doctrine of the Trinity cannot be set aside or reduced to fit within the limitations of human reason without corrupting the teaching of who God is. It is in the teaching of the three Persons that God reveals His love for mankind. Therefore, to deny the doctrine of the Trinity is to deny the Gospel.

The connection between the doctrine of the Trinity and the Gospel is shown also in the Lutheran Service Book which places this hymn under the heading of Justification.

The importance of the doctrine of the Trinity to our faith and salvation is shown in stanza 5:

*If thou be sick, if death draw near,
This truth thy troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves my soul from death;
That is the firmest ground of faith.*

As we write, our world is in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The spread of the potentially deadly coronavirus is bringing people—young and old, rich and poor—face to face with their mortality. For believers this need not be terrifying, for we know God the Father Who loved us and sent His Son to die for us. We know God the Holy Spirit Who was poured out on us in our Baptism, Who has opened our hearts to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

With this saving faith in the one true and living God, we can at all times and in all situations of life sing,



*Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To Thee, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally!*

John Klatt is a retired pastor. He lives in Watertown, South Dakota.

Counterintuitive Healing

In my younger days I worked for the US Soil Conservation Service. One of my tasks was to check on the stands of perennial grasses in recently planted fields that were part of the Conservation Reserve Program. Since one tract consisted of about eleven square miles, I used a three-wheeler for mobility. I quickly learned the skill of counterintuitive steering: to turn left I had to lean right.

Scripture contains the accounts of many amazing miracles. One that might come to mind is how Jesus healed a blind man by smearing mud on his eyes. If not counterintuitive, it's at least unexpected.

2 Kings 2:19-22 brings us another example of a counterintuitive miracle. Shortly after the dramatic ascension of the prophet Elijah into heaven, Elisha, his successor, was approached by the men of Jericho. They desperately needed help. They readily admitted that their living conditions in the city were pleasant, but with a couple of caveats: the water was bad and their fields were barren.

Elisha instructed the men to bring him a new bowl with salt in it. He then went to their water source into which he cast the salt. Then Elisha said, *"Thus says the Lord: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'"* And thus the water was healed and remained healed.

We do not doubt or question this miracle of God.

Not for a moment! But we might wonder about the counterintuitive nature of it. Jericho was not that far away from the super-salty Dead Sea, so we might suppose that the spring or well in question was brackish, unfit to drink and use on the fields. To heal brackish water with more salt seems counterintuitive, if not plain foolish. Yet God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform—they are His own ways, mysterious as they might seem to us.



It is worth mentioning that the prophet Isaiah used the same Hebrew word for "heal" in verse 5 of his great Gospel chapter (53): *"The chastisement for our peace was upon Him [Messiah], And by His stripes we are healed."* This is a wondrous Gospel proclamation, yet the world despises it. Atonement and redemptive healing through a man's blood makes little sense to most. Salvation without any added works on man's part seems counterintuitive to the natural human mind. But Christ and His healing wounds are part of the Gospel mystery, which St. Paul said was not just counterintuitive to the unbelieving mind, but utter foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18).

The water source in Jericho left the fields unproductive. But then God healed it. In the spiritual field, our life is barren of fruit without our Savior, as Jesus said, *"Without Me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5) By nature, no sinner can bring forth fruits of righteousness unless he has been healed. No person can be fruitful unless he abides in Christ and Christ in him. But in the Christ-Vine he bears much fruit. And this healing, this faith, and this fruitfulness are totally of God's free grace.

But that also is counterintuitive, and perhaps explains why so many reject it. If it's free, it must be worthless! Which reminds me of the man who had five puppies to give away. So he advertised "Free puppies," but with not a single taker. Then he changed his sign to something more counterintuitive: "Five free puppies: four cute, one ugly." Within hours all five were taken.

Our Redeemer-God, with healing in His blood, offers us free salvation. To the world it is judged worthless.

But to us ugly sinners who believe in counterintuitive healing, it is our new life and our most precious treasure.

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



Active Listeners

*“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his
natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind
of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is
not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”*

James 1:22-25

A child’s lack of active listening often causes great frustration for his parents. When a child refuses to listen to his parents, he’s also sinning against God’s Fourth Commandment. However, when the child listens and lovingly obeys, God’s commandment is kept, and the home is that much more calm and pleasant. For just as the act of disobedience breeds frustration and chaos, the act of obedience promotes goodwill and peace between parent and child.

