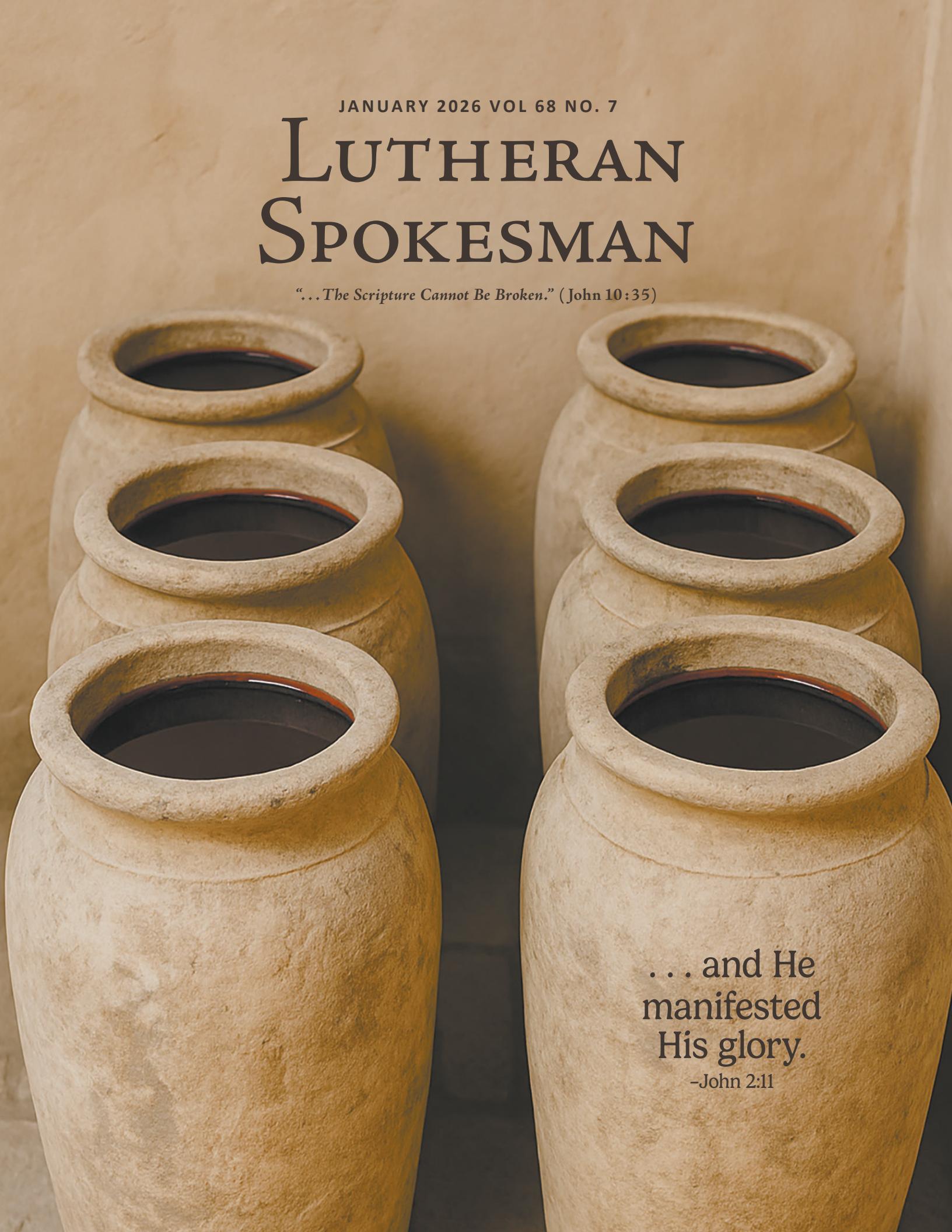


JANUARY 2026 VOL 68 NO. 7

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



... and He
manifested
His glory.

-John 2:11

Be faithful unto death
and I will give you the crown of life.



IN THIS ISSUE JANUARY 2026

Pages 12-13

COVER STORY - EPIPHANY

Oh! I Know You! 3

DEVOTION - THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST

Signs and Wonders 4

HEARTS IN HARMONY - PROFILES OF THE HYMNWRITERS WHO SHAPE OUR WORSHIP

Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) 5

STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The God Who Rightly Cries "Wolf!" 6

GEMS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Operation Infant Rescue 7

KNOW YOUR BIBLE BOOKS - THE LETTERS OF SAINT PAUL

The Epistle to the Hebrews 8

VOICES FROM THE PAST - EGBERT ALBRECHT

Serving with Joy 9

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Forty-Two Men – Trained, Equipped, and Sent! 10-11

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Messiah Lutheran Church – Hales Corners, Wisconsin ... 12-13

BREAD OF LIFE READINGS, JANUARY 2026

14

ILC NEWSLETTER

"Let Us Run the Race with Endurance" 15

SEEN IN PASSING

16

The Lutheran Spokesman (USPS 825580) (ISSN 00247537) is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.clclutheran.org

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

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

Editor: Paul Naumann, 3732 Claymore Lane, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, E-mail to paul.naumann@ilc.edu; Assistant Editor: Craig Owings; Art Director, art direction & graphic design by Pipestone Publishing Co.; Proofreaders: Vance Fossum and Paula Naumann; Staff: James Albrecht, David Berenthal, Timothy Daub, Michael Eichstadt, Wayne Eichstadt, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, Richard Kanzenbach, John Klatt, Joseph Lau, Delwyn Maas, Nathanael Mayhew, Drew Naumann, Karl Olmanson, John Pfeiffer, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Peter Reim, Michael Roehl, Robert Sauers, David Schierenbeck, Chad Seybt, Mark Weis.

Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Naumann three months before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Naumann.

Business Manager: Steve Lentz, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701. E-mail to lutheranspokesman@ilc.edu. Subscription Manager: Jessica Lau. Individual subscriptions \$23 for one year, \$44 for two years, and \$60 for three years. Group subscriptions through congregations: \$20.

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

Spokesman Online Version at: www.lutheranspokesman.org

Printed in U.S.A.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations in this publication are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Oh! I Know You!

A short passing glimpse fired off a bolt of recognition which prompted a physical double-take and the mental conclusion, “I know that woman.” But *how* do I know her? She was in the growing crowd gathering for a funeral, but she wasn’t a member of the congregation or a known family member, so who could she be? The questions created internal banter for several minutes until the triumphant moment: “Oh! I know you! You were my pharmacist!”

It was this kind of moment that faithful Jews began to experience when Jesus entered His public ministry. They knew the coming Messiah through promise. They had seen Him in prophecy. So when Jesus of Nazareth began performing miracles and publicly preaching, there were “I think I recognize you” moments, but that recognition did not immediately come with full understanding.

When the eternal Word of God became flesh (John 1:14), He did not appear to be anything out of the ordinary. However, when Jesus started to perform

miracles, these became the passing glimpses into Who He is. Jesus’ first and subsequent miracles “manifested His glory.” (John 2:11) People began to make the connections between what they knew about the Messiah and this Jesus whom they were following, “Can this be the Son of David?” (Matthew 12:23)

While the miracles were passing glimpses into Jesus’ divine nature, His preaching is what entered the hearts of sinners and moved them to repentance and trust in Him. His amazing works testified to Who He is, and His Word brought souls into His fold. Like the miracles, Jesus’ words also left people amazed. “They were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.” (Luke 4:32)

Even though the people of Jesus’ home town, Nazareth, rejected Him, they still were astonished and asked, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?” (Matthew 13:54)

Nearing the end of his life, John the Baptist sent word to Jesus from prison asking, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (Luke 7:19) Jesus answered by pointing to passages in Isaiah (Isaiah 35 and 61) “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.” (Matthew 11:3-5)

People began to make the connections between what they knew about the Messiah and this Jesus whom they were following.

Jesus’ words and miracles created the epiphany of recognizing Jesus in faith. When Jesus asked the disciples “Who do you say that I am?” Peter came to his own “Oh! I know You!” moment based on what he had seen and heard. Without hesitation Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:15-16)

By God’s grace and through the miraculous power of the Gospel, we know Jesus even more fully than those of His day, for “we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place.” (2 Peter 1:19)

Our Savior can be found throughout the pages of Scripture from Genesis through Revelation, so as we abide in His Word we will be astonished at both His miracles and His teaching. We will grow in our knowledge, understanding, and conviction of the truth (John 8:31-32), and thereby we will be nurtured in our souls, equipped for the battle against our enemies, and we will forever dwell in the light of the epiphany that reveals our Savior to us.

Whenever we spend time in God’s Word, we will see Jesus both in prophecy and fulfillment, and then be able to exclaim, “Oh! I Know You! You are Jesus, my Savior!”



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

Signs and Wonders

The word “miracle” refers to something that cannot ordinarily occur within the realm of the universal laws of nature. Jesus performed miracles to validate what He said, such as in Matthew 9:6-7, “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—‘Rise, pick up your bed and go home.’ And he rose and went home.”

How often the word miracle is found in the Gospels depends on what translation is used. It is, for example, used frequently in the KJV and not at all in the ESV. Other words are also used to indicate examples of things that cannot ordinarily take place, like signs, wonders, and mighty works.

Regarding Jesus changing water into wine in John 2:11, the KJV says, “This beginning of miracles,” the EHV says, “This, the beginning of his miraculous signs,” and the ESV translates. “This, the first of his signs.” The word *sign* indicates that the miraculous event is designed to teach us something and especially to reveal a spiritual application.

God confirmed His Word with signs and wonders in the Old Testament. “I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples.” (Psalm 77:11-14)

The Holy Spirit worked in hearts through the Gospel Jesus preached, and the Gospel was confirmed by the signs He did.

“Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.” (John 2:23)

In connection with his account of the life of Jesus, John wrote,

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30-31)

Note well that John states the precise reason why John recorded the signs in his testimony of the life of Jesus. It is that those who read it may believe and have eternal life!

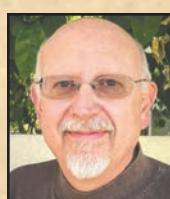
When proclaiming, “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know” (Acts 2:22), Peter did

not need to recite a long list of the works, wonders, and signs of Jesus for his hearers, because they had seen them for themselves!

