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LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



**"For me,
to live is Christ."**

-Philippians 1:21



Pages 8-9

IN THIS ISSUE SEPTEMBER 2024

COVER STORY - LIVING IN CHRIST

Live or Die—It Doesn't Matter 3

STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

God's Gift of Shepherds..... 4

OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY

The Aaronic Benediction 5

GEMS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

The God Who Sees Me 6

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD

The Wicked Vinedressers 7

CONVENTION RECAP

Making a Joyful Shout to the Lord..... 8-9

VOICES FROM THE PAST

Elton Hallauer 10

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Bookmarks in the Book of Acts..... 11

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Saint Matthew Lutheran Church—Dallas, Texas 12-13

BREAD OF LIFE READINGS, SEPTEMBER 2024..... 14

ILC NEWSLETTER

Guiding Lights: Meet the Fresh Faces in Our Dorms... 15

SEEN IN PASSING / ANNOUNCEMENTS..... 16

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Live or Die—It Doesn't Matter

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.”
(Philippians 1:21-23 ESV)

Our attitudes about life and death can sometimes be affected by our current circumstances. Some circumstances may result in a clinging to life: the birth of a child, milestones yet to be reached, an opportunity to travel the world. Other circumstances may result in a yearning for death: the loss of a spouse, a seeming lack of purpose, a feeling of lingering. We may ourselves have been in similar positions before. We've clung all-too-tightly to life, and perhaps at times we've also given up and longed to depart. But I don't know anyone that has longed both to live and to die simultaneously—that is, other than the Apostle Paul.

As Paul writes to the Philippians, he seems to be caught between a rock and a hard place. However, for him, the two options are both desirable—to live and continue serving the Lord or to die and be with the Lord. And what's especially odd about his seemingly incompatible desires is that his circumstances would appear to indicate that death should be the only preferred outcome. He is, after all, under house arrest in Rome for preaching Christ. And this came only after a plot against his life, followed by two years of waiting in Caesarea through a series of unnecessary trials, and finally a disastrous voyage to Rome that was prolonged by shipwreck. Yes, all of the current circumstances in Paul's life make his life-or-death dilemma seem an easy choice.

However, Paul knows that the fundamental reality that shapes his life is not the fact that he is bound by chains in Rome, but rather the fact that he is bound by grace to God in Christ. The other circumstances did not matter—prison, freedom, wealth, poverty, health, sickness—all of his life's circumstances find

their meaning in that one great circumstance of his life, the fact that he is in Christ. And so, his whole letter to the Philippians is filled with such joy and confidence that live or die, it makes no difference. He would either die in Christ, or he would continue to live both in Christ and for Christ.

Paul also writes that you may share the same confidence! *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. . . . And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.”* (Galatians 3:27, 29 ESV) This means you are heirs of the sure hope of eternal life. You've been buried with Christ in His death and raised to life with Christ in His resurrection. So, for you it is certain, *“To die is gain.”*

Also for you, *“To live is Christ.”* Whatever your current circumstances, whatever your current vocation, it makes no difference. The central reality that shapes your life is the fact that you are bound by grace to God in Christ. No disappointment, no setback, no imprisonment can change that fact. So live! Live out your changing circumstances, live out your vocation for Christ with your focus on that one great circumstance of your life: that you are in Christ. *“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* (Colossians 3:17 ESV)



Samuel Rodebaugh is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church of Manchester, Missouri.

God's Gift of Shepherds

“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” (1 Peter 5:1–4)

Perhaps you might think that an article on this text would be better suited for a pastoral conference. After all, Peter is specifically speaking to pastors here. Yet, the Holy Spirit has preserved this word for all Christians to hear. So as we listen to Peter's exhortation, we learn what kind of men pastors are, why they do what they do, and what benefits the Lord delivers to His people through them.

Pastors are men who are just like everyone else. We might be surprised to hear Peter lower himself to the position of “fellow elder,” but Peter recognizes that he is no better than anyone else. In fact, he notes that he is “a witness of the sufferings of Christ.” True enough, but what kind of witness was Peter? To put it lightly, he was a coward, one whose courage failed as he denied three times that he even knew Jesus (Luke 22:54-62).

Peter recognized himself as a sinner. But he also recognized himself as “a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed.” Recall how the risen Jesus appeared to some of His disciples in John 21, and how He restored Peter, commissioning Peter to care for His sheep (verses 15-17). Your pastor is a man like Peter—one who understands what it is to be a forgiven sinner.

Since a pastor is a man who understands sin and forgiveness, he understands how important it is to take that message to others. Remember that Peter is writing to Christians who are being persecuted. He's about to warn them to “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:8). So the Lord sends pastors to “shepherd the flock of God” because

His people need shepherds.

In our culture today, there is a temptation to separate oneself from church and pastor. There is a temptation to say, “I'll just watch the sermon on YouTube. I don't actually need to go to church or be under anyone's spiritual care.” But really, that is to trust one's own ability to stay safe from all of the spiritual dangers out there, and none of us are up to that on our own.