When it comes to active listening, our text reveals that there’s much more at stake than a peaceful home life. James says that we are deceiving ourselves if we’re hearers only. Deceiving ourselves about what? By being hearers only we’d be deceiving ourselves about our faith.

Throughout his epistle, James is concerned about those with a dead faith, those who confess with their mouths but have no faith in their hearts. They believe that giving God a little attention on Sunday morning ought to be enough to stem His wrath. But James points out that if God’s words reach our ears but never penetrate our hearts, then we’re fooling ourselves. Such a faith is not a living, saving faith; it’s dead.

James continues with a relatable illustration. How easy it can be to forget what we see in the mirror, as when a man forgets the little tissue he put on the cut he received while shaving, or the mom distracted by her children who forgets to put up that last strand of hair in her braid or bun. How easy it is also for the sinner to hear the terrors of the Law and the horrible effects of sin, and then go about his day or week forgetting all about those fearful truths which had greatly worried him just a short time before.

“But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues

in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” The “perfect law of liberty” is the Gospel. God’s Law threatens, punishes, and keeps us enslaved to fear and terror. Only in the Gospel are sinners liberated.

We are told to “look into” this perfect law of liberty. This is the same verb that describes how Peter and John stooped down and looked into Jesus’ empty tomb on Easter morning. The same verb used by Peter to share that in the Gospel there are “*things which angels desire to look into.*” (1 Peter 1:12)

The one who “looks into the perfect law of liberty” looks intently with heart and mind set on searching it out, discovering it more and more. Such “looking into” then is the blessed gift from God’s grace of a living, active, breathing faith.

Being a “doer of the Word” doesn’t mean we never sin; rather, it means that we care deeply when we do. It means repentance and faith. Being a doer of the Word means “looking into the perfect law of liberty” and gasping with delight at this truth: sinner though I am, God loves me still!

Finally, being a doer of the Word means striving to put God’s will into practice against the will of our sinful flesh that would have us be hearers only. What a victorious blessing it is when by God’s power and grace we triumph over our old man in keeping God’s Word! Dear Jesus, may we all be so blessed to be active listeners to Your Word! Amen.



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 next 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.

1960 and Beyond

The Wisconsin Synod held its convention in 1961 at Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee. By this time the CLC was an organized church body with its own school, its own boards, and its own administration. The big question was what the Wisconsin Synod was now going to do about its relationship with the Missouri Synod. Although the Wisconsin Synod had declared already in 1955 that the Missouri Synod was causing divisions and offenses contrary to Biblical doctrine, it had never carried out the step that God’s Word demanded when such is the case. What would it do in 1961?

About 4:30 P.M. on August 17 the convention delegates passed the following resolution by a vote of 124 to 49: “That we now suspend fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16:17-18” (Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, p. 198). It would seem that the Wisconsin Synod was finally ready to take the action which its president had called for in 1955, declaring in his presidential report at that time, “For those of us who have been closest to these problems, it appears quite definite that we must now obey the Lord’s Word in Romans 16:17” (Reports and Memorials Twenty-Third Convention August 10-17, 1955, p. 13).

We need to remember, however, that after the 1959 convention the following erroneous principle became the catalyst for continuing fellowship with the Missouri Synod: “Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother or church body demands recognition for their error.” The supporting “Whereases” as well as the discussion on the floor of the convention indicate that in the minds of many the real reason for the suspension of fellowship was that “an impasse” had been



THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC

reached in the doctrinal discussions with representatives of the Missouri Synod. In other words, the conviction had been reached that admonition was of no further avail.

A few days later, August 23-25, the CLC held its second convention in Spokane, Washington. In its report to the convention the CLC Board of Doctrine stated, “The recent convention of the Wisconsin Synod passed a resolution of suspension which gives rise to the hope that the membership of that Synod may be seeking to rectify a situation that has caused much grief and concern. Over this possibility we sincerely rejoice.” The report continued, “This suspension of fellowship does not in itself remove the real issues that are involved in our relations with the Wisconsin Synod” (Minutes of the Second Annual Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, Appendix V).

The convention adopted the report of the Board of Doctrine and added this statement: “We mention the issues that lie between Wisconsin and ourselves, namely: deviations from the Scriptural doctrine of Church fellowship and the doctrine of the Clarity and Authority of the Scriptures, as well as instances of violation of the sanctity of the call” (Minutes of the Second Annual Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, p. 9). In the *Lutheran Spokesman* of January 1962, CLC President Paul G. Albrecht clearly explained the nature of these issues.