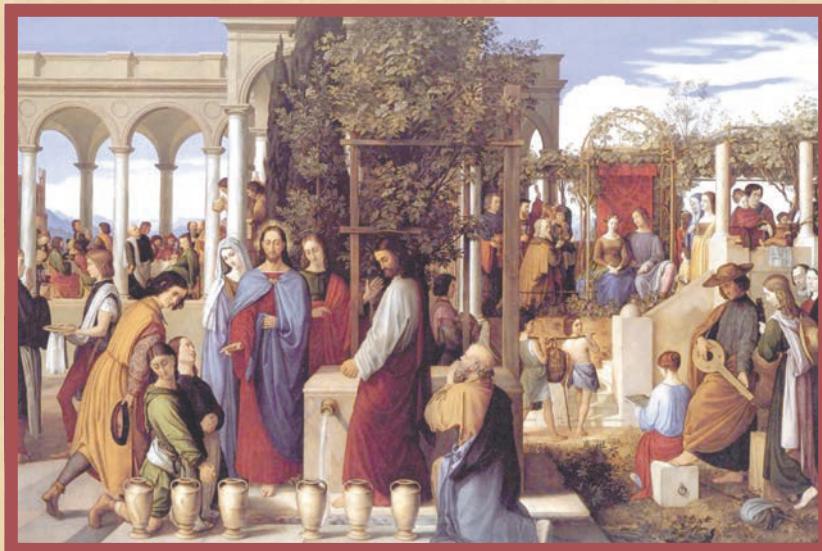
The Lord continued to confirm the spoken Word by giving those who carried this Word forth as missionaries the ability to perform signs and wonders at certain times and places:

Acts 14:1-3—“Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.”

We thank the Lord who has blessed us by recording these powerful events for us today! Praise the Lord for His life-giving Gospel confirmed by His signs and wonders!



Delwyn Maas is pastor of Gift of God Lutheran Church in Mapleton, North Dakota, and St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Ponsford, Minnesota.



Wedding Feast at Cana, 1819 by Julius Schnorr

HEARTS IN HARMONY— PROFILES OF THE HYMNWRITERS WHO SHAPE OUR WORSHIP

Each month we highlight a hymnwriter who authored one or more of the well-loved hymns that we sing today.

Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676)

“A Theologian Sifted in Satan’s Sieve”

The description of the Lutheran hymn writer Paul Gerhardt in our title is a translation of the Latin inscription beneath a life-sized painting of him that hangs in the church in Germany where he served as pastor.

The reference to Satan reminds us of Job and of how God permitted Satan to afflict him. The expression “Satan’s sieve” calls to mind the words that Peter heard from Jesus on the night before His passion, warning Peter that Satan had desired to have him that he might sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31). For God’s own good and gracious purposes, He permitted Satan to afflict both of these men: Job, by bringing on him catastrophic losses and physical pain and misery; Peter, by luring him into a situation where, moved by fear, he denied Jesus three times.

That inscription beneath Gerhardt’s portrait is no exaggeration. Like Job, Gerhardt suffered great personal losses. Of his six children, one died in infancy, and four were taken in childhood by disease. After all this, his wife died also. Like Peter, Gerhardt was put under severe pressure. His secular ruler tried to force him to sign a document promising that he wouldn’t preach against the unscriptural doctrines of the Reformed. For his refusal, Gerhardt suffered the loss of his position as pastor.

From these sifting experiences of loss, persecution, and hardship came the hymns for which we remember Gerhardt. Of the 123 that he produced, 21 are in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. These include hymns that we turn to throughout the church year. At Christmas we sing, “All My Heart This Night Rejoices.” (TLH 77) During Lent and Holy Week we sing, “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth,” (142) and “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.” (172) At Easter, “Awake My Heart with Gladness.” (192) At Pentecost, “Oh, Enter, Lord, Thy Temple.” (228) We draw strength and encouragement from Gerhardt hymns such as “Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me” (349), and “If God Himself Be For Me.” (528)

Gerhardt’s hymns express great joy at the birth of the Savior,

His resurrection from the dead, and His outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They exhibit a cheerful and serene confidence in the promises of God’s Word. So much so, that we may be surprised to learn about the trying circumstances under which he composed them. But it was not in spite of the trials of Gerhardt’s life, but because of them, that he wrote such exultant and confident expressions of Christian faith. It was in the loss of earthly blessings that Gerhardt saw clearly that the Christian’s joy and hope are not in these things, but in Christ and His work. It was in the experience of persecution for teaching and standing up for the truth of God’s Word that he learned to long for the promised hope of eternal life. The hymns of Paul Gerhardt are treasures because they teach us to “seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.” They encourage us to “set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2 KJV)



Paul Gerhardt 1607-1676

Isn’t this just what we need for our lives today? Are we burdened and distracted by either an abundance of material possessions or a desire for these things? Then we need to sing,

*I build on this foundation, That Jesus and His blood
Alone are my salvation, The true, eternal good,
Without Him all that pleases Is valueless on earth;
The gifts I owe to Jesus Alone my love are worth. (528:3)*

Are our lives today—like those of previous generations—still characterized by troubles and sorrows? Then we need to sing,

*Why should cross and trial grieve me? Christ is near With His cheer;
Never will He leave me. Who can rob me of the heaven
That God’s Son For my own To my faith hath given? (523:1)*



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

The God Who Rightly Cries “Wolf!”

“Knowing this first: That scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: That by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that existed perished, being flooded with water.” (2 Peter 3: 3-6 NKJV)

In one of Aesop's famous fables, a shepherd boy tricks his neighboring villagers twice by falsely crying “Wolf!,” leading them to come needlessly to the rescue. When a wolf later does appear and the boy cries for help, his cries fall on skeptical and deaf ears with tragic consequences.

False alarms are not uncommon in our own lives either—be it from mechanical alarm failure, meteorologists' overreaction, politicians' fearmongering, medical false alarms, or even our own anxieties. There is always cause for careful scrutiny of man's words and warnings.

Yet our holy and faithful God “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2), and therefore cannot mislead or manipulate or exploit anyone.

All His words, including His promises and His warnings, are “trustworthy and true.”

(Revelation 21:5) While we are more familiar with the numerous New Testament end time, last day, final judgment prophecies (Matthew 25:31-46, John 12:48, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:11-15), the Old Testament also is filled with warnings of divine judgment on sin, both in now time and end times, especially in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel and Zephaniah.

