

JUNE 2025 VOL 67 NO. 12

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



*"He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.'"*

*—Matthew 19:4-5*





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# Marriage's Bond of Perfection

*"And above all these things put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." (Colossians 3:14 ESV)*

A friend of mine, referring to himself and his wife, said, "I know we won't be married in heaven, but I think I'll ask God if I can just stand by her awhile." He wasn't struggling with Matthew 22:30 and similar passages ("For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage"); he was simply proclaiming his love for his wife.

Ah, love—one of the obvious aspects of marriage. The ancient Greeks identified eight types of love, including *eros* (romantic, intimate love), *phileo* (love between friends), and *storge* (acceptance and comfort of family). While these three types of love are typically found in marriage, there is a higher love: *agape* (uh-GAH-pay).

God says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." (Ephesians 5:25) Christ's love for the church was *agape* love—a love that sacrifices and serves. It's unselfish.

Author Ed Wheat, in his book *Love Life for Every Married Couple*, presents a checklist to help his readers determine if they love with a conditional or an unconditional love. Here are several points from his checklist:

- Do I think that love should be shown only as a reward for good behavior?
- Do I feel that my spouse has to change before I can love him or her more?
- Do I think that I can improve my spouse's behavior by withholding love?

If these questions are answered with a "yes," the love is conditional. Conditional love requires that certain conditions be met before the love can flow—this is not *agape* love. *Agape* love is an unconditional love.

Husband and wife should love each other freely, without any thought as to how, or if, that love will be reciprocated.

The other day I asked my wife, "Why do so many people treat strangers better than they treat their spouse?"

She paused, then said, "Because a stranger could be an angel, but you know your spouse is no angel." We laughed, but consider the last part, which amounts to this: every married person has a sinner for a spouse—and our sinful nature is a saboteur of

relationships.

When God told husbands to love their wives, He also alerted husbands to guard against their sinful flesh, commanding, "and do not be harsh with them [wives]." (Colossians 3:19 ESV) Likewise, "let the wife see that she respects her husband." (Ephesians 5:33) Harshness and lack of respect aren't the only problems our sinful flesh can generate in a marriage. Our sinful nature is proud and selfish. It champions its own perceptions while ignoring a spouse's perspective. It causes a husband and wife to blame and battle each other, instead of working together to fix a problem. Our sinful flesh doesn't listen well, doesn't apologize easily, can hold a grudge, can be rude, deceptive, and sometimes doesn't even care. For these shortcomings, we ask God and our spouse for forgiveness.

Motivated by *agape* love, we can prevent problems:

*"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'" (1 Peter 4:8)*

Motivated by *agape* love, we can remedy problems:

*"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)*

Take to heart this section from Colossians, which, like the passages above, is not exclusively for married people, but for everyone:

*"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection." (Colossians 3:12-14)*

May God bless your marriage with the bond of perfection—unselfish love for each other. Amen.



**Karl Olmanson** is a retired teacher. He lives in Kasota, Minnesota.



# Luther's Marriage

## June 13, 1525

*“With my wedding, I have made the angels laugh and the devils weep.” M. Luther*

For all his early life, Martin Luther knew that priests and nuns were not allowed to marry. After all, the vow of chastity was, and is, an important tenet of the Roman Catholic faith. So when Martin chose the path of the priesthood, he knew he was closing the door on the possibility of wife and children, much to the chagrin of his parents.

During the Reformation, as the Holy Spirit guided Luther to the scriptural truths of salvation by faith, Martin also began reexamining other teachings of the Roman church. He came to realize that many of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic faith had no basis in Scripture at all, but were mere fabrications of popes, church councils, and religious traditions.

Throughout his early career Luther had spoken and written about the blessings of Christian marriage. He emphasized that marriage provided the blessings of companionship, sexual purity, and family life with the gift of children. After seeing that Scripture neither forbade nor commanded clergy to marry, Luther boldly proclaimed that priests and nuns were also eligible for marriage, the same as any of God’s children. Yet, while extolling the virtues and blessings of matrimony, he was convinced that he was not destined for a married life.

However, Luther’s words were taken to heart by many. Priests and nuns all across Germany began to rescind their vows of chastity, and seek out homes and spouses. Twelve such nuns sought Luther’s help and were spirited away from their nunnery, purportedly in herring barrels. Within two years all the women had found suitable matches except for Katharina von Bora. After two suggested matches for Katharina failed, she famously declared that she would marry none except Nikolaus Amsdorf or Dr. Luther himself. She got her way. On the thirteenth of June, 1525, Martin and Katie were united in marriage in a small private ceremony in Wittenburg.