On the issue of church fellowship Albrecht explained, “The Lord says, Romans 16:17: Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them, that is, take careful note of them, which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them, have no fellowship with them, not tomorrow or next year or when you reach the conviction that admonition is of no further avail, or when a majority of convention delegates reaches this conviction,

but when you see what they are doing. . . . There is nothing in Wisconsin's recent suspension resolution that would show that Wisconsin has receded from the unscriptural position to which she has clung and which she has stoutly defended."

It was Wisconsin's interpretation of Romans 16:17-18 that caused the CLC to charge the Wisconsin Synod with undermining the clarity and authority of Scripture. The question had been raised in the Wisconsin Synod as to whether Romans 16:17-18 should be followed, or whether the Synod owed a debt of love to the Missouri Synod and should therefore postpone suspension. One set of Scripture passages was pitted against another set, thus confusing the matter.

CLC President Albrecht and WELS President Oscar Naumann began in February of 1962 to arrange discussions of the issues that separated the two synods. The basic problem in arranging meetings between the two synods was that the Wisconsin Synod representatives seemingly wanted to avoid any discussions that would bring to light discrepancies between the Bible's teaching on church fellowship and their official synodical actions in the years from 1955 to 1961. In response the CLC Board of Doctrine stated, "We cannot undertake to discuss expressions of principle with Wisconsin at this point without reference to past practice and the expressions of principle which supported such practice. The Wisconsin "Theses on Church Fellowship," whatever their merits otherwise, do not focus upon the immediate point of our controversy. In the specific area of our differences they are subject to varying interpretation. If they are declared to mean what the CCF (Concerning Church Fellowship, the CLC document) says in regard to that issue, their adequacy would have to be tested against the other official pronouncements of Wisconsin as well as its actions between 1955 and 1961. Failing this, our discussions would expose us to the great danger of reaching agreement in words without agreement in substance. This risk we cannot in good conscience accept" (Church of the Lutheran Confession – Seventh Annual Convention Proceedings, pp. 22-23).

In an effort to pinpoint the specific doctrinal deviation on the part of the Wisconsin Synod, the Board of Doctrine in April of 1968 sent a lengthy letter to the WELS Commission on Doctrinal Matters. The history of the controversy was summarized, and the statement was made: "The question dividing CLC from the WELS is whether the directives of Scripture admit of a continuing fellowship relation, protesting or otherwise, with a church body known

and acknowledged to be engaged in the teaching of error and in unscriptural practice, while a protracted course of admonition is being pursued. The WELS has defended such a course of action; the CLC . . . rejects such a policy" (Church of the Lutheran Confession Eighth Convention Proceedings, p. 23).

The 1992 CLC convention declared, "1. We affirm that ever since the formation of the CLC in 1960 there has been a doctrinal difference between the CLC and the WELS/ELS on the matter of termination of fellowship with church bodies that have become causers of divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, cf. Romans 16:17-18. 2. We are convinced by Scripture (Gal. 5:9; 1 Thess. 5:21-22) that in order to resolve doctrinal differences it is necessary that previous official false statements and actions be clearly rejected. This conviction is reinforced by a study of church history. 3. Since in the correspondence of the past biennium the representatives of the WELS/ELS have refused up to this point to acknowledge that this difference which separates us is a matter of doctrine, we urge the Board of Doctrine to terminate the present discussions with the representatives of the WELS/ELS, unless such discussions address this specific doctrinal difference from the outset" (Church of the Lutheran Confession Twentieth Convention Proceedings, pp. 29-30).

By this time, fifty years and more after the original controversy, there are no doubt other issues besides termination of fellowship that would have to be resolved before the CLC could declare fellowship with the WELS or the ELS. One of the issues to be resolved would have to be participation with fraternal insurance companies such as Thrivent. But the old issue is still very real. It is strange that the Lawrenz statement of 1958 on termination of fellowship, which seems clearly unscriptural to the CLC, cannot be also clearly rejected by the WELS and the ELS, since their claim is that we are really in doctrinal agreement. Thomas Nass of the WELS made this comment in 2001: "When asked what the doctrinal difference was, the Lawrenz statement of 1958 is quoted by the CLC as proof of false doctrine. . . . However, we would not be able to condemn it as false doctrine, because we can understand it in a proper way. . . . Progress toward reconciliation will not be made, however, if the CLC continues to insist that the Lawrenz statement of 1958 must be labeled as false doctrine" (Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, Winter 2001, p. 61).