Yet despite God's universal alarm system sounding forth loudly and clearly through His Word as well as through Biblical and historical judgments, scoffers abound—both in Peter's day and in our day.

“Nothing's changed since the beginning of time,” they say.



“Why would things ever change?” They “willfully forget” two obvious truths: this very earth and universe was created by the Word of God, and this same world was once deluged and destroyed by that same Word because of sin. Jesus Himself “connects the dots” between Noah's flood and His own return on Judgment Day (Luke 17: 26-30). Each “now time” judgment is a sign of and prelude to the one great final Judgment and therefore a call to repentance to every sinner.

When God's first Eden warnings of judgment upon sin were ignored (Genesis 3), the floodgates of earthly and eternal judgment upon sin were opened. The same Jesus Who rightly cried “wolf” about false prophets (Matthew 7:15) also rightly issued warnings for all to be ready for His return to usher in judgment and eternity (Matthew 24-25).

Yes, our God never “cries wolf” without good reason. *“As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”* (Ezekiel 33:11) *“God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8) God's intent in all His dealings with mankind is never to harm or destroy the sinner, but to lead him to repentance, to awaken him to his sin and lead him in faith and into the loving arms of his Savior and Good Shepherd.



David Schierenbeck is a retired pastor and a member of the CLC Board of Doctrine. He lives in St. Paul Park, Minnesota.

Operation Infant Rescue

History has recorded some notable and important rescues. In WWII alone, General MacArthur and his family were rescued from Corregidor in the Philippines by PT boats followed by a plane to Melbourne. The raid at Cabanatuan (Philippines) by the US Army 6th Rangers liberated over five hundred Allied prisoners and civilians from a Japanese camp. And who has not heard of the rescue of the British Expeditionary Force off the beaches of Dunkirk?

Biblical rescues certainly include Lot and his family from the four kings of the East by Abram and the 318 trained men of his household. And who can forget the rescue of baby Moses by his mother and Pharaoh's daughter?

Important as those rescues were, there was another just as important and even more consequential. The account is given in 2 Kings 11 and 2 Chronicles 22 and 23. The situation was as follows: By God's command and promise through Elijah, Ahab and Jezebel and their descendants were to be liquidated by Jehu for bringing the evil worship of Baal into Israel. This included King Ahaziah of Judah, whose mother was Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. With the death of Ahaziah, and a good portion of the royal family already killed, Athaliah grabbed the throne for herself. To cement her power, she murdered all the remaining royal princes—her own grandsons!

Except for one. His name was Joash, and as an infant he was rescued by Jehosheba, a half-sister of Ahaziah, and wife of Jehoiada the high priest. Jehosheba stole Joash away from his intended fate and hid him and his wet nurse in a temple bedroom for six years! For six years the secret was kept inviolate. For six years the infant prince lived safely under the care and protection of Jehosheba and Jehoiada. Then on the seventh year Joash was brought forth and crowned king over Judah. Bye-bye, Athaliah!

What is remarkable is the courage and understanding of that faithful couple. Athaliah's murderous plan was nothing less than an attack on God's redemptive plan, for God's covenant promise stipulated that His Messiah would come from the lineage of King David. What an amazing rescue and so very

important for us all!

Here we cannot help being reminded of the infant Messiah. Again, the murderous plan by Herod to kill Him was nothing but another attack on God's gracious plan of salvation. For with a Jesus dead before His time, there would have been prophecies unfulfilled, no sinless life as our Substitute, no atonement for sin on Calvary, and no resurrection for our justification.

This time God intervened directly, sending an angel in a dream to warn Joseph to get out of town quickly. And so our infant Savior escaped to Egypt, not to return until Herod was dead. Thank God for His Baby rescue!

Can we be a Jehosheba and Jehoiada rescuing infants from death? We can certainly pray that the millions of abortion deaths in this country be stopped. With God nothing is impossible.

are rescued from spiritual and eternal death, and hidden safely in the House of God.

What else? We certainly do not advocate any lawless action. But we can support Project Kinship, a sponsorship program which rescues overseas orphan children from homelessness. We might even consider adopting an orphan child ourselves. More, the data seems to suggest that pregnant women, considering an abortion, often change their minds upon seeing an ultrasound/sonogram of their child still in the womb. Funding for such might be something to consider and support.

History has given us amazing and consequential rescues. May God move our hearts to willingly join "Operation Infant Rescue" any way we can.



David Fuerstenau is a retired pastor. He lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

The Epistle to the Hebrews:

The Better Way

In the early days of Christianity, as the message of Jesus Christ as “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6) spread through Jerusalem and Palestine, believers themselves spoke of their faith as “the Way.” The Pharisee Saul, in his zeal to abolish the Christ-believers, made it clear that he was pursuing those who were of “the Way.” (Acts 9:2) But as Saul-soon-to-be-Paul would discover, these were people who had in fact found a better way than the one he was on.

It is generally accepted that the Epistle to the Hebrews was addressed to Jewish (Hebrew) Christians who were being persecuted; specifically, they were under significant pressure to abandon their Christian faith and return to the traditional Jewish rituals and practices. The letter does not have the typical “feel” of letters of the time; there is no address, no formal expression of brotherliness, or mention of the audience intended. Rather, it just begins, and begins in such a riveting way that readers immediately sense that they are reading the Spirit-led work of a masterful writer and a scholar of the holy Scriptures: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2 NKJV) From that point on, it reads like a treatise, very unified but working through a range of topics all relating to the superiority of the Christian faith as the fulfillment of the promises God had made to the Hebrew fathers. Drawing heavily upon passages from the Old Testament, the letter assures its readers of the divine origin and majesty of the Lord Jesus, but also of His human birth and common brotherhood with those who “are to inherit salvation.” (1:14) It shows how Jesus is the highest Prophet of God; how His ministry is superior to that of Moses; how He is a unique, eternal Priest, ministering on behalf of His people in an eternal temple. All these well-supported arguments drive home the point that Jesus, and Jesus alone, can bring His people into a true rest from their labors (4:10).