So the Lord doesn't leave you alone. Christ calls shepherds for His sheep. And those pastors care for their sheep. They don't care for them because they're being forced to, but because they have the privilege of being called to serve the Lord and His people in this way. They watch over them guarding them against spiritual thieves and wolves, false teachers and temptations that threaten to kill their people spiritually. And

the pastor does all of this through that tool that God has given him—the powerful Word of God.

When the relationship of trust has been built up between pastor and congregation, blessings abound. The perfect God, “the chief Shepherd,” speaks to you through your imperfect pastor, but that Word of God is just as powerful and effective. So listen to and pray for your pastor(s) as you rejoice to receive the crown of glory that does not fade.



Robert Sauers is pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Winter Haven, Florida, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions

OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY

Ever wonder why we Lutherans use the form of worship we do?

In this series we examine the depth and meaning of the various elements of our Lutheran worship service.

The Aaronic Benediction

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.

The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

(Numbers 6:22-26, KJV)

The word *benediction* (literally “good word”) is a synonym for *blessing*. When you sneeze, a friend might say, “God bless you.” That’s a polite *social convention*. When we sing, write, or say, “God bless America,” that’s a *wish*. When I write letters or emails, I usually close with “The Lord’s blessings to you and yours.” That’s my *prayer* for God’s blessings.

The benediction we have at the close of our liturgy, however, is an entirely different matter. It certainly is not a mere social convention. Nor is it just a wish. It is not even a prayer. The Aaronic Benediction at the end of our services actually *imparts* God’s blessings to believers! It accomplishes what the words say! The benediction conveys God’s blessings to the hearers because that’s the promise which God attached to it when

He commanded Moses to tell Aaron and his sons (the priests) to use these words to bless the children of Israel. God said, “*And they [Aaron and his sons] shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.*” (Numbers 6:27, KJV) This is God’s promise.

Pay attention to the metaphorical language here. God is a spirit; He does not have a literal, physical face. The words *face* in the second line of the benediction and *countenance* in the third line are the same word in the original Hebrew, and in fact some translations use *face* in both lines. In English, however, *face* and *countenance* have slightly different connotations, and *countenance* probably better conveys the significance in each of those lines. *Countenance* means “visage,” or “facial expression.” Picture the expression of a parent looking at a dear child with whom he is especially pleased. You can see the parent’s love for the child in his facial expression, his countenance.

There are also other places where the Bible uses this imagery of God’s face, or countenance, upon us. In reference to King David,

Psalm 21:6 (KJV) says, “*For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.*” As God’s children through faith in Christ, we rejoice that our heavenly Father’s face shines upon us. It is, in fact, God’s countenance upon us as His children that we should look to when we are discouraged, dispirited, or forlorn. As Psalm 42:5 (KJV) says, “*Why art thou*

cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”

There is, however, another—and quite different—aspect to God’s countenance upon man. Speaking of the Israelites who had departed from faithful worship of the one true God, the Lord says in Deuteronomy 31:17-18 (KJV), “*Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them,*

and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.” Or again, speaking of His wrath toward those who have departed from the faith to serve false gods, the Lord says, “*My face will I turn also from them.*” (Ezekiel 7:22, KJV)

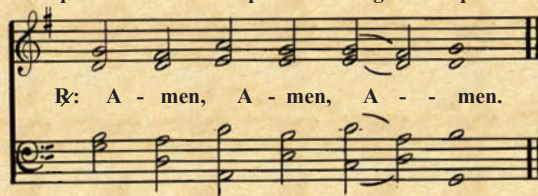
Dear Christian, you are God’s child through faith in Christ Jesus. When you hear the words of this benediction, rejoice that His countenance shines upon you! For in those words, the Lord sustains us, extends His grace to us, and gives us His peace. Amen.

The Benediction

Minister: The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.



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

The God Who Sees Me

For Hagar, the circumstances were desperate. She was young, alone, pregnant and penniless; a slave fleeing the harsh treatment of her mistress Sarai. Seventy miles lay behind. If her destination was home in Egypt, many more difficult, dangerous miles lay ahead.

Eventually, Hagar came to a well in the Wilderness of Shur, a desolate region of rolling dunes and distant ridges, scraggly shrubs, and parched soil. There she sat, resting, remembering, weeping, surrounded by landscape as barren as her hope.

Most of us have been to that wilderness; not physically perhaps, but mentally, emotionally, spiritually, even maritally. That place of running from problems. That place of exhaustion, collapse, and white-flag surrender; of broken hopes, broken dreams, broken homes, and broken promises.

Need we ask what Hagar was thinking or feeling in that wilderness? No. All of us have entertained similar thoughts when feeling alone, mistreated, unloved, and unwanted. “Who sees me? Who knows me? Who understands me? Who cares about me?” Yet, on that day, in that desolate wilderness, Hagar learned the answers: God sees, God knows, God understands, God cares.