It is assumed that there was little, if any, romantic love between the couple at the time of their marriage; although they had

deep respect for each other. However, through their letters of correspondence over the years, it is clearly evident that a deep and lasting love had grown up between them during their 21-year marriage. Katie was indeed a God-sent helpmeet for Martin.



Katharina von Bora

Katie not only made sure the Herr Doktor’s bedding was clean and meals cooked regularly, but she also ran and maintained the Black Cloister, their home, often with thirty or more students and guests staying there. She also planted the crops and fed and cared for the animals on the cloister farm. Katie even had the cloister brewery repaired, and brewed the beer! All these financial and managerial efforts by Katie allowed her husband the time to read, study, write, preach, debate, and expound on the Word of God.

The one area Luther took an especially active role in was the raising of the children. The Luthers were blessed with six children, although two daughters were taken in death early, one at eight months and the other at thirteen years.

Even though Martin and his wife were devastated by these losses, they knew that their job was not just preparing their children for this world, but preparing them to meet their Savior God.

When one sees the blessings of family and married life that came unexpectedly and relatively late in Luther’s life, you can see the truth in Proverbs 18:22, *“He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.”* Or, as Luther put it, “The greatest gift of grace a man can have is a pious, God-fearing, home-loving wife, whom he can trust with all his goods, body, and life itself, as well as having her as the mother of his children. . . . Katie, you have a good man who loves you. Thank God, and let someone else be empress.”



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## HYMN OF THE WEEK PLAN

*The Lutheran church enjoys a long tradition of identifying one “Hymn of the Week” for every Sunday of the church year. Such a hymn should reflect the unifying theme of the service, and is intended to be sung on that Sunday every year. In this series, Pastor Nathanael Mayhew gives us a brief overview of the Hymns of the Week for the coming month.*

# INTRODUCING THE *Hymn of the Week* June (Easter, Pentecost and Trinity)

**T**he Season of Easter - As we near the end of the Easter season, we do not leave the joy of Christ's victory behind. No matter where we are in the church year, every Sunday reminds us of the hope that is ours because Christ is risen from the dead.

- ♦ **June 1**—The Sixth Sunday after Easter is the last Sunday in the season of Easter. The readings for this Sunday communicate the Christian's life of joyful expectation, lived with confidence in the certain promises of Jesus. The expectation of our eternal deliverance from sin encourages the believer in this life. Martin Luther's reformation hymn **“If God Had Not Been on Our Side”** (TLH 267; not in LSB) has a powerful but unfamiliar melody. Based on the words of Psalm 124, it is full of confident expectation in the Lord.
- ♦ **June 8**—The fifty-day celebration of Easter concludes with the Festival of Pentecost. On this day we focus on the work of God the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples that He would ascend to His Father after completing His work of salvation, but promised that He would send the Holy Spirit, who would *“guide you into all truth.”* (John 16:13) The hymn **“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord!”** (TLH 224; LSB 497) was Luther's hymn on the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

**The Season of Trinity** - The longest season of the church year begins with the Feast of the Holy Trinity. In the festival part of the church year, we reviewed all that our Triune God has done to accomplish our salvation. Now, in the Trinity season we will see how God's work for us is not just about words or ideas, but is also applicable to our everyday lives as our Triune God works in and through us to live for His glory. The color for the season of Trinity is green, which symbolizes the new life that God works in those who believe in Him.

- ♦ **June 15**—The season of Trinity begins with the festival of Holy Trinity. On this day we consider the nature of the one and only true God. The church has used the

Latin word “triune” to describe the God of Scripture, who is one in essence, but three in person (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). The color for Trinity Sunday is white, representing the holiness of our Triune God. Luther's creedal hymn, **“We All Believe in One True God”** (TLH 251; LSB 954) is a metrical version of the Nicene Creed, which has been used since the early church to confess the nature and work of God.

- ♦ **June 22**—The First Sunday after Trinity examines the tools which the Holy Spirit uses to call sinners to salvation. We call these tools the Means of Grace. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God, and the sacraments which are connected to God's Word, to bring us to faith, keep us in the faith, and strengthen us in our Christian lives of faith. The hymn for this day, **“We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost”** (TLH 231; not in LSB), praises all that the Holy Spirit does in our lives.
- ♦ **June 29**—The Second Sunday after Trinity studies God's gracious invitation to sinners. This call is an urgent call, because we are sinful and are deserving of death, and we can in no way save ourselves. It is also urgent because we do not know when our lives will come to an end or when Jesus will return. The communion hymn **“Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Hast Prepared”** (TLH 306; LSB 622), wonderfully focuses us on the Lord's gracious call to receive the forgiveness and refreshment that He alone is able to give.