David Lau is a retired pastor and professor. He lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

A SLICE OF LIFE IN THE CLC

Snapshots of congregations from around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church Phoenix, Arizona

In the Phoenix metropolitan area, known as the “Valley of the Sun,” cities border one another so closely that you can drive through two or three different cities without knowing where one ends and the next begins. The Valley of the Sun is, in fact, one of the fastest-growing areas in the country. Obviously, that means that Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church is in a population-dense area, with all the blessings and challenges that entails.

For one thing, our population density is highly variable. Our area is a major destination for both vacationers and “snowbirds” (winter-season-only residents). Every year, almost 22,000,000 vacationers travel to the valley to play golf, watch Cactus League spring training baseball games, and engage in many other activities and diversions while enjoying a respite from the cold climates of their home states in the north. Another of the popular wintertime outdoor activities is hiking in one of the seven nearby peaks, such as Camelback Mountain, Echo Canyon, and the Cholla Trail. In addition to the short-term vacationers, nearly 300,000 snowbirds live in our area for the duration of the winter season. This variability in population, coupled with the brief stay of many of the visitors, can make outreach a challenge—but it also offers many opportunities to share the Gospel beyond just our congregation’s membership.

Among these vacationers and snowbirds, of course, are members of other CLC congregations from all over the Midwest and beyond. Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church sits ensconced on the side of Moon Hill, along Thunderbird Road—a busy six-lane arterial. The barren desert hillside is behind us, and residential housing surrounds the other three sides. Geography notwithstanding, just as in their home congregations, these CLC visitors will find Christian fellowship and the preaching of the pure Word when they are away from their home churches. For the last sixty years Holy Cross has served as an oasis in the desert, an oasis where the living water of the Savior’s Word is found.

Like many other CLC congregations, Holy Cross had humble beginnings. Starting in 1969, members met in a household. In November of last year, Holy Cross celebrated its sixtieth anniversary, and many former called workers were able to help crown the occasion and look back on God’s faithfulness throughout the last six decades. Pastors Delwyn Maas, Douglas Libby, Michael Eichstadt, and Paul Fleischer, along with Teacher Phil Strike, came to help us celebrate. Currently, Holy Cross serves a membership of eighty-three souls, in addition to the regular, semi-regular, and irregular visitors that often attend.





Our Christian Day School has seen many different iterations throughout the years since the early 90's. We have had as many as three teachers instructing many students in tight spaces. For the last several years, however, we have been a one-room school, enhanced by the willing and capable work of many volunteers assisting Mr. Ross Kok, the full-time teacher. Mr. Kok and those faithful volunteers currently instruct six young people in our school. At the time of this writing, they are all learning how to teach and continue their education via Zoom, due to the mandatory school closings caused by COVID-19.



Our congregation has had the opportunity to offer our facilities as a meeting place for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) teaching and support groups. NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization. It is dedicated to building better lives for Americans affected by mental illness. Some of the classes that were held in our fellowship area served support groups for primary caregivers to those living with mental illness. Holy Cross Lutheran has also had the privilege of staffing a booth at the NAMI Walk of the Valley, where thousands of people have had the opportunity to obtain information about our church and school, and where we have been able to offer prayers upon request for either the attendees or one of their loved ones living with mental illness.

Another of our outreach projects is the summer VBS program, which serves also as a good introduction to our Christian Day School for new and prospective students. However, since the average temperature here in July is 106 degrees, we have to get creative about the kind of physical activities we can offer with VBS.

Phoenix is host to a very transient population, especially compared to many of the towns in the Midwest where the majority of our CLC congregations are located. As a result, we have seen many different faces over the years, and we have been blessed with getting to know folks from all over the country. In addition to church services, we have enjoyed things such as meeting in visitors' homes for Bible Study, or sharing a luncheon in order to show our appreciation for our winter visitors. This has helped us to treasure the important things that have united us. We are of the same mind and same spirit because God has brought it about. We cherish our rich Lutheran heritage, given by the grace of our Lord Jesus, which unites

us in declaring that we are saved by grace alone, by faith alone, by Christ alone; all of this being made known to us by God's Word alone.