According to Genesis 16:7-8 (EHV), “*The Angel of the Lord found Hagar beside a flowing spring in the wilderness, beside the spring on the way to Shur. He said, ‘Hagar, servant girl of Sarai, where did you come from? Where are you going?’*”

Hagar was a runaway slave, languishing in the middle of nowhere, traveling by foot toward Egypt, friendless, helpless, hopeless—regretting the past, escaping the present, and fearing the future. Could circumstances be any worse? Yet, into this very setting God came to help Hagar.

And that this “Angel of the LORD” was in fact God is evident from the context; specifically, Genesis 16:13, where the Angel is referred to as both “LORD” and “God.” In other words, that Angel Who appeared to Hagar in the wilderness

was the preincarnate Son of God Who, centuries later, as God-In-The-Flesh, crossed miles of Samaria to save another hurting woman at another well (John 4:5-30).

God’s dealings with Hagar were vastly different from anything she’d known as a slave. To many, Hagar was mere property. To God, she was a hurting person. Sarai made Hagar’s life difficult. God empowered Hagar to endure a difficult life. Abram and Sarai sent Hagar away into the wilderness. God sought Hagar in the wilderness and brought her back. In the Biblical narrative, Abram and

Sarai refer to Hagar only as a servant girl. God called her by name and by circumstances: “*Hagar, servant girl of Sarai.*”

Truly, here was the God Who saw, knew, understood, and cared. Realizing this, Hagar gave God a name befitting His constant vigilance and personal attentiveness. “*She called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, ‘You are a God who sees.’*” (verse 13 EHV) In fact, that well in the wilderness came to be called *Be’er Lahai Roi*, Hebrew for “Well of the One Who Lives and Sees Me.”

Hagar is referenced in only four chapters of Scripture: Genesis 16,

18, 21, and Galatians 4. Yet the story of Hagar is a story with which we can all identify. We may not be slaves, yet feel enslaved by addictions, temptations, and loveless relationships. We may not be in the Wilderness of Shur, yet find ourselves in personal circumstances equally desperate and desolate—asking all the same dismal questions: Who sees? Who knows? Who understands? Who cares?

God does. The God Who sought, found, and rescued Hagar in the wilderness is the same God Who sought, found, and saved you. His name is *El Roi*: “The God Who Sees Me.”

All of us have entertained similar thoughts when feeling alone, mistreated, unloved, and unwanted. “Who sees me? Who knows me? Who understands me? Who cares about me?”



Mark Weis is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

The Wicked Vinedressers

A sense of entitlement is a corrosive cancer which blinds the soul to the goodness of our Lord and leads to a wide range of sin. In the Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (Mathew 21:33-46), the tenants' assumption of squatting rights results in manifest murder.

Fully furnished with wall, tower, and winepress, the landowner has developed his acreage into prime real estate. The intricate details mirror Isaiah's familiar metaphor of God's boundless grace toward Israel: "What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it?" (Isaiah 5:4)

God had provided Moses' laws as a wall which identified them as His people, the line of David as a tower of temporal protection, and the winepress-promise of a Messiah to save from sin and death. Without peering into too much detail, there is no doubt that this rich rock edifice is the "refuge and strength" of God's Word, with which Israel had been uniquely blessed (Psalm 46:1; Romans 3:2).

The parable depicts a common farming arrangement, where tenants served under a hereditary lease, each generation offering the landowner a portion of the field's fruits as rent. But Jewish social structure also allowed tenants to inherit the land, if, over time, ownership rights were not exercised.

Their wicked behavior, then, is an attempt to make the field not worth the landowner's effort: "The vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another." (verse 35) They go so far as to kill the owner's son so that, with no legal heir, the land would effectively become theirs.

Jesus asks his audience (the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders of the people) what they think should happen to the tenants. They respond, "He [the owner of the vineyard] will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers." (verse 41) The parable closes with a bold declaration of God's wrath, but it actually overflows with longsuffering mercy throughout. One disgrace should have ended the lease. Instead, the landowner sends "servants, more than the first" (verse 36)—more not in number, but in compassion.

Though Old Testament stories are often associated with divine punishment, God sent prophets for the sole purpose of salvation. Moses promised a Prophet Who would extinguish Sinai's terrors.

Isaiah proclaimed the Savior's birth, death, and resurrection in vivid detail. Ultimately, God watered the vineyard Himself through John's Baptism, that the land might bear fruit for His Son's arrival.

Israel's history reflects the parable's rejection of each messenger's increasingly gracious call. But where do they get all these stones? There are no rocks in this luscious vineyard soil. They would have to pull them free from the tower, winepress, and walls. The vandalism foretells both



And they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him

Israel's collapse as a nation, and how they would cast Jesus' own words back at Him in order to send Him "out of the vineyard" to die by Roman crucifixion. But Jesus' conclusion reveals how God's mercy cannot fail to win out in the end, just as certainly as He would rise for our justification: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." (verse 42)

A sense of entitlement lies at the root of every self-destructive way. This is why the Lord graciously continues to send servants to call you out of the foolish thinking that life is yours to do with as you please. Through the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), He seeks to give "other vinedressers" the good ground of a heart tilled and sown by His Word.