Dear Lord, help me to worship You with a joyful and thankful heart!



**Nathanael Mayhew** is a pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota.



# Divine Inspiration of the Bible

***“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20-21)***

**I**n the instruction of our youth, pastors have found it important to assign key Bible passages for memorization. This practice has served to arm believers with God’s Word of truth whenever their faith comes under attack. Consider how Jesus withstood the temptations of the devil. He overcame the deceptive lies and enticing allurements of Satan by answering him, saying, *“It is written . . .”* (Matthew 4:4,7,10) In other words, He told the devil, “this is what God says in response to your temptations.”

One of our evil foe’s lines of attack is to call into question what God tells us. This goes back to the very beginning of time when he raised doubts in the minds of Adam and Eve about whether or not God really forbade them from eating the fruit on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, saying to Eve, *“Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”* (Genesis 3:1)

The devil has continued this approach down through the centuries. We hear his human surrogates making the claim that we cannot say that the Bible *is* God’s Word, but rather that the Bible merely *contains* God’s Word. And it is up to the reader to determine what parts are God’s Word and what parts are man’s word in the Bible. Still others tell us that the Bible writers only recorded what the current teachings developed by the religious leaders were, and—claiming that beliefs are ever changing and evolving—critics tell us that not all the teachings in the Bible are valid and applicable in modern times.

These two cunning stratagems have caused people to question the veracity and applicability of teachings found in Holy Scripture. It has also resulted in folks picking and choosing which teachings and moral precepts are to be accepted and which ones are to be disregarded as outdated.

The final desired outcome in Satan’s plan of attack is to cause

sinners to reject the saving Gospel of Christ and thereby lose their only hope of salvation.

God gives answer to such assaults on the Bible in the two verses found above. He teaches us that the writings of Holy Scripture did not have their origin or interpretation in human minds.

No. He continues by informing us that His chosen writers spoke and wrote what He moved them to reveal. The Spirit of God made use of His writers’ unique vocabulary, style of writing, and life’s circumstances to record word for word what He wanted to make known to us in the Bible.

Now, some would point out that what is found in 2 Peter 1:20-21 only applies to the prophetic writings in the Old Testament. However, the Apostle Paul gives the following divinely inspired testimony in 2 Timothy, *“All Scripture*

*is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”* (3:16) All Scripture, which includes both the writings in the Old Testament and the New Testament, was inspired by the Holy Spirit. He breathed into the writers of Holy Scripture in a very special way exactly what He wanted them to record, word for word. Catechumens will recognize this as yet another key passage to be memorized.

How very important it is for Christians to be armed with God’s Word of truth so that we will recognize the lies of the devil and send him packing with memorized Bible passages!



Gutenberg Bible, New York Public Library



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# Faith Clings to the Secret Things

***“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 29:29 ESV)***

**I**f there is a God, then how do you explain . . .?” I’d guess that most of us have heard this demanding question before, especially from friends and family who are not believers or who are struggling in their faith. The desire of man to have the God of heaven and earth explained to him in quantifiable terms has led many away from the faith. But as you’ll recall, Paul refers to us Christians as “stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:1)

A large portion of what we believe and confess can be described only as a mystery. Creation makes no sense to our feeble human reason—how could God create everything from nothing in only six 24-hour days? Again, to human reason the sacraments make no sense—how can Christ’s body and blood come to us in plain bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins?

Baptism makes no sense—how can water and a few words cleanse someone of sin? The incarnation makes no sense—how could Jesus be both truly God and truly man? The resurrection makes no sense—death seems so final!

As Moses gives his farewell address to Israel before his death in the closing chapters of Deuteronomy, his words remind us that the answer to the incessant question, “how do you explain . . .?” is simply and often this: *you don’t*.

Our God and His ways are so much higher than we and our ways are (Isaiah 55:9) that there are many such secret things that belong to the Lord which we will never be able to fully grasp on this side of eternity. But what God *has* revealed to us and to our children is both trustworthy and eternal. After all, He has already revealed to us the most dumbfounding, incredible act of love by sending His own beloved, perfect Son to suffer and die on the cross in our place. Why would

God sacrifice so much for sinful people who have nothing to offer in return? Because we can’t fathom a love that deep, the very foundation and chief tenet of the Christian faith makes absolutely zero rational sense. And that’s okay! We are not called upon to understand why “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) We are merely called to believe it. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

***The answer to the incessant question, “how do you explain . . .?” is simply and often this: you don’t.***

Having been redeemed through Christ’s blood, we may now strive to do all the words of the Law in faith. We may look at all these mysteries of God not in frustration but in joy, content in knowing that even those truths we can’t comprehend remain truths, nonetheless. He who revealed them to us does not lie (Numbers 23:19). The Gospel

motivates us to hear and faithfully follow God’s Word to His glory, and it gives us peace in knowing that we don’t need to understand the secret things of God to believe them and rejoice in them.