After the first ten chapters lay out the case that the Christian

“Way” is far superior to any other spiritual path his readers might follow, the readers are guided into a better understanding of the life of faith: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (11:1) In living such a faith, they have for a pattern, first of all, Jesus Christ Himself as “the

founder and perfecter of our faith.”

(12:2) Additionally, members of the family of God can look back upon the faith-lives of their spiritual ancestors, living by faith rather than by sight; people like Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and more who held onto the promised grace and salvation of God, notwithstanding the hostility of the world and impossibility of circumstances. This is a “cloud of witnesses” (12:1) of whom “the world is not worthy.” (11:38) The Hebrew Christians are directed

to apply that Way to their own situation: to live in love and fidelity within their own community of faith; to respect those who have spoken the Word; to honor marriage and to live selflessly, free of bondage to the “love of money.” For their riches lay in the knowledge that “I [the Lord] will never leave you, nor forsake you.” (13:5)

This inspired letter comes with its own puzzles. Was it sent to Hebrew Christians in Palestine (as one might expect), or westward (there are hints that it might have been intended for house churches in Rome, 13:24)? Who is the author? The best answer to authorship came from Origen in the 3rd century: “God only knows.” But there is evidence that the writer had been a student of the apostles (2:3) and worked in Timothy’s sphere of activity (13:23). What we can be sure of is that here is a testimony that Jesus Christ is the better Way than any other way humankind will ever find.

All these well-supported arguments drive home the point that Jesus, and Jesus alone, can bring His people into a true rest from their labors.



Peter Reim is a former pastor who now teaches English at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He makes his home in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



Egbert Albrecht
1921-2009

In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by early leaders in the CLC. Pastor Emeritus James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Rev. Egbert Albrecht (1921-2009) was a leader in the formation of the CLC. He served parishes in Marquette, Michigan, and Markesan, Wisconsin, among others. He also served as President of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. This article is from the Lutheran Spokesman of January 1973.

Serving With Joy

Congregations have again sought out of their midst men who are honest, wise, and full of the Holy Spirit to serve on their Church Councils. They assigned them responsibilities that imply many hours of work, frequent meetings, and in some cases, difficult spiritual dealings with fellow members. Then they listened to them promise that they would fulfill faithfully the duties entrusted to them. Thereafter the whole congregation joined in prayer, asking that the Holy Spirit fill these men with diligence, steadfastness, boldness and wisdom in their work.

Now At Work

Those elected members, chosen to help the pastor in building up the Kingdom of God, are now at work. Having formally assumed the obligations of their office, they are now examples to the congregation in Christian conduct, even in the manner in which they rule their own households. They are at work seeking the spiritual and temporal welfare of the congregation. They desire to glorify God through the exercise of their office.

Many men have found great joy in serving on the Church Council. Their own personal life took on new meaning. Their understanding of the Lord's work assumed new dimensions. They made diligent use of God's Word in their homes, turned to the Lord daily in prayer, and lived as fine examples to both young and old alike.

The Old Adam Loves Praise

Others have found that the joy they expected from this noble work was not so great as they anticipated. They began their duties with enthusiasm, but lost interest. Finally they filled out their term of office, doing only those things that were most essential. They preferred not to have their names listed again on a ballot for election to the Church Council. They did not object to the fact that they were never paid for all their hours of meetings and church duties. That was not the problem. But what troubled them was

the lack of appreciation by others for what they were doing in behalf of the congregation. They became discouraged. Their Old Adam suggested time and again that their work ought to be more appreciated and rewarded.

Any worker in the Church who lets these thoughts linger in his heart will find the Lord's work difficult. It will soon become a painful rather than joyful activity. It will turn into a half-hearted, listless effort. For in the Church much is taken for granted. He who seeks to hear many words of praise for his efforts will find little cause for joy. He will soon be disillusioned, disheartened, and disappointed.

Grateful Service

Let all those men recently elected to an office in the church remember that the real joy in church work comes from serving Jesus, who rendered such unselfish service toward us. It does not come from expressions of thanks from fellow believers. Only what is done out of love for our Savior will bring joy. He gave His life for us. This was the assignment entrusted to Him by the Father. And this fact should be thanks enough for us. It should lead us to use every ounce of energy we have to show Him how much we appreciate our salvation. Faithfulness in our church duties is one way of doing so, and joy is its by-product.

The term of office for Church Council members usually expires after one to three years. At that time the pastor will express the thanks of the entire congregation for the work that we have done. Perhaps individual members will also commend us for the same. But Jesus, who waits to grant every believer eternal life, will show us that not one single effort to further His Kingdom went unnoticed by Him. He knows how faithfully we do His work. Let it be done with joy.

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

Forty-Two Men—Trained, Equipped, and Sent!

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

It is a great pleasure and opportunity to share information about the training of pastors and leaders that is happening in Nepal. As you know, Nepal is a predominantly Hindu country: over 95% non-Christians. This country is full of temples and idols, and the people are living in spiritual darkness. They need the truth so that they can be free from all the rituals and bondages. The truth they need is about the Redeemer, the Christ.