Jesus asks, "When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)

At the very least, dear reader, the Lord has found you. Continue to "render to him" (verse 41) the glory for everything you have and are until the day He returns.



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



CONVENTION RECAP

Making a Joyful Shout to the Lord

They came from every direction.
They came across land and by air.
They came from states near and far, and from across the sea.

They are the 143 voting members of the 36th Church of the Lutheran Confession Convention, held on the campus of Immanuel Lutheran College, June 20-23, 2024.

They came to “*Make a Joyful Shout to the Lord*” (convention theme, from Psalm 100), to serve the Lord with gladness, and to come before His presence with singing. Only the Lord is truly God, only He is worthy of praise, thanksgiving, and service. Only He could bless the work before the convention and the ongoing work we seek to accomplish in His Kingdom (First devotional essay).



Convention servants (l-r): organist Lane Fisher, IT manager Professor Ross Roehl, chaplain Pastor Thomas Naumann, essayist Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, essayist Pastor Drew Naumann, memorial service speaker Pastor Emeritus Vance Fossum, communion service speaker Pastor Delwyn Maas, communion service officiant Pastor Paul Krause

They came to enter the Lord’s gates with thanksgiving, to be thankful to Him and bless His name, for He is good—a statement that is inherently true even in the darkest days of trial and hardship. His mercy is everlasting and His truth endures to all generations (Second devotional essay).

Daily devotions recounted some of “The Mighty Men” featured in Scripture and thereby encouraged everyone in the assembly to work mightily in the strength of the Lord.

The Convention Communion service was an opportunity for all to make a Joyful Shout to the Lord God in worship, to remember our Savior’s death in the sacrament, and to be encouraged in our Christian fellowship. The sermon text was Isaiah 12:1-6, and hearers were reminded of all the reasons for Joy in the Lord with the end result that “it’s OK to smile in church.”

Worshipping the Lord God Who is good and listening to His Word framed and undergirded the work of the Convention. Some of the business highlights are as follows:

Many incumbents were re-elected to the offices and boards



Full-time CLC missionaries (l-r): Pastor Peter Evensen, Pastor Bruce Naumann, Pastor Todd Ohlmann



God provided much-needed rain to west-central Wisconsin in the middle of the convention

of the CLC, but there are also several new servants. Pastor Joseph Naumann, Vice President; Pastor Timothy Daub, called servant member on the Board of Missions; Teacher Nathan Wales, called servant member on the Board of Regents; and Mr. Craig Ryan, layman on the Board of Education and Publications.

A “Recruiters to the Public Ministry Committee” was created and is composed of Public Ministry Recruiter Pastor Samuel Rodebaugh, and pastors Benjamin Libby and

rejection of the three points articulated by the 2022 Convention. The convention encouraged the General Pastoral Conference to continue using God’s Word to study what God says concerning church fellowship and its termination.

The building project on the Immanuel Lutheran College campus was divided into two projects, authorizing the construction of a new gymnasium when contributions have been received to within \$3,000,000 of the estimated cost. The construction of a theater/chapel building is the second project.

When the work was done, those who came returned to their homes and individual callings, blessed by the Lord, Who alone is God and eminently good.

Next Convention: June 25-28, 2026



Newly-elected CLC President Pastor Michael Wilke gives his attention to the speaker at the microphone.



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

Neal Radichel.

\$50,000 was added to the Board of Education and Publications budget “for the purpose of assisting CLC congregations in the establishment and ongoing support of Christian Day Schools.”

The president’s declarations of fellowship with the Confessional Church of the Reformation of Uganda (CCRU), the Eglise Confessionnelle Luthérienne Sainte Famille au Congo (ELCSFACO), and the Lutheran Autonomous Mission in the Philippines (LAMP) were ratified.

In doctrinal matters, the convention expressed regret that the WELS/ELS terminated discussions following their



Rev. Elton Hallauer
1924-2021

In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by early leaders in the CLC. Pastor James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Rev. Elton Hallauer (1924-2021) was a leader in the formation of the CLC. He was the longtime pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church in Morris, Minnesota. He also served in various synodical positions, including Chairman of the ILC Board of Regents and Vice President of the CLC. This article is from the Lutheran Spokesman of June 1971.

Know the Scriptures

Let us assume that a teacher who lived a thousand years ago had written an “autograph” [that is, a document hand-written by the author himself.] He had some students who appreciated the value of their teacher’s wisdom. In order to preserve his writing for themselves and future generations, they each made a handwritten copy of it; and then the original was lost. The next generation made hand written copies of the copies of the original and so on and on. These all, written in the same language as the autograph, are called “manuscripts,” and, no doubt, many of these are also lost.