Michael Gurath is pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Phoenix, Arizona, and a visiting missionary to Africa.

The Serampore Covenant

William Carey (1761-1834) was a Baptist missionary in India, and is often called the father of modern missions. A working agreement that he and his co-laborers subscribed to is known as the “Serampore Covenant,” which is still a sound document to operate by in a foreign field. It breathes a spirit of zeal and fervor for the Lord, dedication to His work, and love for poor benighted souls lost in sin. For each of the eleven points of the covenant, passages which I have selected and my comments are attached. Carey and his compatriots agreed on the following:

1) To set an infinite value on men’s souls.

Romans 10:1, *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.”* [passages quoted from the RSV throughout] An infinite value? How about Romans 9:3, *“For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race.”* The value we put on men’s souls is a reflection of the value Christ demonstrated on Calvary. 1 Corinthians 9:22, *“I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”* Would we die for the ungodly? Would we commit our sons to mission fields of danger and disease? Think of our Savior. Romans 5:6-8, *“While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die*

for a righteous man—though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”

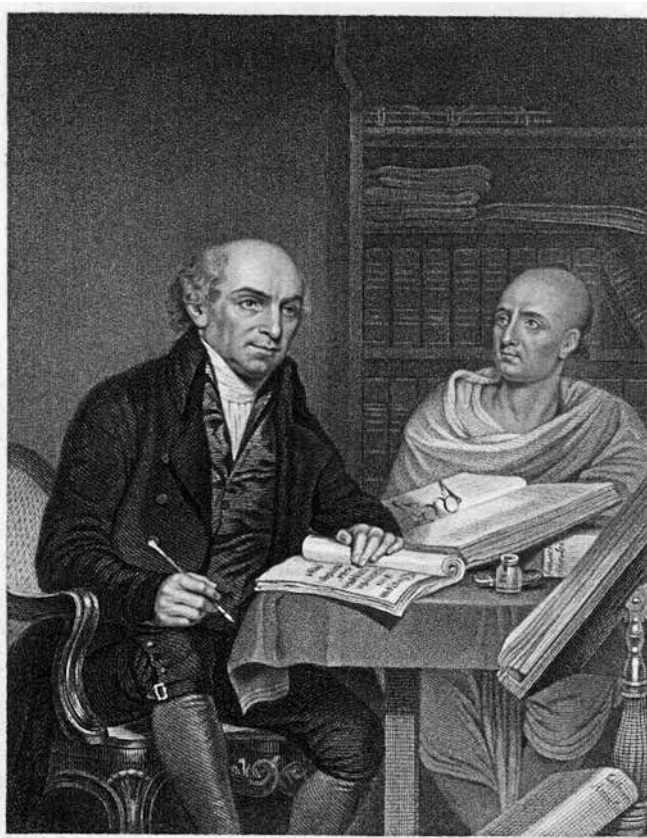
2) To acquaint ourselves with the snares which hold the minds of the people.

1 Corinthians 9:20, *“To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. . . .”* Galatians 6:2, *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”* It is not enough to say from above, *“Don’t do that.”* Walk in the other’s shoes for a time to better understand how to help him out from under the devil’s power. Paul had one approach for Mars’ Hill, another for the synagogue, yet always speaking the Gospel.

3) To abstain from whatever deepens India’s prejudice against the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 8:9, *“Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.”* We want to put no stumbling blocks unnecessarily in the way. There are enough there already.

When all the women wear saris in your field in India, don’t let your wife go around in shorts. When the Hindus abhor the eating of beef, don’t invite them over for hamburgers!



On October 7, 1805, nine missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society, including the famous Serampore Trio of William Carey, William Ward, and Joshua Marshman, signed a covenant in Serampore, India. This declaration of missionary strategy would serve as a cornerstone document for future generations.

4) To watch for every chance of doing the people good.

Galatians 6:10, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Our church's work with the widows, orphans, and seminary students in India is a natural product of the love of Christ poured into our hearts.

5) To preach "Christ crucified" as the grand means of conversions.

The Gospel for eternal life is more important than the hospital for temporal care. Conversion has to be the goal. 1 Corinthians 1:23-24, "We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God." Since Carey's time, universalism and the social gospel have redirected efforts and treasure from the primary purpose of the church.

6) To esteem and treat Indians always as our equals.