What has been revealed is our precious treasure forever. What has not been revealed belongs to the Lord our God and will be understood clearly when the Lord calls us to our eternal rest. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV), “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!



**Drew Naumann** is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington.



## KNOW YOUR BIBLE BOOKS – THE LETTERS OF SAINT PAUL

*In this series we offer brief introductions to the books of the Bible, including background, authorship, content, and application to the lives of today's Christians.*

# Colossians

## *"Not This, That"*

**T**he word "sapper" comes from the French noun *sapeur* and the verb *saper*, both of which refer to "digging under" or "undermining." In military usage, the job of sappers is to undermine enemy fortifications, causing them to collapse. The devil fields his own legion of sappers, many of which exist in ignorance of the identity of their commander-in-chief. Their sole mission is to undermine the Word of God.

Sinners are both brought to faith and preserved in that faith by the Holy Spirit working through the power of God's Word. It is not surprising therefore that the devil works tirelessly to undermine that Word of God. In connection with the Epistle to the Colossians, the undermining began with an attack on its very authorship. By denying that Paul himself wrote the epistle, despite the fact that the letter clearly states that he did, Satan seeks to undermine the entire epistle. If the letter's claim of authorship is false, what, if anything, can be trusted? In fact, if Paul did not write the epistle, the majority of the final chapter is also nothing but a protracted lie. Even when

Paul's authorship is defended, Satan still claims victory in that he has succeeded in distracting from God's message in the epistle. His tactic is "Not This, That." *"Forget about the content. Argue about who wrote it."* Satan's plan is fiendishly clever in that it apes the true theme of the Holy Spirit's message in the Epistle, which is also "Not This, That."

Though evidence suggests that Paul himself did not establish the congregation in Colossae (and may never have visited it), he remained intensely interested in the preservation and growth of its members. The Epistle to the Colossians is one of the letters he wrote during his first Roman imprisonment, where he received reports not only from Epaphras, the man believed to have founded the congregation, but also from Onesimus, the freed slave of Philemon, who was a native of Colossae.

This epistle was more than just a letter of encouragement, though the first and fourth chapters were certainly also that. Paul's decision to encourage the members in Colossae apparently did not originate in a vacuum. Chapters 2 and 3 tell us of the need or causation of Paul's

encouragement, which was that the congregation was under attack. Satan's minions were already at work trying to undermine the very foundations of that Christian congregation. Chapter 2 was Paul's "not this," and chapter 3 his "that."

The error that Paul addressed in chapter 2 appears to have been an early form of Gnosticism. Gnostics (from the Greek word for *knowledge*) not only denied the deity of Christ, they also promoted a "higher consciousness" and asceticism that bears striking similarities to Buddhism. Many Gnostics considered themselves Christians but insisted that Apostolic Christianity alone fell short of ultimate truth and was therefore inadequate. In chapter 2, Paul dismissed

the Gnostic errors as "philosophy and empty deceit," and as teachings founded "according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ." (Colossians 2:8 ESV) He also condemned Gnostic asceticism and the insistence on keeping parts of the Mosaic Law: "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival

or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17 ESV)

The "not this" of chapter 2 is followed by Paul's magnificent "that" in chapter 3, where he reminded the Colossians of the sufficiency of Christ and the true Christian walk. He encouraged them to set their minds "on things that are above," to "put to death therefore what is earthly," to "put off the old man" and to "put on the new." (verses 1, 4, 9-10) What a bright, shining contrast the Holy Spirit has here given us between the dark and malevolent lies of Satan and the bright crystalline joy of true Christianity. Read the letter. And thereby avail yourself of "that" treasure.

Ruins of the ancient city of Colossae



**Michael Roehl** is pastor of Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Bismarck, North Dakota.





Pastor Robert Mackensen  
1920-2012

*In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by early leaders in the CLC. Pastor Emeritus James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Pastor Robert Mackensen (1920-2012) was a charter member of the CLC, and served congregations in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado and North Carolina. This article is from the Lutheran Spokesman of July 1995. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.*

## Aspirin-Sized Words

**C**ustomer: "I want to buy some acetylsalicylic acid."  
Druggist: "Do you mean aspirin?"  
Customer: "Yes, I can never remember that word."