Over the years, the language of the people changed from that of the original autograph. Gradually scholars, instead of making additional copies of existing manuscripts, translated one or more of them into the language of the day. These translations are called “versions.” The version that is derived from a faulty or incomplete manuscript, of course, will also be faulty. The more reliable the source manuscripts, the more accurate the resulting version.

The autographs of the prophets, apostles and evangelists have all been lost; probably, as one writer states, for the best—since otherwise men would be tempted to revere the paper and ink rather than the contents. But there are in existence almost five thousand manuscripts of various ages and types . . . and the number increases as new discoveries are made. The Word of God has been preserved over the centuries; He has seen to that.

Of the ancient “versions” there are about twenty. Modern translations number nearly a hundred times that amount. English versions alone number more than twice that amount.

COPY ERRORS

Remembering that all manuscripts are handwritten copies, it is easy to see how errors could creep into them. Groups of scribes receiving dictation could commit “errors of hearing.” The words *to*,

too, and *two* all sound the same but have different meanings. The original languages of the Bible have similar peculiarities. “Errors of seeing” happened too. This is understandable when you realize that the oldest Hebrew manuscripts were written in block letters without vowels, punctuation or spaces between words. To illustrate, Genesis 1:1, using our alphabet, would have looked like this: NTHBGNNNGDCRTDTHHVNND.

The Greek of the New Testament was similar, except that this language contained vowels. Even so, the eyes could be deceived. How, for example, would you read this: GODISNOWHERE. One might see *GOD IS NOW HERE*, while another might see *GOD IS NOWHERE*.

Such errors of the eye, ear, and hand were certainly unintentional, as were most of the errors of omission and addition. Sometimes, a scribe would copy a word twice, sometimes he would skip a few lines because of similar words at the end of two lines. Occasionally, a scribe would insert marginal notes from a previous copy into the body of the text, thinking undoubtedly that they belonged there. Some errors, it seems, were intentional, although not dishonestly so. Almost always the scribe simply wanted to “correct” what seemed to him to be an error in the text. . . . For example, two similar statements of Jesus from different accounts were modified in order to bring them into perfect agreement with each other.

NO CAUSE FOR ALARM

The Lord did not inspire the copyists; He did inspire the holy writers. What they have written has been reconstructed for us by dedicated scholars from many manuscripts, numerous versions, and quotations from the Scriptures found in the writings of the church fathers. . . . It is comforting to know, furthermore, that no doctrinal truth is in question because of errors in the Greek text. You may “search the Scriptures” with confidence.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

In this series, those involved with CLC foreign missions profile one aspect of our overseas endeavors.

Bookmarks in the Book of Acts

There are three passages in particular in the Book of Acts that give us a glimpse into the thrust of our God in the apostolic days. This thrust was to continue by the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) though the apostles and their successors went to be with the Lord. These bookmarks of mission history in Luke's days are 6:7, 12:24, and 19:20.

“And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7 RSV)

While it all started in Jerusalem, it did not end there.

Like an explosion, it spread outwards. The more that believed in Jerusalem, the more there would be to spread the Gospel when the persecutions arose. The more that believed, the more that could be said of Him and His amazing grace. Do we think of multiplying in order to multiply? What was first seen in Jerusalem was replicated elsewhere over and over again.

How can this happen? The answer is *“the Word of God increased.”* If we truly believe that the Spirit comes with the Word, that it is His sword to pierce to the heart and mind, then how shall we talk and how shall we act? Apostles died, their successors died, and on and on it went, but the Bible is *“the living and abiding Word of God.”* (1 Peter 1:23 RSV) It does not perish, though we turn to dust and ashes and our soul departs this veil of tears. Whether spoken or written, it is His tool to craft the wretch into a child of God. He does it superbly.

“But the Word of God grew and multiplied.” (Acts 12:24)

By the time we read this in Acts there has been an unexpected harvest: in Samaria through the deacons' work, an Ethiopian has heard Isaiah explained that he might return to his country with Good News, Saul the hater of Christ and persecutor of the church has become the persecuted, Cornelius the first European convert has witnessed all at his house gathering baptized, and Barnabas has been to Antioch in Syria which became a seedbed

for far-ranging efforts. Look at what God wrought by His Spirit-inspired, empowered, accompanied Word! The Word has continued to grow, enrapturing more and more to its heavenly melody. In ever-widening circles the enlivening Gospel breeze swept.

“So the Word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily.” (Acts 19:20 RSV)

There is yet more outreach recorded in Acts. At chapter nineteen, right before the verse above, we read that by faith the believers at Ephesus gave up in smoke the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver as they burned the devil's books

of magical arts. They were not going to let the devil's practices spread if they could help it, as they were intent on spreading the Christ's love absent of any compromise along the way. This spiritual vibrance of the early Christian church has got to be inspiring. The Word convinced, captured and held.

By this point in Acts, two of the three ever-more-expansive journeys of Paul are recorded, and we are on the third. Get a map and see—it was up, over, around, and through rather than sitting in one region circumambulating a rather tiny area. Paul was the original circuit rider, who did not hesitate to go beyond the ground he had already covered.