This was a rather enlightened view of the Indians for Carey's day. His view was enlightened by the Word. The Christian has a spirit of meekness (Galatians 6:1-3), which prompts him not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think (Romans 12:3). Christ died for all, with no partiality toward one race or ethnic group. When it comes to salvation, the redemption which Christ laboriously gained is for Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free alike (Galatians 3:28).

7) To guard and build up "the hosts that may be gathered."

Colossians 1:28, "Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ." The process of discipling is ongoing until death or the Second Coming. Serampore College, founded in 1818 by Carey and two other missionaries, was established to guard and build up.

8) To cultivate their spiritual gifts, ever pressing upon them their missionary obligation.

Romans 12:6, "Having gifts that differ . . . let us use them."

If it is true that we are all, whether Indian or westerner, a universal priesthood of believers (I Peter 2:9), and that the gifts are God's "varied grace" (I Peter 4:10), then they should be used to the glory of God.

9) To labor increasingly in biblical translation.

Acts 2:6,11, "Each one heard them speaking in his own language . . . We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." After fourteen years in India, it was recorded of Carey and his companions "These 'low-born and low-bred mechanics' have translated the whole Bible into Bengali, and by this time have printed it. They are printing the New Testament in Sanskrit, Oriya, Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati; and are translating it into Persic, Telegu, Kanarese, Chinese and the tongue of the Sikhs and of the Burmans; and in four of these languages they are going on with the whole Bible. . . ."

10) To be instant in the nurture of personal religion.

1 Corinthians 9:26-27, "I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." How many haven't been turned off because what was taught was not what was done?

11) To give ourselves without reserve to the Cause, "not counting even the clothes we wear our own."

Our Lord beckons, Matthew 16:24-26, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" And so first century apostles, Acts 5:41, "left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name." And so eighteenth century Christians labored "without reserve" in India. And so today . . .



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

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JUNE 2020

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Jun 1	TLH 148	John 18:1-11	Jesus demonstrates His willingness to suffer for our sins.
Jun 2	TLH 150	John 18:12-24	We see the contrast between Jesus' words and Peter's—Peter's that He didn't know the Lord, and Jesus' that He was the Lord.
Jun 3	TLH 159 (LSB 436)	John 18:25-27	Peter eventually recognized His sins of denial. May the Spirit grant us to see any sins of denial in ourselves and repent of them.
Jun 4	TLH 519	2 Samuel 1:1-16	Although David's enemy was dead, it was a sad day for Israel because Saul had once been the Lord's chosen king. The mighty can surely fall.
Jun 5	TLH 593	2 Samuel 1:17-27	Many of us have lost dear friends to death. We weep for them and at the same time thank God for them.
Jun 6	TLH 608	2 Samuel 2:1-11	The Lord had chosen David as Israel's next king, but we see right away that Saul's army would not have it. In the end, they would not prevail.
Jun 8	TLH 614	John 18:28-40	Jesus' work is not to lead a rebellion against rulers on earth, but to bring us to eternal life in heaven.
Jun 9	TLH 511 (LSB 832)	Psalms 72	Jesus is our true king, and believers all over the world bow down to Him and follow Him.
Jun 10	TLH 331 (LSB 614)	2 Samuel 3:17-39	Again David showed that he was not always glad when his enemies perished. He would rather see them turn from their evil ways and live.
Jun 11	TLH 406	Daniel 1:1-16	Even while in exile, Daniel fully intended to keep on following the Lord. He would not give up his God just because his circumstances had changed.
Jun 12	TLH 143 (LSB 439)	John 19:1-16	Nothing but crucifixion would satisfy the crowd. Then again, nothing but crucifixion would satisfy the Father in Heaven, either.
Jun 13	TLH 267	2 Samuel 5:1-10	After Saul's son Ishbosheth was assassinated, David was accepted as king by both Israel and Judah. He was accepted by God, too.
Jun 15	TLH 250 (LSB 940)	2 Samuel 6:1-23	After an initial mishap, the Ark of God made its way to Jerusalem. David danced before the Lord, joyful at the Lord's presence among His people. Let us be joyful for the same reason!
Jun 16	WS 743 (LSB 802)	Daniel 2:1-23	Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving praises God's wisdom and power. Particular wisdom from God was given to Daniel, too, for his benefit. God always uses His wisdom for our benefit, doesn't He?
Jun 17	TLH 145 (LSB 423)	John 19:17-24	Pilate, probably to aggravate the Jews, wrote that Jesus was their king, and he would not change it. But those words still echo a timeless truth many centuries later.
Jun 18	TLH 43 (LSB 806)	2 Samuel 7:18-29	We find here another beautiful prayer of thanksgiving. Who is like our God? He redeemed His people. He protects them. He communicates with them. He loves them!
Jun 19	TLH 284	Daniel 2:24-49	Daniel praises God as One who reveals mysteries. We're reminded of the greatest mystery of all that He has revealed to us: the Gospel of sins forgiven in Christ.
Jun 20	TLH 594 (LSB 855:8)	John 19:25-27	Jesus "got His affairs in order" before His death. It's a good idea for us to do the same, since we do not know when the Lord will call us home.
Jun 22	TLH 403 (LSB 845)	2 Samuel 9:1-13	In this heartwarming story, David reaches out in love as he still remembers Saul and Jonathan. May we continue to show love from generation to generation too, even as our Savior has.
Jun 23	TLH 401 (LSB 692)	Daniel 3:1-23	As Christians we are called upon to obey our government unless it forces us to do something against God's will. Then we follow the Lord, whatever the earthly consequences.
Jun 24	TLH 20	Daniel 3:24-30	God delivers His children from danger! Here, the three escaped the fiery furnace. In heaven, we will all escape the fires of hell.
Jun 25	TLH 151 (LSB 420)	John 19:28-42	Jesus delivers us from death through His own death.
Jun 26	TLH 22	2 Samuel 11:1-27	God's people of faith are not perfect. Like us, King David sinned against the Lord. Like us, he would need to be brought to repentance.
Jun 27	TLH 323	2 Samuel 12:1-15	David repented of his sins and trusted in God's forgiveness. However, sometimes sin's "collateral damage" cannot be reversed. David's child with Bathsheba would die.
Jun 29	TLH 204 (WS 726)	John 20:1-8	It is one of the most well-attested facts in all history: Jesus Christ rose from the dead.
Jun 30	TLH 27 (LSB 814)	Daniel 4:1-17	Nebuchadnezzar gave an account of important events in his life so that others would know what the Most High God had done for him. That's not a bad idea, is it? What would you write?