Himalayan Bible Institute



HBI graduates, October 2025

People are perishing without knowing about their God and Savior. Romans 10:14-15 says, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”

This is why the HBI is working to prepare more workers, pastors, teachers, and evangelists for the work of the ministry, for spreading the good news in rural and urban areas of Nepal.

The Lord has blessed the HCLC Nepal with the training center Himalayan Bible Institute. It is training pastors and leaders for the work of the Kingdom. During Missionary Todd Ohlmann's visit to Nepal in October of 2025, we had a fifth graduation ceremony for the fourteen students who completed their studies at the HBI. They had been studying for over one and a half years. Missionary Ohlmann encouraged the men with the Word of God as they are on their way to the work in their villages and towns. They appreciated his presence and the words of encouragement. They were dedicated to the ministry and are already in the ministry working in the rural communities.

The Board of Missions of the Church of Lutheran Confession is supporting the training program. There have been several classes of candidates who have graduated since we started informal training in



Continuing education—a pastoral training seminar at the Himalayan Bible Institute



Worship service at the HBI, Missionary Todd Ohlmann, center

2009. This year we graduated fourteen men for the public ministry. The total number of men trained through the HBI has now reached forty-two.

Over these years we went through ups and downs. We had difficulties and blessings. We were humbled as well, as the Lord helped us through the challenging periods. Now the work is going on.

The HBI plans to enroll a new class of sixteen students in January 2026. Prayers are requested and much appreciated as we continue to train more men for the work of the ministry. We pray that the Lord uses us to train more workers for His kingdom, so that they may carry the message of salvation to the millions of unreached people of Nepal.

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Messiah Lutheran Church

Hales Corners, Wisconsin

What's new with Messiah in Hales Corners (Milwaukee area), Wisconsin? Well, we could start with the pastor. After twenty-six years of faithful service at Messiah, Pastor Michael Eichstadt retired from the pastoral ministry in September of 2024. Pastor Luke Bernthal and his wife, Julia ("Jewels"), arrived in October of 2024 and has been serving Messiah for just over a year.

We have a very active and close-knit congregation of approximately 200 souls, and an average worship service attendance each Sunday of 125. It is a tremendous blessing to worship each week in a full sanctuary with a congregation blessed with talented singers and musicians who love to sing praises to our Savior! Whether it's for worship services, Bible classes, a work day, fellowship meal, voters' meeting, choir practice, or other church function, this congregation really does a great job of "showing up"!

One of the ways this really stands out is when it comes to our Christian day school. Messiah Lutheran School currently has an enrollment of twenty-three students. We are blessed to have three full-time teachers: Carrie Reim (grades pre-K and K), Levi Schaller (grades 1-4), and Paul Tiefel III (grades 5-8, principal). On top of that we have the added blessings of a host of volunteers who teach music, art, and Spanish classes; and others who participate in reading with the students, recess and lunch monitoring, tutoring, and correcting papers. It really is a joy to see

so many of the members of our congregation giving of their time and talents to help with our vital ministry of Christian education.

As far as outreach is concerned, some of our most effective outreach has been "virtual." We have been blessed with a number of members who are skilled in technology, graphic design, website development, and online marketing. We have a volunteer webmaster for our church's website, and a team of individuals who help post the livestream of the worship service and run the slideshow that is projected at the front of the church. The result is a very high-quality presentation of the worship service that can be viewed via our website: MessiahHC.org. The livestream services have been very much appreciated by our members at a distance, our shut-ins, and a number of online "visitors" who have watched our worship services from all across the country.

Two of our members have volunteered to be in charge of our church's Facebook page and have recently started a Messiah Instagram account as well. These volunteers have done an outstanding job of consistently repurposing content from the





Above and right, "Missionaries for Christ" VBS at Messiah, Hales Corners

worship service each week: making "Reels" from portions of the Sunday sermon, posting Bible passages, hymns, and so on. As a result, we've reached almost 1,400 users on Instagram with Gospel messages in just the first month—quite amazing for only having twenty followers so far! Last month our Facebook page had a reach of 546 individual users and 4,300 views. Praise God!

We also had great success using Facebook ads for our VBS this past summer (with an assist from our new VBS banner for the front of our church). We had a total of ten non-member sign-ups as a result of our new banner and the Facebook ads.

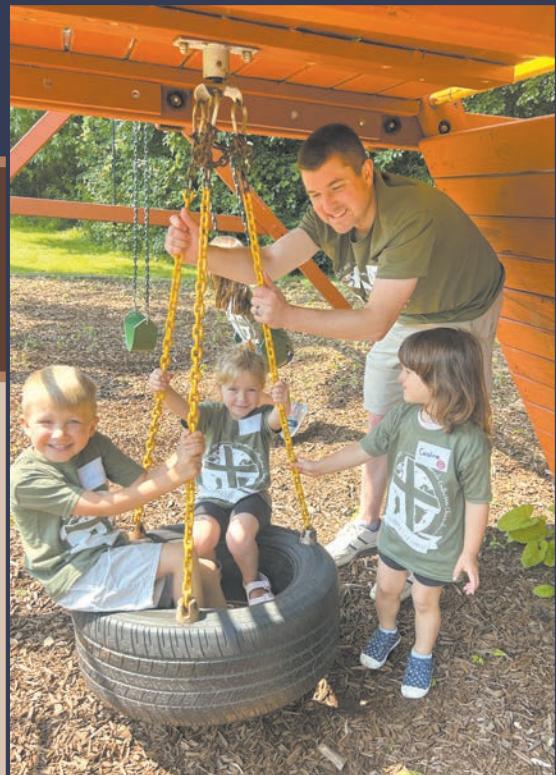
Come check us out! https://www.instagram.com/messiah_halescorners/ <https://www.facebook.com/MessiahHalesCorners>

Of course, our events and outreach are not all "virtual." Our congregation also participates in a number of in-person outreach activities and events throughout the year:

- Vacation Bible school in July with the theme "Missionaries of Christ" had thirty-five total students. "Friendship Sunday" and our annual church picnic were held on the following Sunday.
- "Firecracker Four" four-mile run/walk on July 4th in Hales



Messiah Lutheran School children on Reformation Day



Corners. Our church is an official water station for the runners as their route passes right by our church and school property. We enjoy handing out water and cheering on the many runners. This has given us good exposure and produced considerable good will toward us from the community. A number of our members also participate in the run each year.