Most people can remember and understand simple words more easily than "jaw breaker" terminology. In our Bible the Holy Spirit has presented mind-boggling truths in "aspirin-size" words.

For example: Scripture declares that Jesus is God and man in one Person. His divine and human natures did not remain aloof from each other like two kinds of wood glued together. Nor did they melt into just one nature making Christ not quite God, yet super human.

Instead, the Son of God and the Son of man share the use of each other's abilities just as powerful electricity and the wires in your toaster share their individual capabilities in order to make toast. In order to produce our glorious salvation, the God and human parts in Christ worked together.

But see how the Bible presents these stupendous truths in "aspirin-size" words! Is our Savior both God and man? Answer: "Unto you is born . . . the Lord!" (Luke 2:11) "God was manifest in the flesh." (1 Timothy 3:16)

Did His two natures share the use of their abilities with each other? Answer: "Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea." (Matthew 14:25) "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the

sick of the palsy), "I say unto thee, arise and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." (Luke 5:24)

Did God and man in Christ accomplish our salvation by working together? Answer: "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." (Romans 5:10) "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

Pharmacists must study long hours in order to know precise (but long-worded) terms for simple medicines like aspirin. Our future ministers must also study long hours in order to know precise (but long-worded) terms for the great truths of Scripture.

At Immanuel Lutheran Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin these dedicated young men, under the professors' guidance, discuss how Christ's divine and human natures work together. Their discussion involves sentences such as, "The communication of Christ's attributes in the idiomatic (individual), majestic, and apotelesmatic (accomplishing) areas. . . ."

God wants us to have well-trained pastors who guard us from the poison of false religious ideas. Yet, relying on their pastor should not cause church members to shy away from studying Scripture themselves. The Holy Spirit is an excellent Teacher. By using "aspirin-size" words, He enables all Christians to search the Scriptures daily, to judge the correctness of the minister's teaching, and to have the Word of Christ dwell in them richly.



# Devastating Flash Floods in the CLCI

[Editor: The following is a report about current events in the Church of the Lutheran Confession in India (CLCI). It is written, in his own words, by the indigenous pastor who is our main contact in the CLCI. Names of people and places are being withheld because of increasing persecution in the area. The report is lightly edited for clarity.]

***“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)***

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are humbled to write these few words on how God is helping the CLCI in time of trouble. Your prayers and support are of utmost importance to the CLCI to survive in the midst of the many difficulties we are facing here in India.

## Flash Floods

When we wake up in the morning from bed, we expect to step onto the floor, right? But one morning in late December, many of our members from nine CLCI congregations stepped into water after they woke up. These Christians live near the Krishna River, which experienced flash floods on such a large scale. These floods damaged many of our church buildings and the homes of our members in the districts of Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Bapatla. People in these districts experienced one of its worst floods.

“I was fast asleep then the next minute I heard water running. I thought that maybe I might have forgotten to close a tap, but when I woke up, I literally stepped into a pool of water. Water was literally coming through the windows,” said one of our CLCI pastors.

The floods have thrust many of our members’ lives into poverty. Many lost everything, including their household goods and farming equipment. We are sorry to inform you that four of our members died due to the floods. The loss of life and property affected our CLCI congregations with the saddest feelings.

Though heavy rains began in the month of December 2024, no one expected them to turn into flash floods that took so many lives and destroyed millions of dollars’ worth of property. Homes flooded, dams broke their banks, roads were damaged, and crops were destroyed. And sadly, lives





were lost. Some people lost their sources of income as their businesses were washed away by the floods.

We visited these nine flood-affected congregations, and our CLCI volunteers helped in removing rubble. Due to the effect of the disaster, almost all the water has been polluted, thus becoming a risk for spreading various dangerous diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid, cholera, etc. These diseases attacked many of our people. In the first phase of the flood relief program, we have made some immediate efforts to distribute cooked food, medicine, bleaching powder, and floor cleaners like phenyl and so forth. We have also distributed drinking water packets and water bottles to our flood-victimized CLCI members.

We faced a few problems with our relief operations in those effected villages. Besides our members, the other village people who are not our members have started coming to claim our relief materials. So it has also become an important step in communicating clearly with our CLCI pastors and the affected members of the CLCI. We have decided to restrict our relief efforts to our CLCI members only who are severely damaged. We invited them to come to our CLCI mission house to take relief materials. After successful completion of the first phase, we invited them to come to the mission house. We distributed clothing, blankets, saris, towels, and also rice, onions, soaps, and curry dhal grains. We distributed plastic lunch boxes with new testaments to the children.