And the Spirit, working through the Word, also multiplied workers. Over thirty people are designated in one way or another in Scripture as “fellow workers” with Paul. There may well have been more. These people were all over the map, so to speak, as the Word prevailed. May it prevail in your heart also that you support Christ's *“Go into all the world”* (Mark 16:15), and help to repeat this Gospel history.



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.

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Saint Matthew Lutheran Church Dallas, Texas

Some might say “Nothing” when asked what is new at Saint Matthew in Dallas, Texas, since the last update seven years ago. Of course that is not completely accurate—after all, even the godless scientific community admits that they cannot precisely define “nothing” on account of everything being composed of something. Certainly, since Saint Matthew last checked in with the *Lutheran Spokesman*, there has been a lot of “something” happening.

In many ways, the last seven years have been more of the same; which is wonderful, because God showered His blessings the same then as now. One could say with truthful clarity that “the overwhelming grace of God continues to flow to Saint Matthew.” That is a long title, which would not be all that surprising to any that have visited the Saint Matthew website and YouTube channel and noticed that the sermons are not particularly short but, Lord willing, serve to communicate the Law and Gospel in an edifying way to the listener.

Seven years ago, it was a blessing to worship with slightly over fifty individuals on a Sunday morning. Now, if you have the opportunity to worship with us on a Sunday morning, you will still be accompanied by slightly more than fifty individuals being strengthened by the “overwhelming love of Christ.” Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, came to earth as one of us and lived the very life we were created to live but cannot on account



Member Pat Sandilands working on the church roof



of our sins. It took God to show us how humans are supposed to live and, not only that, Jesus gathered all of our sins—and the sins of all people—to the cross, paying the penalty of “God forsakenness” so we never have to pay it ourselves.

It is an interesting blessing that in the past seven years twenty of those that attend with regularity are new to St Matthew. The Lord has led them to the congregation and moved them to become active in our ministry. That is a wonderful blessing, but you might ask “what of those other twenty—where did they go?”

As with most congregations, the ebb and flow of the business of life carry on. Some individuals moved away and thankfully became part of other congregations in the Church of the



The Arguelles family at the baptism of their daughter

Lutheran Confession. Others have sadly left the fellowship altogether. And even a few have been called home by the Lord to eternal glory. One such individual is Elaine Sandilands, who this past Holy Week went home to the Lord. The Lord used her as a founding member of the congregation and she was instrumental in the continued ministry in the Dallas area.

Her husband Pat (pictured above, eighty-five years old, doing some work on the church roof) and many others continue the privilege of serving the Lord in this area of Texas. In the past fifteen years, on average, over thirty new individuals each year attend a Sunday morning service. The better part of that number come with no prior connection to anyone within the Church of the Lutheran Confession; the Lord draws them in and we share the Gospel with them. Some inquire and begin adult instruction but end up not finishing, while others by God's grace do finish and become active members in our fellowship.

Seven years ago there were two different Sunday school levels and a young adults class on Sunday morning, and that is the situation today. Different students and some different teachers, but the same Gospel being taught.



The Lindahl family at confirmation

Seven years ago, Saint Matthew's pastor also led worship services in Waco, Texas; now he is traveling once a month to Conroe, Texas (in the Houston area) to conduct worship services there. Funerals, weddings, confirmations, and Baptisms—along with all the other activities of this Christian congregation—are part of the worship life of Saint Matthew.

The overwhelming grace of God is at work here. As Texas and the Dallas region itself continue to receive a great number of people moving into the area, God is giving us the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to many. "More of the same" in the past seven years does not do justice to the wondrous ways of the Lord in the lives of His people. And it would be absolutely incorrect to answer the question, "What's new?" by saying, "Nothing." "The Same Overwhelming Grace of God" is more fitting!



Matthew Hanel is pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Dallas, Texas.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS SEPTEMBER 2024