- The Messiah "Block Party" is held on the lawn in front of our church each September. We invite the neighborhood to join us for live music and grilled hot dogs and s'mores around several fire pits. It's usually quite well-attended and makes for a very enjoyable evening of fun, food, and fellowship! We plan to make more efforts to invite our neighbors in the community to join us in the future.
- Each Christmas season our congregation and school go Christmas caroling to two area senior living centers. Our children perform their Christmas Eve service and share the Gospel message with these residents who are always eager to hear the recitations and songs the children bring each Christmas. We also conduct monthly worship services at these same two senior living centers, which have been very well received by the residents who attend.
- Whether it's "virtually" or in person, we look forward to the next time you visit our Milwaukee-area congregation!



Luke Berenthal is the pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Hales Corners, Wisconsin.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JANUARY 2026

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

| Date | Hymns | Reading | Comments |
|------------|-------------------|------------|---|
| January 1 | TLH 14 / LSB 791 | 1 Kings 20 | Ben-hadad, king of Syria, attacks Samaria. Ahab defeats him twice. The Lord condemns the decision of Ahab to release Ben-hadad. |
| January 2 | TLH 320 / LSB 610 | 1 Kings 21 | Often one sin leads to another, like so many dominoes in a line. The coveting of a vineyard gives way to false witness, murder, and theft. The Lord condemns the sins of Ahab, and Ahab repents. |
| January 3 | LSB 583 | 1 Kings 22 | Ahab listens to the false prophecy of false prophets, but Micaiah, a true prophet of the Lord, prophesies against Ahab. Ahab dies in battle. Jehoshaphat reigns over Judah, and Ahaziah reigns over Israel. |
| January 5 | WS 742 / LSB 793 | 2 Kings 1 | King Ahaziah and his soldiers oppose the Lord and oppose Elijah, the prophet of the Lord. Disaster results. |
| January 6 | TLH 660 / LSB 748 | Daniel 1 | Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacks Jerusalem and brings some of the Israelites, including Daniel, to Babylon. Daniel and his companions refuse to eat the food of the king. |
| January 7 | TLH 522 / LSB 615 | Daniel 2 | The wise men of Babylon are unable to interpret the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, but the Lord enables Daniel to interpret the dream. Daniel receives a major promotion. |
| January 8 | TLH 17 / LSB 804 | Daniel 3 | Nebuchadnezzar creates an idol of gold and commands all the people to worship it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego choose the fiery furnace over false worship. The Lord delivers the three men from harm, and they receive a promotion. |
| January 9 | TLH 36 / LSB 895 | Daniel 4 | Nebuchadnezzar praises the Lord. Nebuchadnezzar has another dream, and Daniel interprets it. The Lord humbles Nebuchadnezzar. |
| January 10 | TLH 612 | Daniel 5 | King Belshazzar mocks the Lord by toasting to idols from the sacred vessels of the temple of the Lord. The Lord judges Belshazzar with miraculous handwriting on the wall. Belshazzar dies and Darius succeeds him. |
| January 12 | TLH 428 / LSB 729 | Daniel 6 | Enemies of Daniel manipulate King Darius into casting Daniel into a den of lions. The Lord delivers Daniel, and Darius praises the Lord. |
| January 13 | TLH 651 / LSB 752 | Daniel 8 | Daniel records visions of four beasts, of the Ancient of Days seated on His throne, and of the Son of Man receiving dominion. Daniel records the interpretation of his visions. |
| January 14 | TLH 318 / LSB 613 | Daniel 9 | Daniel intercedes to the Lord on behalf of his fellow Judeans who are living in exile in Babylon. Gabriel brings to Daniel an answer from the Lord, Who holds the future in His hands. |
| January 15 | TLH 254 / LSB 522 | Daniel 10 | While mourning the fate of his people, Daniel receives a terrifying vision, and an angel strengthens him. |
| January 16 | LSB 751 | Daniel 11 | The Lord reveals to Daniel a future conflict between Persia and Greece, a future conflict between Egypt and Syria, and the rising of wicked King Antiochus IV Epiphanes. |
| January 17 | TLH 258 / LSB 659 | Psalm 79 | Asaph (or perhaps a descendant of Asaph) laments the destruction of Israel by Babylon. We, too, cry to the Lord for His help when we suffer persecution. |
| January 19 | WS 764 / LSB 850 | Psalm 80 | Asaph implores the Lord to restore His people after they have suffered defeat at the hands of foreign armies. |
| January 20 | WS 741 / LSB 807 | Psalm 81 | The Lord desires from His people not merely outward worship, but true inner repentance. The Lord longs to comfort His people through His Word. |
| January 21 | TLH 568 / LSB 785 | Isaiah 36 | Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invades Judah. The Rabshakeh threatens the people of Jerusalem with suffering unless they surrender. The people of Jerusalem resist. |
| January 22 | TLH 13 | Isaiah 37 | King Hezekiah asks the prophet Isaiah for help. Isaiah proclaims that the Lord will deliver Jerusalem. Hezekiah prays to the Lord. Isaiah prophesies that Sennacherib will fall. |
| January 23 | TLH 598 | Isaiah 38 | Hezekiah prays to the Lord for healing and for forgiveness. The Lord answers. |
| January 24 | TLH 18 | Isaiah 39 | Isaiah rebukes Hezekiah for his reliance on Babylon. Isaiah prophesies the exile of Judah in Babylon. |
| January 26 | TLH 427 / LSB 728 | Isaiah 46 | The idols of Babylon are false gods. The Lord is almighty! |
| January 27 | TLH 275 / LSB 934 | Isaiah 47 | The Lord will humiliate proud Babylon. |
| January 28 | TLH 171 / LSB 453 | Isaiah 53 | The Lord makes atonement for rebellious transgressors through the sacrifice of His innocent Servant. |
| January 29 | TLH 510 | Isaiah 54 | The Lord has redeemed His people. As a result of the atoning sacrifice of the Servant, all people may become servants of the Lord. |
| January 30 | WS 743 / LSB 802 | Psalm 82 | The justice of the Lord will prevail. No believer will suffer injustice forever, but the Lord will restore us. |
| January 31 | TLH 269 | Psalm 83 | When we feel overwhelmed by the evil schemes of our enemies, physical or spiritual, we join Asaph in his invocation of our faithful Lord, Who answers prayer. |

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.

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN
HIGH SCHOOL. COLLEGE & SEMINARY

“Let Us Run the Race with Endurance”

Immanuel has many options for extracurricular activities that keep students busy and give them opportunities to use their gifts in a variety of ways. Right away at the beginning of the school year—in fact the day before classes even begin—practice starts for our cross-country team.

Immanuel fielded its first cross-country team in 1972 with only eight boys. Since most of the girls at Immanuel play volleyball in the fall, we've rarely had many girls running. But this year we had a complete girls' team (five) for the first time since 2014. We also had fifteen boys, which meant we had both varsity and JV complete teams, too.

This fall was one of the hottest in recent memory, meaning the runners had to deal with overheating more than usual. But with over half our runners coming from southern states, we felt we had an advantage. In fact, our church in Columbia (South Carolina) has provided more runners than any other in recent years.

Cross-country is a demanding sport, requiring personal drive and stamina. We try to keep things fun by varying the routes and workouts, and most runners enjoy our Saturday morning long runs (up to 8 miles). But one workout that many current and former runners talk about with dread is doing charges up and down “the hill” at the UWEC. These practices force our runners to push themselves to the limit, but they also bring our team closer together, giving them the opportunity to support one another and cheer each other on.

This highlights several of the blessings of cross-country. As our runners use their God-given abilities, they are learning how to care

for their bodies, to push themselves to improve, and to support one another through hardships. We celebrate every time a runner sets a new personal best time for a race, doing our best to heed the words in Romans 12:15 to “Rejoice with those who are rejoicing.” (EHV) Our athletes this year exemplified this, rallying around each other and even other competitors, supporting everyone on the course at all our races.

This year, as in each of the last few years, we've had seniors on the team who demonstrated positive leadership, encouraging and supporting each of their teammates. This

plays a huge role in making the season a positive experience for all and contributes to our team's success. This year's team closed out the season by winning the Dairyland Conference title for the third straight year, with three of our runners making the all-conference team.

Each of our teams also gathers before each race for a prayer, led by one of the seniors, to encourage each other and focus on glorifying our Lord and Savior. In this and all aspects of our sport, we are reminded of our Savior's directive to “let your light shine in people's presence, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16 EHV)



Stephen Sydow is an instructor, coach, and counselor at Immanuel Lutheran College.

Lutheran Spokesman

501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nominations for ILC Professor and ILC President. The Board of Regents announces the following nominations to fill the professorship vacated by the resignation of Professor David Schaller prior to the 2025-26 academic year: Paul Krause, David Reim, David Schaller, Dan Sullivan, and David Ude. In addition, the following and only person has been nominated for the office of President of Immanuel Lutheran College: Daniel Schierenbeck. The term of the ILC President's call is for two years, extending to the end of Academic Year 2028. All comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates are to be received by email or letter no later than midnight January 22, 2026 (letters postmarked January 15, 2025) to: Mr. James Burkhardt; 217 Windy Lane; Rockwall, TX; email:jeb6217@yahoo.com.

—Pastor John Hein, Chairman, CLC Board of Missions

EduK8 Fund. The Board of Education and Publishing (BoEP) is hereby informing member congregations of the CLC of the deadlines for requesting financial assistance from the EduK8 Fund. The BoEP is supporting both the establishment of new schools as well as providing a variety of resources for existing schools (furniture, textbooks, Chromebooks, playground equipment, etc.). Contact a board member for more information and to receive an application form. Applications being submitted by new schools are to be submitted by August 1 one year prior to the projected start of the school year. (e.g., August 1, 2024 for the Fall 2025 school year). Applications being submitted by existing schools are to be submitted by March 1 preceding the next school year. (e.g., March 1, 2024 for the Fall 2024 school year)

—Pastor David Naumann: pastordavenaumann@gmail.com
—Professor Ross Roehl: ross.roehl@ilc.edu
—Teacher Seth Schaller: seth.schaller@ecmessiah.org
—Mr. Craig Ryan: cryanpage1@gmail.com



Attendees at an exploratory mission service in Des Moines, Iowa November 10, 2025



Northern lights over St. John's Lutheran Church, Okabena Minnesota, November 10, 2025