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.

The Highest Authority



I have never served in the military, but from what I have been told by those who have, much of the training that takes place in boot camp involves obeying lawful orders without question. The chain of command is instilled in each recruit. The end goal, I presume, is to prepare soldiers to follow orders when lives are in the balance. In the words of Tennyson, “Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die.”

To a lesser degree, following orders and a chain of command are part of most aspects of life. God provides us governments, bosses, and family who “order us around,” and we are expected to obey. Negative consequences often follow for those who do not: imprisonment, unemployment, and being grounded, to name a few.

As I write this, unprecedented authority is being used by the federal and state governments in our country in an attempt to slow the spread of the coronavirus. With the uttering of a sentence or two, those in authority can disrupt the everyday lives of millions. Not everyone will heed their orders, and there is no guarantee that even if the orders are followed the desired outcome will be achieved. That’s the thing about authority in this world: its power is limited. All the authority of the government, workplace, and home (well-intentioned though it may be) can only bring outcomes and blessings as God allows. Does this mean these authorities should not be obeyed? Certainly not. God speaks clearly on obedience (Romans 13, Ephesians 6), with the marked exception that, when a conflict between human authority and divine authority arises, we “ought to obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

BEST. JOB. EVER!

The call extended by a congregation of believers is a call from God. It is by His authority that one goes about His work.

So, what does this all have to do with the “Best Job Ever”—that of a called servant of the Word? It has to do with having the Best Boss Ever. The call extended by a congregation of believers is a call from God. It is by His authority that one goes about His work. Jesus said shortly before His ascension, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Matthew 28:18) We have a Boss Who is omnipotent. Just by uttering the words, He created the world. By Jesus’ perfect life, death, and resurrection, He saved the world. It is by His authority that His followers are told to “make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things” that He has commanded them

(Matthew 28:19).

With His authority come promises that only He can keep: “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11) As His spokesmen, His called workers can be assured that teaching His Word will bear fruit according to His desire. We can also be assured that He has our backs. “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

As a child, perhaps you had the feeling that your dad could protect you from anything. He was big, strong, and loving. At varying points in our lives, disillusionment hits us all. We are faced with the reality that our dads, our government, and we ourselves are fallible, and that our trust must be in something bigger. Lives are in the balance, eternal lives. Our heavenly Father assures us that He has the power and authority to lead us safely home. As workers in His kingdom, we follow Him with confidence.