Also, we gave Rs 1000 money (a little less than \$12 USD) to the nine severely affected pastors. Our CLC USA brethren

gave generous contributions, and many members from other CLCI congregations have helped us in these relief operations. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank all of them for their kind help. I am sure all the CLCI flood victims will gladly remember them all. Because they have shown such heartfelt compassion, Christian love, tremendous encouragement, kindness, and generous help in this time of tragedy.

Please pray for the following needs.

1. Repairing the damaged churches and prayer sheds. (nine congregations and twelve preaching stations.)
2. Pray that the Lord may grant His comfort to those families who lost their loved ones in the floods. Four deaths occurred.
3. Pray for the families who have lost their cattle. There are seven families who have lost their water buffaloes, which are the main source of their livelihood.

We have carried out the relief programs with much hard work and planning. We once again thank all the CLC and CLCI brothers and sisters for their amazing generous donations and help, which have been rebuilding the affected families for a brighter future. Thank you once again for your valuable service and help.

Please pray that the Lord may use the CLCI to bring many Indians into His kingdom. Your prayer support will build the CLCI greatly here in India to do His mighty work. May the Lord bless you all. Thank you.



Left, CLC-funded relief supplies are distributed; right, a CLCI pastor officiates at the funeral of a flood victim.



# Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Columbia, South Carolina

***“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” (Psalm 127:1)***



Last May, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of our Christian day school (pre/K—eighth grade) with a seminar, special worship service, and potluck. This summer the congregation will be doing a total renovation of the school. This will include a complete gutting of the existing interior, removal of asbestos, and a rebuild from the bare structure. We pray that this will serve us for another fifty years of God's grace!

We are grateful for all the hard work of our teaching staff. Our enrollment is at twenty-seven this year, including six non-members. Mr. Mark Wales, recently retired from his consulting job in the pallet industry, has stepped in to serve as our principal. Blair Sydow, having left a public-school teaching job, has accepted the call to serve as full-time upper grade teacher. Leah Fossum teaches preschool and kindergarten. Amy Osborne teaches the lower grades. Deana Pfeiffer teaches language arts, and Bob Long volunteers to teach advanced math.



Top left, main church entrance; top right, school entrance; above, current and former teachers and pastors at the fiftieth anniversary of Trinity Lutheran School.





Students and instructors at the fiftieth anniversary of the school.

Close to a third of our congregation, about fifty souls, is between the ages of five and twenty-five. The large number of youths mentioned in our last article (*Lutheran Spokesman*, July 2020) has now matured into a large group of young adults in high school and college. We are grateful that so many have been able to attend ILC (fourteen this year, and hoping for five more next year). We miss them dearly! The Christ Explorers Camp for youth has now evolved into the Christ Explorers Retreat in order to serve our high school through college age young adults. We are excited to host our first such retreat in Bryson City, North Carolina, June 19-22.

With the ILC students away and sixteen households living at a distance, we average about seventy to ninety members on a given Sunday. Our ministry has a particular focus on staying connected, mentorship, and small group fellowship. We regularly review a “keeping in touch” list with our council and elders so that members who seem isolated or in special need (widows, distant households, lonely members) are visited and kept in prayer.

For the last three years, we’ve been hosting quarterly “breaking bread” small groups that meet in members’ homes. The classes usually last about four to six weeks and feature Bible-based discussion. Members have appreciated a chance to get to know others they might not normally visit with. We hosted our first men’s retreat in February at a local retreat property, with about fifteen in attendance. We toured a fish hatchery and enjoyed a tasty shrimp boil. The theme was “Encouraging Each Other.”

We are doing well and are grateful for the Lord’s continued guidance and teaching. Thank you for letting us share our faith and life in Christ with y’all!



Church re-roofing project, spring 2019.