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
September 2	TLH 26/LSB 797	Isaiah 30	The Lord judges His people for their reliance on Egypt for deliverance. This trust in human power is yet another act of rebellion against the Lord. The Lord Himself will deliver His people in His own good time.
September 3	TLH 25	Isaiah 31	Trust not in horses and in chariots, but trust in the Lord. Trust not in idols made with human hands, but trust in the Lord.
September 4	TLH 345	Isaiah 32	The Lord will deliver His people by sending them a just and righteous King. Jerusalem will be destroyed, but later the Lord will redeem His people and they will live in peace and security.
September 5	TLH 469/LSB 648	Isaiah 33	At the appointed time, Assyria will face the judgment of the Lord. The Lord will save His people.
September 6	TLH 172/LSB 450	Isaiah 34	The Lord will judge the nations. We would have every reason to be terrified of the judgment of the Lord, but Jesus Christ has accomplished our redemption.
September 7	TLH 188	Isaiah 35	The Lord will save His exiled people and will lead them back to their homeland with joy. The Lord will fulfill these joyful promises primarily through the redemption accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
September 9	LSB 616	1 Samuel 13	Saul leads the Israelites in battle against the Philistines, who vastly outnumber the Israelites. Since Samuel is delayed, Saul takes it upon himself to offer an unlawful sacrifice. Samuel rebukes Saul for disobeying the Lord and informs him that because of his unfaithfulness, his reign over Israel will not continue.
September 10	TLH 658/LSB 662	1 Samuel 14	Jonathan, the son of Saul, defeats the Philistines. Saul swears a reckless oath, nearly resulting in the death of Jonathan. Saul fights against the various enemies of Israel throughout his life.
September 11	TLH 552/LSB 878	1 Samuel 15	Saul disobeys the instructions of the Lord, and Samuel rebukes him. The Lord rejects Saul, promising through Samuel to give the kingdom of Israel to a different king.
September 12	WS 747/LSB 817	1 Samuel 16	The Lord sends Samuel to Jesse of Bethlehem to anoint one of his sons as the new king of Israel. Contrary to the expectation of Samuel, the Lord selects David, the youngest son of Jesse, to be king. When an evil spirit afflicts Saul, Saul appoints David to play the lyre, thereby driving the spirit away from him.
September 13	TLH 451/LSB 660	1 Samuel 17	The giant Goliath, a champion of the Philistines, challenges the Israelites to send any man to fight him in order to settle the conflict between the Philistines and the Israelites. David volunteers to fight Goliath, trusting in the Lord to deliver him.
September 14	TLH 371/LSB 563	Isaiah 50	The Lord invites His chosen people to believe His promises of deliverance. The suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, appears in order to accomplish salvation for all people.
September 16	TLH 659/LSB 774	Genesis 42	Ten of the brothers of Joseph travel to Egypt in order to buy grain during the famine. Joseph tests his brothers.
September 17	TLH 14/LSB 791	Genesis 43	Joseph's brothers, including Benjamin, travel to Egypt in order to buy more grain. Joseph feasts with his brothers.
September 18	TLH 383/LSB 557	Genesis 44	Joseph tests his brothers. Judah sacrifices himself to protect Benjamin.
September 19	TLH 660/LSB 748	Genesis 45	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. Pharaoh invites the brothers of Joseph to bring their households and to settle in Egypt.
September 20	WS 767/LSB 646	Genesis 46	Israel and all of his descendants travel to Egypt. Joseph and his father Israel are reunited.
September 21	LSB 813	Genesis 47	Israel and his children settle in the land of Goshen. On behalf of Pharaoh, Joseph sells food to the Egyptians. Joseph promises to have Israel buried in the land of Canaan.
September 23	WS 800/LSB 922	Genesis 48	Before his death, Israel blesses Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.
September 24	TLH 105/LSB 389	Genesis 49	Israel blesses his sons. Israel commands his sons to bury him in the cave of Machpelah. Israel dies.
September 25	TLH 425/LSB 732	1 Samuel 18	Jonathan, the son of Saul, makes a covenant with David. The Lord blesses the leadership of David, and David becomes popular among the people. Saul becomes jealous of the popularity of David, attempting to kill David. David marries Michal, the daughter of Saul.
September 26	LSB 735	1 Samuel 19	Saul plots to kill David. Jonathan and Michal protect David.
September 27	TLH 590/LSB 755	1 Samuel 20	David and Jonathan arrange a signal by which Jonathan lets David know whether or not his life is in danger.
September 28	TLH 527/LSB 757	Numbers 11	The children of Israel complain about the food that the Lord has provided. Moses complains about the burden of leading a rebellious people. The Lord appoints elders to assist Moses. The Lord punishes the children of Israel with a plague.
September 30	TLH 29	1 Samuel 21	In a case of necessity, Ahimelech the priest gives holy bread to David and to his companions to eat. David flees to Gath and pretends to be insane.

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

Guiding Lights: Meet the Fresh Faces in Our Dorms

The start of school at Immanuel every fall is exciting, in part, because of all the new students we are privileged to welcome to campus and get to know throughout the year. This fall, though, we are also very happy to welcome our new dorm supervisors. Jaqi Bredehoft is the girls' dorm supervisor, and Henry Lau is the boys' dorm supervisor. (For information about our new professor, Matthew Thurow, see the July 2024 *Lutheran Spokesman*).



Girls' dorm supervisor
Jaqi Bredehoft and family

Jaqi is certainly familiar with dorm life at Immanuel. She is from Mukonago, Wisconsin, and lived in the girls' dorm herself while attending high school at Immanuel Lutheran. After high school, she moved to the Twin Cities. She met her husband Jake while both were working full-time as IT technicians for the National Guard in St. Paul. Jake, originally from Wabasha, Minnesota, started joining Jaqi in church almost immediately after they met. He became an active member at Berea Lutheran Church in Inver Grove Heights after completing instructional classes. Jaqi has since taken classes for several years in art and design. Jake earned a BS in management information systems from Winona State, and an MS in cybersecurity from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. For fun, they love to camp and hike and enjoy board games and reading. Jaqi and Jake will be joined by their one-year-old daughter Charlotte (Charlie). They are both excited to come to ILC to make a difference in our students' lives and to positively impact the culture here. Having lived in the dorm herself, Jaqi will be able to support students from a place of empathy and understanding, and she looks forward to being a help in providing them with a sense of family and home when they need it most.

Henry is from Eau Claire and attended high school at Immanuel for his junior and senior years. He returned to Immanuel for college and graduated with a BA in Pre-Theology. He then enrolled in the Chippewa Valley Technical College truck driving program and received a commercial driver's license (CDL).



Boys' dorm supervisor
Henry Lau

After earning his CDL, Henry worked as a school bus driver for Student Transit. Since 2023, he has worked as a semi-truck driver for Indianhead Foodservice Distributor. He has also taught Sunday School at Messiah Lutheran in Eau Claire and volunteered at God's Kids Bible Camp. Henry enjoys playing and writing piano music and hymns, studying the Bible, hiking, canoeing, outdoor adventures, and playing disc golf, basketball, and various other sports. He is excited to be back on campus and looks forward to the daily opportunities to hear God's Word with others in chapel services and also to be able to share that Word with others during evening chapels and through daily interactions. Henry also looks forward to working alongside his mother Jessica, who works in the General Business Office on campus, and his brother Brett, who is a maintenance worker at ILC.

One of the most important roles on our campus is that of dorm supervisor. Jaqi and Henry will be interacting with our students on a daily basis, providing them with spiritual comfort and direction. It is truly a blessing to be able to find such dedicated, caring, and gifted Christians who are willing to serve the Lord by devoting their time and talents to nurturing and educating our students. "Serve one another, each according to the gift he has received, as good stewards of the many forms of God's grace. . . . If anyone serves, let him do it as one serving with the strength God supplies so that God may be glorified in every way through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen." (I Peter 4:10-11 EHV)



Dr. Daniel Schierenbeck is President of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Installation. In accord with our usage and order, **Rick Mariner**, who was called by Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mankato, Minnesota, to be a high school teacher, was installed on August 18, 2024.

—Pastor Joseph Naumann



Installation. In accord with our usage and order, **Matthew Kranz**, who was called by Berea Lutheran Church of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, to be a teacher, was installed on July 21, 2024. Also pictured in the photo (l-r) are teachers Cathy Augustine, Claire Abbas and Christy Moen (not pictured: Christine Starland.)

—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer

Installation. Professor **Matthew Thurow** will be installed at the opening service of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on Sunday, August 25 at 3:00 P.M.

—Pastor John Hein, Chairman, ILC Board of Regents

Retirement Observance. Messiah Lutheran Church of Hales Corners, Wisconsin, will hold a special service on Sunday, September 8, 2024 to honor our Lord on the occasion of the retirement of Pastor Michael Eichstadt. Service times and activities are available by contacting the congregational president, Jim Lisak, at jlisak@wi.rr.com. Those wishing to send greetings/communications should send them to Ted Quade at tedquade@gmail.com by September 1, 2024.

—Ted Quade

Correction. The July 2024 issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman* featured a profile of Teacher Matthew Thurow, who was recently called to the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College. The author of that profile was Pastor Emeritus David Schierenbeck, not Professor Daniel Schierenbeck. We apologize for the error.

2024 Minnesota Pastoral Conference

West Battle Lake, Clitheral, Minnesota • October 6-8

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis: Zephaniah 2:1ff.—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
 - New Testament Exegesis: Titus 2:11-15—Pastor Luke Willitz
 - 500th Anniversary of the Peasants' Revolt—Pastor George Dummann
 - A Review of the Basic Principles of Logic—Pastor Joseph Naumann
 - Evaluating the Pursuit of Theological Degrees from Heterodox Church Bodies—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
 - A Review of the Messiah Hymnal—Pastor Theodore Barthels
 - 1 Corinthians 14:34 Applications in Congregations—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
 - A Review of Proselytizing Applied to the Unique Circumstances of the CLC—Pastor James Albrecht
 - [An additional topic at the chairman's discretion]—TBD
- Chaplain: Delwyn Maas
—Pastor John Hein, Chairman



Ordination and Installation. In accord with our usage and order, **Paul Agenten**, who was called by Calvary Lutheran Church, Marquette, Michigan; and Saint Peter Lutheran Church, Iron River, Michigan to be their pastor, was ordained and installed at Calvary, Marquette on July 1, 2024. Also participating in the service were (photo, l-r) Pastors Andrew Schaller, Norman Greve, Chad Seybt, Timothy Daub, [the ordinand], David Ude, Pastor Emeritus Paul Fleischer, Professor David Schaller, and Pastor Edward Starkey. A separate installation service was held at Saint Peter, Iron River on July 28.

—Pastor Andrew Schaller