Lutheran Spokesman

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SEEN IN PASSING

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

Scouts File Chapter 11.

"Boy Scouts of America has filed for bankruptcy. The organization announced the news in a press release dated February 18. The filing comes after years of allegations of sexual abuse within the organization, and amid increasing legal costs as it faces multiple sexual abuse lawsuits, according to NBC News. In the press release, the BSA said that the bankruptcy filing had 'two key objectives': to compensate victims of abuse within the Boy Scouts by setting up a Victims Compensation Trust, and to allow 'the BSA to continue its mission for 'years to come.' The BSA cares deeply about all victims of abuse and sincerely apologizes to anyone who was harmed during their time in Scouting. 'We are outraged that there have been times when individuals took advantage of our programs to harm innocent children,' Roger Mosby, BSA's president and CEO, said in a statement." Murphy, Helen. "Boy Scouts of America Files for Bankruptcy After Sexual Abuse Allegations." *People*. YahooNews.com, 20 Feb. 2020. Web. 12 Apr. 2020.

Empty Churches, Empty Tomb.

In an article for *The Week*, feature columnist Matthew Walter commented poignantly on the strange and singular period the world has been going through owing to the Covid-19 health crisis, how it has affected Christians, and particularly how it affected the greatest Christian festival, Easter. Walter describes February-April as "an atmosphere of relentless dread that many of us will no doubt refer to as 'the long Lent.' These have been the strangest and most miserable three months of my life." And yet, he said, the empty churches to which live-streaming pastors preached their Easter messages remind us of the empty tomb. Even when the physical society of fellow-believers is denied us, we are reminded that "The Church is herself a society, both natural and supernatural, a society of human believers whose shared joy is the affirmation of a truth. This truth is, reduced to its barest essence, that a certain body which ought to have

been in a tomb was sought and found elsewhere. . . . We too must stand, like Mary Magdalene and her companions, before an emptiness and see beyond it a great light and a body, one both like and radically unlike that for which they had been seeking. This is the Resurrection, the hope of Easter, which must be commemorated with empty churches in spite of, nay because of, the fact that it is founded upon the realization that emptiness means not an absence but the presence of something for which we have longed." Walther, Matthew. "Empty churches and the empty tomb." *Feature*. *TheWeek.com*, 12 Apr. 2020. Web. 12 Apr. 2020.

For Such a Worm As I.

Geologists from UC Riverside have discovered what they claim is the "first ancestor on the family tree that contains most familiar animals today, including humans."

This human ancestor, they say, was a blind worm about the size and shape of a grain of rice. They named it *Ikaria wariootia*.



The fossilized burrows of the creature (not the creature itself) were found in south Australian rock formations that the geologists say are 555 million years old. Their findings were published in the March 2020 issue of the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. [Ed: In a conflicting report, the finding that man was made by God, fully-formed, on the sixth day of creation less than ten thousand years ago was published in chapter one of *The Book of Genesis*]. N.a. "Ancestor of All Animals – Including Humans – Identified in Australian Fossils." *Earth News*. *Scitechdaily.com*, 23 Mar. 2020. Web. 5 May 2020

ANNOUNCEMENTS

West Central Delegate Conference

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Colorado
Dates July 21-23, 2020

Agenda:

- Revisiting and Reviewing Pastor Norbert Reim's Paper on "Equipping the Saints for Ministry"—Pastor Thomas Schuetze
- A Comprehensive Review of Our Calling Processes.—Pastor Michael Roehl
- A Biblical Study of God's Hand and Control of Earth's Climate and Weather. – Sioux Falls layman
- Devotional Study of O.T Minor Prophet – Lakewood layman
- Ways to Actively and Regularly Engage the Youth in Worship Services—Pastor Paul Nolting
- Thorough Review and Discussion of the Convention Prospectus
- The Doctrinal Difference Between the ELS and WELS on Church and Ministry—Pastor Mark Weis
- Study of Lord of hosts.—Pastor Aaron Ude

Communion Service Speaker—Pastor Timothy Daub

Chaplain—Pastor Paul Krause

—Submitted by Pastor Timothy Daub, Secretary