**David Pfeiffer** is pastor of Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in West Columbia, South Carolina.



# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JUNE 2025

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comment
June 2	TLH 160 / LSB 442	Psalms 24	David calls the people of the Lord to worship their God, Who is glorious and Who has demonstrated His glory in creation.
June 3	TLH 526 / LSB 745	Psalms 25	With David we ask the Lord for victory over enemies, for instruction, for forgiveness, for deliverance, and for redemption.
June 4	TLH 462 / LSB 651	Psalms 26	David prays to the Lord for vindication in the face of false accusation against him. No one can accuse us with the Lord on our side. Therefore we join David in blessing the Lord.
June 5	TLH 402 / LSB 731	Psalms 27	Since we have confidence in the Lord, we are bold to request of Him help, forgiveness, and guidance.
June 6	TLH 6 / LSB 942	Psalms 28	David petitions the Lord for help. Fully expecting the Lord to answer his prayer, David praises the Lord.
June 7	LSB 503	Acts 2	Luke records the events of Pentecost, including the sound like a mighty rushing wind, the divided tongues as of fire, the speaking in other tongues, the powerful sermon of Peter, the repentance of the people, the 3,000 Baptisms, and the fellowship of believers in the early church.
June 9	TLH 575 / LSB 966	Psalms 29	The Lord proclaims His Gospel powerfully throughout the world.
June 10	WS 761 / LSB 818	Psalms 30	David praises the Lord for providing restoration, requests continuing help, and thanks the Lord for His grace and His mercy.
June 11	TLH 247 / LSB 505	Psalms 31	David prays for rescue, acknowledges the ongoing care of the Lord, and calls all the faithful to take courage.
June 12	LSB 877	Psalms 32	Psalms 32 is one of seven Psalms traditionally designated as “penitential psalms.” David describes vividly the blessedness of forgiveness, recalls from experience the wasting away that occurs without repentance, beautifully and simply outlines the confession of sins, confesses that the Lord is a hiding place, and expresses trust in the Lord.
June 13	WS 782 / LSB 726	Psalms 33	Believers rejoice in and praise the Lord, remembering His Word and his work of creation. Realizing that the Lord sees all and knows all, we put our hope in the Lord.
June 14	TLH 294 / LSB 523	Proverbs 8	Solomon personifies wisdom. Beyond simply extolling wisdom as an abstraction, Solomon here describes Jesus Christ, Who is Wisdom incarnate, Who was present and active in the creation of the world.
June 16	TLH 426	2 Samuel 8	The Lord gives King David and Israel victory over their enemies.
June 17	LSB 843	2 Samuel 9	Mephibosheth is the son of Jonathan and the grandson of Saul. Rather than considering him a threat, David demonstrates great kindness toward Mephibosheth.
June 18	WS 768 / LSB 665	2 Samuel 10	The Lord gives King David victory over Ammon and Syria.
June 19	TLH 329 / LSB 607	2 Samuel 11	Sin spreads like cancer. Sloth gives way to lust. Lust gives way to adultery. Adultery gives way to deception and murder. David’s great fall into sin and shame is tragic especially in light of how gracious the Lord has been toward David. Truly we have much in common with David.
June 20	TLH 318 / LSB 613	2 Samuel 12	The Lord sends Nathan to rebuke David. David repents of his sin. As a result of the sin of David, the son of David and Bathsheba dies. The Lord blesses David and Bathsheba with the birth of their son, Solomon. David captures Rabbah and other Ammonite cities.
June 21	TLH 429 / LSB 708	Luke 16	Jesus tells the parable of the dishonest manager, teaches that the law must be upheld, denounces divorce, and tells of the rich man and Lazarus.
June 23	TLH 513	2 Samuel 13	Amnon, a son of David, rapes Tamar, a daughter of David. Absalom later murders Amnon before fleeing into exile. The Lord is fulfilling His prediction to David, recorded in 2 Samuel 12:11.
June 24	TLH 254 / LSB 522	2 Samuel 14	Three years later, Joab arranges for Absalom to be returned safely to Jerusalem. Two years later, Absalom and David are reunited.
June 25	TLH 520 / LSB 754	2 Samuel 15	Absalom conspires against David in order to claim the throne for himself. David and his loyal servants flee Jerusalem.
June 26	TLH 424	2 Samuel 16	Ziba bears false witness against his master, Mephibosheth, in order to find favor with David. David bears the cursing of Shimei. Absalom comes to Jerusalem. Hushai pledges loyalty to Absalom in order to serve as a spy for David.
June 27	TLH 339 / LSB 549	2 Samuel 17	Hushai uses his position with Absalom to protect David.
June 28	TLH 432	2 Samuel 18	Joab and his men kill Absalom. David is deeply saddened by the death of his son.
June 30	TLH 210 / LSB 464	2 Samuel 19	Joab urges David to stop mourning his enemy and to accept the victory. David returns to Jerusalem and forgives those who have rebelled against him with Absalom.



# Building Projects in Nigeria and Bangladesh

From foundation stones to living stones, God is shaping His Church in Nigeria and Bangladesh! Two vital construction projects are underway—each designed to support the training of church leaders and the spread of the Gospel in fields ripe for harvest.

In Nigeria, the Nigeria-CLC (NCLC) is nearing completion of a new multipurpose seminary building. Through the Lord's provision—made possible by local offerings and a Mission Development Fund (MDF) grant—the structure is on track to be completed by the end of spring, 2025. The facility will include two large classrooms, a library and computer room, and faculty offices. Currently, eight students are enrolled in seminary, with two more planning to begin studies next year. The new building has already sparked renewed interest among young men who wish to study for the ministry. Missionary Todd Ohlmann is scheduled to visit later this year to dedicate the building and connect with pastors and seminary leaders. This seminary will play a vital role in equipping faithful preachers of the Word for congregations across Nigeria.

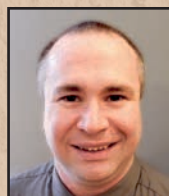
In Bangladesh, construction is also progressing on a multi-use building for the Bangladesh Lutheran Church Mission (BLCM) in Gopalganj, funded in part by an MDF grant. Groundbreaking took place shortly after Easter, and workers are racing to complete the foundation and ground floor slab before the monsoon rains arrive—typically in late May



or early June. The building will serve multiple purposes: a worship center, Bible Institute classroom, storage space, and a residence for Pastor Monotosh and his family. While a full student dormitory is part of the long-term vision, this first phase will include just one dedicated dormitory room. Fourteen men are ready and eager to begin pastoral training once construction is complete. The BLCM plans to launch a four-year training program with monthly in-person sessions, combining classroom instruction with practical outreach.

Both of these projects are advancing by God's grace, through the prayers of His people and the dedication of those laboring in the field. As the work continues, we give thanks for all who are involved and ask for your continued prayers—that the Lord would bless the construction, strengthen His servants, and raise up faithful shepherds to serve His growing Church.

To Him be the glory as His Kingdom grows through brick, mortar, and the Gospel of Christ!



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



## SEEN IN PASSING

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

### **UK School Celebrates “Refugee Week” Instead of Easter.**

Norwood Primary School in Eastleigh, Hampshire, this year canceled its traditional Easter observance in the name of “diversity and inclusion.” The observance was apparently seen as too discriminatory in favor of Christians. In its place the headmistress of the school introduced a “Refugee Week.” Hussain, Nasser. “Canceling Easter.” *Events*. FirstThings.com, 9 Apr. 2025. Web. 8 May 2025.

**History Repeats as Whale Swallows Man.** On February 8, 23-year-old Chilean kayaker Adrián Simancas was literally swallowed by a humpback whale off the Patagonian coast of South America. The incident was captured on video by his father, who was in a nearby kayak. The swallow-ee, who survived, described feeling a slimy texture and hearing strange noises inside the whale’s mouth. Simancas thought he was about to die. However, after holding him in its mouth for a few seconds, the whale spit him out again. Diaz, Andrea. “‘I felt a slimy texture brush my face’: Man describes being swallowed by whale.” *BBC Mundo*. BBC.com, 14 Feb. 2025. Web. 8 May 2025.

**Church of England Bans Non-Alcoholic Wine, Gluten-Free Bread from Communion.** In February the Church of England officially affirmed that non-alcoholic wine and gluten-free bread cannot be used as substitutes when taking communion. Ahead of the General Synod, held in London, the denomination’s leadership reiterated that the bread used in the sacrament must be made from wheat flour, and wine must be the fermented juice of the grape in order to be consecrated. Some C of E leaders had objected to this restriction as representing an “injustice of exclusion,” but they were overruled. Others saw the discussion as relatively inconsequential, especially in light of recent clergy abuse scandals. Klett, Leah. “Church of England bans non-alcoholic wine, gluten-free bread from communion: ‘injustice.’” *News*. ChristianPost.com, 10 Feb. 2025. Web. 8 May 2025.



A conference of pastors and inquirers near Karatu, Tanzania, April 14-15



Wittenberg Seminary faculty members at the conference luncheon, (l to r) Pastors Robert Loskira, Jeremia Issangya and Missionary Bruce Naumann

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Anniversary.** You are invited to join the members of Berea, Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, in giving thanks to the Lord of the Church for His sixty-five years of blessings. A special service of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord will be held on Sunday, June 29, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. Speakers will include Berea’s former pastor, David Schierenbeck, as well as two sons of the congregation, Professor Steven Sippert, and seminarian Samuel Radermacher. A meal will follow the service.

—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer