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LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

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HOSANNA!



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A Victory March to the Grave

Usually, the parade happens *after* the war is won. Throughout history, when a conquering general returned home, the scene was predictable. He would ride a white stallion, chin held high, followed by a train of spoils and prisoners of war. Confetti would fly. Crowds would cheer. It was the “Ticker-Tape Parade” of the ancient world. It signaled that the danger was past, the enemy was crushed, and it was time to party.

But on that first Palm Sunday, Jesus turned the pageantry upside down. He didn't wait for the battle to be over. He was marching directly into the heat of it. And He wasn't riding a warhorse. He was riding a borrowed donkey—a beast of burden for a Savior bearing the burden of the world.

To the naked eye, the Triumphal Entry is a bit of a confusing mess. You have the Son of God allowing Himself to be hailed as King, yet He is weeping over the city that is cheering for Him (Luke 19:41). You have crowds shouting “Hosanna,” which means “Save us now!” while expecting a political liberation that Jesus had no intention of bringing. They were rolling out the red carpet for a Lion, but they got a Lamb.

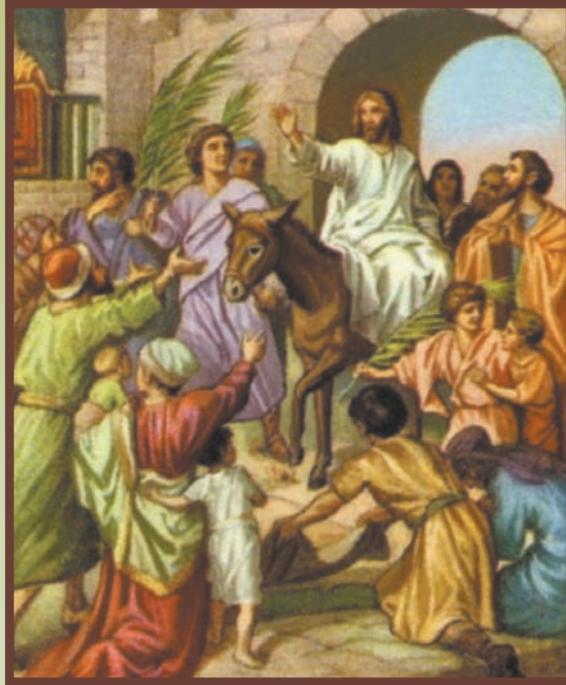
If we are honest, we often suffer from the same confusion as those crowds. We want the Jesus Who fixes our finances, cures our ailments immediately, and makes our life in this fallen world a smooth ride on a paved road. We want the crown without the cross.

But Jesus loves us too much to give us merely what we want. He is determined to give us what we need.

That is why this procession was not a victory lap—at least, not in the way the world counts victory. It was a funeral procession. The crowd didn't know it, but Jesus did. He wasn't riding to the governor's palace to evict Pontius Pilate. He was riding to Golgotha to crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15).

The prophet Zechariah saw it coming centuries before:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey.” (Zechariah 9:9 NKJV)



Notice the word *lowly*. Kings aren't supposed to be lowly. But this King came to serve. He came to lower Himself into the very dust of death. The reason the triumphal entry is truly “triumphant” isn't because of the palms or the cloaks on the road. It is triumphant because nothing could stop Jesus from marching toward His death. The Pharisees told Him to hush the disciples. The disciples didn't understand what was happening. Jerusalem was fickle. Yet, Jesus set His face like flint toward the cross.

He marched to the grave because that is where our enemies were hiding. Sin, death, and the devil held humanity in a chokehold, and the only way to break that grip was to enter their territory and burst it open from the inside.

As we enter the climax of our Lenten journey, let us not be like the confused crowds who only wanted a king to satisfy their earthly wants. Let us look past the waving palm branches and see the shadow of the cross looming over the road.

This was a victory march, yes. But the victory wasn't won by avoiding death. It was won by swallowing up death forever (Isaiah 25:8). So, wave your branches. Sing your loud hosannas. Know that your King rides on to die, so that you might live.

He marches to the grave, so that on Easter morning, He can walk out of it, and take us with Him.



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

And Then the Resurrection Changed Everything

(Read Matthew 28:1-10)

On at least three occasions, Jesus forewarned His disciples of His impending suffering and death. With each warning He also gave the certain promise of His resurrection. In Matthew 16:21, for example, Jesus explained that He “must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” (NIV84)

Yet, as the first Easter dawned, the disciples were not anticipating their living Lord but mourning a dead Savior. The women who hurried to the tomb wondered, “Who will roll the stone away?” (Mark 16:3 NIV84) Mary Magdalene thought the risen Jesus was a cemetery caretaker. Peter and John associated the empty tomb with body theft instead of bodily resurrection. Thomas insisted, “Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it.” (John 20:25 NIV84) At least Thomas was an honest doubter.

It’s easy to fault these disciples. “You should have known better, Peter.” “You should have trusted more Thomas.” Yet, we have the certain words of Scripture too. Why, then, do we act so hopelessly at times? When we live in fear and despair, are we not acting as if Jesus were still dead and buried instead of living and reigning?

However, when the disciples realized that Jesus had risen from death, everything changed. Fear became confidence; sorrow, laughter; despair, hope. Thomas went from saying, “I will not believe it” to “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28 NIV) Peter, who in fear denied knowing Christ, came to boldly proclaim Christ in the very city in which Jesus was crucified. And when you and I encounter the risen Lord through faith, our lives must drastically change too.

One such change is mentioned twice in Matthew 28: “Do not be afraid.” (verse 5, 10) Afraid of what? Anything, though at Easter a natural application is the fear of death. Certainly,

no one wants to die. Yet, when the time of our death comes, we can face it with absolute confidence. Why? Because the resurrection of Jesus changed everything. Jesus said at a funeral, John 11:25-26, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.” (NIV84) And then, to prove the truthfulness of His words, Jesus stepped to the tomb of dead-and-buried Lazarus and cried out with a loud voice: “Lazarus, come forth!” (John 11:43 NKJV) And at the power of Christ’s word, Lazarus did.



Caravaggio - The Incredulity of Saint Thomas

The fact of Christ’s resurrection is proclaimed throughout the Bible. Yet, dear reader, let’s not fail to apply that glorious fact to our everyday lives and problems. So, say with me, “I used to fear death, but then the resurrection of Jesus changed everything. I used to grieve hopelessly, but then the resurrection of Jesus changed everything. I used to think my relationships were too troubled to repair, but then the resurrection of Jesus changed everything.”

“I used to feel utterly alone, but then the resurrection of Jesus changed everything. I used to wonder if God could really forgive all my sins, but then the resurrection of Jesus changed everything. I used to worry that God might not keep His promises to me, but then the resurrection of Jesus changed everything. I used to feel hopeless because of my illness or financial situation or doubts, but then the resurrection of Jesus changed everything.” This is what it means to apply the resurrection of Jesus to our daily lives. Jesus Christ is alive.

And His resurrection changes everything.



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

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.

Philipp Nicolai

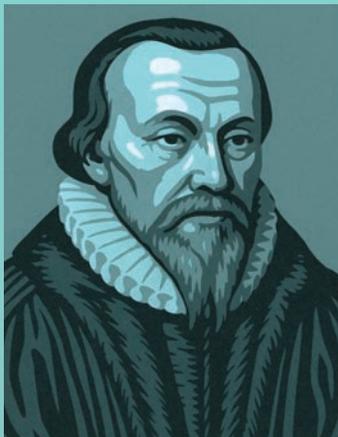
"Wake, Awake!"

Philipp Nicolai was born in Germany in 1556, ten years after the death of Martin Luther. He did not live through the tumultuous years of the Reformation but inherited the rich theology of the Lutheran Church. He was like many of us, who were not alive when our church body was founded, but who are inheritors of a deep theological history and tradition. That is not to suggest Nicolai's life was easy. In many ways it was as difficult as the life of Martin Luther and his contemporaries.

Nicolai fought a theological war on two fronts. First, he lived during the years of what has been called the "Counter-Reformation." During these years the Roman Catholic Church was working hard to reclaim people from Lutheranism. Nicolai resigned his first call due to pro-Catholic opposition. In addition to these challenges, he was also involved in fierce battles with the followers of John Calvin who rejected the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. As a result of his defense of the Biblical teaching on the Sacrament, he was banned from preaching for a time and was strongly opposed by Calvinists throughout his pastoral ministry.

From a young age Nicolai displayed both an interest in and a gift for poetry—a gift which he developed throughout his life. Those whom he served knew him as a caring and loving shepherd and as a gifted and eloquent preacher. While he used this gift to comfort those burdened by sin, he was also a staunch defender of God's Word of truth. He was also known to direct words of warning and judgment against those who rejected the truths of God's Word, leading many people to despise and even hate Nicolai.

His two most valuable works are considered by some to be the greatest Lutheran hymns of all time. His hymn, "Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying" (TLH 609; LSB 516) has been called the "King of the Chorales," and his hymn "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star" (TLH 343; LSB 395) the "Queen of the Chorales." Both of these hymns reveal Nicolai as the compassionate shepherd and a powerful defender of God's Word. For example, in "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star" Nicolai



Philipp Nicolai 1556-1608

✦ rightly describes both the person and work of Jesus: "True Son of God and Mary's Son, Thou highborn King of ages!" (verse 2)

✦ beautifully points to the Word as the means by which God brings us to faith and gives us salvation: "Thy blest Gospel's saving power my raptured soul engages. . . . Heav'nly manna, tasting, eating" (verse 2)

✦ faithfully defends the Real Presence declaring, "Thy body and Thy blood, afford my soul its dearest treasure." (verse 4)

✦ expresses the joy the Christian has even in the trials of this life: "Thy Son hath made a friend of me, and when in spirit Him I see, I joy in tribulation." (verse 5)

✦ and joyfully proclaims his confidence in eternal life with Jesus: "And Thou at length—O glorious grace!—wilt take me to that holy place, the home of joys supernal," (verse 7)

The life of Nicolai reminds us that the work of reformation is ongoing through every generation, not just a past event in the lives of those who have come before us. Every generation, whether they formed a church body out of faithfulness to the truth, or whether they have inherited one from their parents, is called to stand for and preserve God's truth.

Philipp Nicolai stands as a faithful second-generation Lutheran who made the confession of a previous generation his own. He had the courage to faithfully proclaim both God's judgment on sin and His deep mercy for sinners through the work of Jesus. Are you willing to follow in his steps?



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

While We Await Jesus' Return

“Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.” (2 Peter 3:14-16)

The most important future event that we as Christians look forward to with eager anticipation is Jesus' return on the last day of this world. We await the day of the Lord, because that is when the event which the Apostle Peter revealed in the previous verses will take place; namely, bringing to an end this sin-cursed world, and ushering in eternity with a new, heavenly earth where we will dwell with God and all the saints in perfect bliss.

While we are waiting for that day to arrive, what are we to do so that we are found ready? Peter exhorts us to make every effort to imitate Jesus (1 Peter 1:19), living our lives “*without spot or blemish.*” As imperfect humans, we know that in spite of our best efforts we can't make it through a single day without sinning. It is for that reason that we will daily need to repent of our sins and turn to Jesus in faith for forgiveness and salvation.

When this is a part of our day-to-day routine, we shall be able to be at peace with God as the apostle encourages us. Paul wrote of this in Romans, “*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (5:1)

God hasn't told us when Jesus will return, but we know it will be sudden. The Lord's delay is due to His patience for the salvation of many. Our Lord hasn't come yet, because there are still more of the elect who need to be brought to faith and eternally saved. Being mindful of this will help us to patiently await Jesus' return.

Peter pointed out that Paul, who like him was given

divine wisdom, also wrote about these matters in his letters. As we read through Paul's letters, Peter informs us that there are “*things in them that are hard to understand.*” (verse 16) As we come across such difficult writings, Martin Luther gave us this advice: “If we come to something hard to understand, lay it aside instead of twisting it to our fancy.”

Speaking of twisting Scripture to suit our way of thinking, Peter writes of the unlearned and unstable doing this very thing. Oh, how important it is for us to guard against this folly, for it can lead to our eternal destruction! Paul gives us an example of this in Romans Chapter 6. People were guilty of twisting Scripture to say that God's grace has given us a license to sin. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can see that this is one of the devil's many lies which he promotes so that we are not found ready when Jesus returns.

In the final words of the Bible Jesus states, “*Surely I am coming soon!*” And we join in answering, “*Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*” (Revelations 22:20) But remember, we want Him to come when the time is right and when we are found ready for His return.

Our Lord hasn't come yet, because there are still more of the elect who need to be brought to faith and eternally saved.



Mark Gullerud is retired from the pastoral ministry. He lives in Sunnyvale, California.

The Unpleasant Truth

“And all the prophets prophesied so and said, ‘Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph. The Lord will give it into the hand of the king.’ And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, ‘Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably.’ But Micaiah said, ‘As the Lord lives, what my God says, that I will speak.’” (2 Chronicles 18:11-13)

A “yes man” is someone who always agrees with a person higher in rank. We sometimes see the rich and famous surround themselves with an entourage of “yes men.” It feels good when everyone encourages you in everything you do. It feels good to feel right. But what if you aren’t right?

In 2 Chronicles 18, we read how the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat; and the king of Israel, Ahab, allied themselves against the Syrians in Ramoth-gilead. When King Jehoshaphat requested that Ahab inquire of his prophets whether they would triumph in battle, a false prophet name Chenaanah and four hundred of his cohorts prophesied favorably and unanimously, “Go up to Ramoth-Gilead and triumph. The Lord will give it into the hand of the king.” (verse 11) But Jehoshaphat could evidently sense the desire of these prophets to simply tell Ahab what he wanted to hear, so he requested a second opinion from another prophet. Ahab replied, “There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, Micaiah, son of Imlah; but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil.” (2 Chronicles 18:7)

When the other prophets came to summon Micaiah, they pleaded that he would join his voice to theirs and speak only of victory. But Micaiah answered that he was constrained to speak only what God gave him to speak. Even after that, though, Micaiah did speak favorably at first in the presence of the kings. But even Ahab could tell that the prophet was withholding the truth. So, Micaiah finally delivered God’s Word to the kings: “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd” (verse 16) (thereby foretelling Ahab’s defeat and death). And because he disobeyed the king and spoke the Lord’s truth, Micaiah was thrown in prison.



Death of King Ahab 1870 by Julius Schnorr

The sad reality is that most of the people you encounter will not thank you for speaking the truth, especially during this Lenten season. You might recall how Pontius Pilate even questioned the existence of truth while presiding over Christ’s trial, asking, “What is truth?” (John 18:38) God’s Word, which alone stands as the source of all that is true in this world, condemns each one of us as sinners. It is the iniquity we are born into and which we commit daily that condemns mankind to eternal death and hell. But this is only one part of the truth.

The other, far more comforting truth of Lent is that Christ Jesus came into the world to redeem sinners just like us. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.” (Ephesians 1:7) People will seldom thank you for holding up the mirror of God’s Law, for it shows us the true extent of our transgressions. But such truth is necessary. If we have no sin, what did Jesus die for? From what has He saved us? The Law must be preached in order to proclaim the saving truth of Jesus Christ: the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world! May the Holy Spirit endow us with the courage of the prophets to speak nothing more nor less than the truth our loving God has revealed to us for our instruction in righteousness.



Drew Naumann is a pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

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.

2 Peter

A Final Message from a Loving Father

When Jesus reinstated Peter on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and commanded him to “feed My lambs,” He told Peter, “When you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” Then John explains, “This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.” (John 21:17-19) Peter is now an old man and sees the writing on the wall, so to speak. He says, “I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.” (2 Peter 1:14) Tradition suggests that Peter was crucified upside down not long after he wrote this letter. He continued to feed Jesus’ sheep and lambs until his death and beyond with this letter.

These were desperate times. As the kingdom of God was growing, Satan was fighting back tooth and nail. The persecution under Emperor Nero was in full swing. The Apostle Paul likely had already been beheaded. The death of the Apostle Peter would follow close behind. What would Peter impress upon the saints in these difficult times before he was put to death for his faith? In three short chapters he urged them to (1) Continue to live their faith, strengthened by God’s certain Word, (2) Beware of false prophets who would lead them astray, because (3) Jesus is surely coming again to destroy this world and usher all believers into a new one. The message was clear—do not turn away from Christ in order to spare yourself.

Peter gives us some powerful encouragement in our desperate times. God’s “divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.” It has “called us to his own glory and excellence, . . . has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Therefore, you are to “be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure.” (verse 10 NKJV) We do that by living our faith daily with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness,

godliness, brotherly affection, and love. “If you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (verses 10-11)



Feed My Lambs by James Tissot

That power of God for life and godliness comes only through the Word of God. The written Word is surer than any experience or anyone’s own interpretation, for that Word comes from God the Holy Spirit. Therefore we “do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” (verse 19)

Therefore, beware of false teachers who will arise just like false prophets rose up among the people of Israel. They will “secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.” (2:1-2) Peter doesn’t mince words about the danger of such false teachers or about the condemnation they will receive.

In spite of the world’s mocking, we need to know that Jesus will certainly return for judgment, and to destroy this world in fire. “Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.” [See Pastor Mark Gullerud’s article in this issue for further encouragement.]

Peter’s final words of encouragement are needed more today than ever. Therefore, may we all continue to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (3:18)



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



Pastor Rick Grams
1951-2022

In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by voices from the past in the CLC. Pastor Emeritus James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Pastor Rick Grams (1951-2022) was a Viet Nam-era veteran and a graduate of Immanuel Seminary. He served several parishes including Winner, South Dakota; and Red Wing and Eagle Lake, Minnesota. This article is from the Lutheran Spokesman of March 1999. Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version.

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

It was a long journey. They had traveled to Judea from every direction of the Mediterranean world. The descendants of Abraham were required to attend the great Passover festival in Jerusalem at least once in their lives.

The journey of a lifetime was near its end. Rounding the Mount of Olives the traveler gets a sudden view of the city in all its splendor. He sees the great walls stretching over the hills, the white marble of the Temple complex shining brilliantly under the sun.

This glorious scene caused pilgrims to break forth in a song of praise to almighty God for bringing them there. They recited the words innumerable times at religious festivals. “*Save now [hosanna], I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!*” (Psalm 118:25-26)

What a scene! Among the many travelers to Jerusalem another crowd was coming from the city. There in the valley, a Man on a donkey, the crowds all shouting, “*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!*” (Matthew 21:9)

If we had been there, we could not have stopped ourselves from joining this national celebration of God’s compassion and protection. It was the first day of holy week, the day Christians call Palm Sunday.

The Promised Messiah

We celebrate the triumphal ride of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Those who shouted their hosannas to Jesus commonly used the branches of fruit and palm trees in festivals of joy and thanksgiving to God.

The original of *hosanna* meant “help” or “save.” The palm branch became a national symbol of ancient Israel, reminding them that God had blessed them again by His providence and blessing. The palm branch was a sign of life for those who laid them down for the path

of Jesus.

In spite of themselves, they proclaimed Jesus to be the King of kings, the Son of David, the greatest king Israel ever had. The Lord had revealed how David would have a king to sit on the throne of His eternal kingdom. “*When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever.*” (2 Samuel 7:12-13)

The text reveals that the people continued to lay down the branches, giving the highest praise to Jesus as the Son of God. They welcomed Jesus as the Messiah, the One descendant of David whose glory is from eternity and whose kingdom would continue forever!

Religious Pilgrims

They proclaimed that Jesus came “in the name of the Lord” – that Jesus came according to the Word of God to bestow the gifts and treasures of His heavenly kingdom.

What they proclaimed on Palm Sunday was true according to God’s Word, but by the end of the week many joined the shouts for the crucifixion of Jesus!

We too are religious pilgrims again this year. Through faith in Jesus, we continue together along the narrow road to the city of God.

Our Savior rules on the throne of God forever, and His kingdom will have no end. When, by faith, we enter our heavenly home, we will not return to a life of sin and darkness. We shall remain in the kingdom of God to serve the Lord in Christ’s righteousness and holiness forever.

Every day of our lives we are traveling toward Christ’s heavenly kingdom of glory. What a sight that will be! Then we shall sing our hosannas to the Son of David, the living Lord Jesus Christ, forever!

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

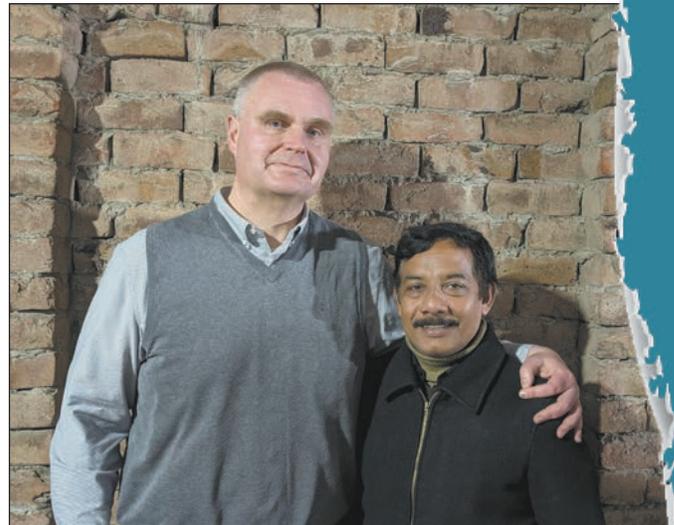
In this series, those involved with CLC foreign missions profile one aspect of our overseas endeavors.

Doctrine, Prayer, and Patience in Pakistan

The Church of the Lutheran Confession has had several contacts in Pakistan over the years. Unfortunately, most turn out to be pleas for money with no real interest in Bible doctrine. Pastor Timothy Daub of Hecla, South Dakota, had one such encounter in 2020 with a man in Faisalabad, Pakistan, and a handful of students he rounded up from a local Bible college. When that original contact demanded monetary compensation for the further “privilege” of teaching in Pakistan, Pastor Daub ended the class. But a few weeks later, one student reached out to express how embarrassed he was that his former friend had so despised the Word. This student asked if he could keep learning.

So, in March of 2021, Nadeem Gill organized his own class of eighteen family members and neighbors. Meeting twice a week, they took a year to work through an Urdu translation of a *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*. Nadeem translated for Pastor Daub, and conceptual diagrams proved especially helpful in bridging the linguistic gap. At the conclusion of the course, Nadeem offered a graduation celebration, and those students began meeting in his home for Sunday services.

After five years of confirmation classes and Sunday



Mission Board member Pastor Timothy Daub and Pastor Nadeem Gill

services, Missionary Todd Ohlmann and Pastor Daub traveled to meet the members of the Pakistan Church of the Lutheran Confession. From January 22-27, 2026, they visited Pastor Gill and his household, offered Bible studies, and attended Sunday service—followed by a church dinner featuring a massive vat of chicken korma and stacks of naan bread!

They also accompanied Pastor Gill on a dozen home visits to meet and encourage the members. The people live in a densely-populated community of compact living spaces within plain brick structures. Scaling steep stone staircases to climb to individual members’ homes felt like a surreal castle adventure. It was especially striking to see the joy on people’s faces when they saw missionaries going to such lengths to make personal visits. For their part, Missionary Ohlmann and Pastor Daub experienced the joy of discovering a faithful flock committed to true Lutheran doctrine.

The group has an active membership of thirty-five souls, aged two to eighty. Most members live in the same neighborhood, and many belong to Pastor Gill’s extended family. Some travel from a mile or two away. With a population density of



Members of Pastor Nadeem’s small flock enjoy a fellowship meal



Pastor Nadeem's family with Missionary Todd Ohlmann (center)



A Sunday school project

thousands of souls every square mile, they are already planning preaching stations for these “long-distance” members.

Suppressed beneath the grim shadow of Islamic darkness, the small flicker of Christian witness in Pakistan is mostly a confusing mix of superstitious Catholicism and Pentecostalism. Members consistently share how impressed they are with the systematic approach of *Luther's Small Catechism*, which presents the basics of Scriptural truth with a clarity they had never previously experienced.

Sunday worship might differ from ours in a few matters of outward form, but the liturgical structure is quite similar. They use a simple Urdu hymnal originally compiled decades ago by Presbyterian missionaries. Each song is a chant of either a set of Psalm verses or simple Gospel anthems: “Christ Crucified Is the Fount of Salvation and Grace.” “Because Jesus Rose from the Dead, Someday Too Will We.” These complement the Scripture readings just as do our introit and liturgical chants. Instead of an organ, a simple hand drum keeps the singing in unison. A highlight is the standing recitation of the Apostle’s Creed as an opportunity to openly confess the Triune God. On the first Sunday of each month, with fitting reverence, the Lord’s body and blood are offered for members to eat and drink.

Over the years, Pastor Gill has used various solid Lutheran materials to prepare his weekly sermons.

His current preparation involves studying each week’s Ministry by Mail selection. He uses its theme and parts as a personal outline, translating its linguistic content into Urdu language and its homiletic analogies into examples more pertinent to local Pakistani culture. Going forward, the CLC Board of Missions will offer further seminary training to Pastor Gill and a few other men via correspondence.

This visit comprised the third step in the protocol our CLC Board of Missions follows to establish fellowship with foreign church ministries. The first two steps include initial instruction and 1-3 years of focused correspondence. The CLC President has now been advised to begin the official colloquy process by choosing a Board of Doctrine member to conduct an independent assessment via internet media over the next year. Lord willing, a second face-to-face meeting will ensure that true unity of doctrine and faith exists.

This thorough process has resulted in formal fellowship with ministries in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Nepal, Myanmar, DR Congo, Uganda, Liberia, and others. We pray the Lord will similarly bless our relationship with this fledgling group in Pakistan!



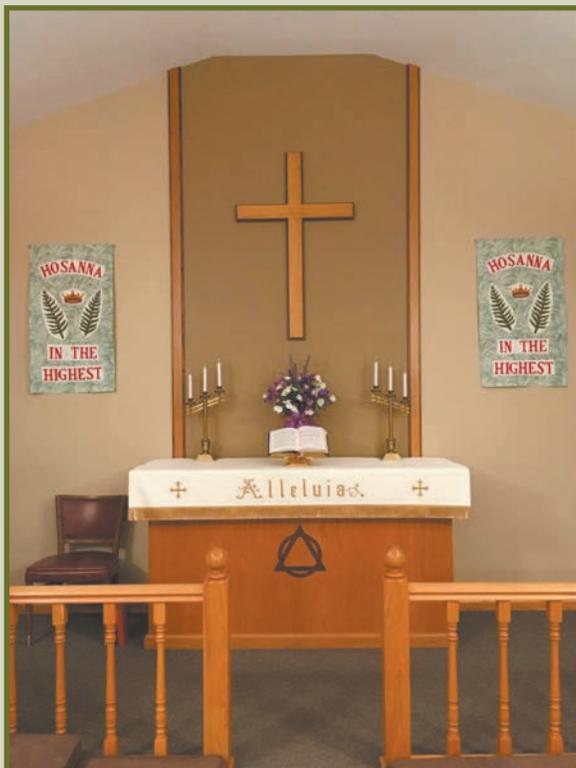
Timothy Daub is pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church of Hecla, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Aberdeen, and Redeemer Lutheran Church of Bowdle, South Dakota. He also serves on the CLC Board of Missions.

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

Red Wing, Minnesota

A so-called “faith” page in the *Republican Eagle*, a weekly newspaper for Minnesota’s Goodhue County area, includes a listing of all the churches in and around the city of Red Wing. The “Worship Directory” on that page lists the name, address, and times of worship of no fewer than one hundred eleven churches, including no fewer than forty-six “Lutheran” congregations. In turn, under that category is an alphabet soup identifying a particular congregation’s affiliation to different church families or “synods” (AFLC, ELCA, LCMS, WELS, CLC). One can’t help but wonder what explains the existence of such a potpourri of churches in the area, one of which is Our Redeemer’s Lutheran of the CLC.

For anyone wondering what the CLC synod and its constituent congregations stand for, the book *OUT OF NECESSITY—A History of the Church*



of the Lutheran Confession (published in 2010 for the CLC’s 50th anniversary) is a big help. It was 1958 when Our Redeemer’s Lutheran Church (and School!) of Red Wing was first established. For doctrinal reasons based on the Word of God, and under the guidance of its Pastor George Barthels, a group of eighty-three communicants and thirteen Christian day school students severed church fellowship from their former WELS church. Sad to say, Our Redeemer’s Christian Day School, operating from the beginning, closed in 1983.

Fast forward. On August 12, 2018, Our Redeemer’s Lutheran Church observed its 60th anniversary. Former pastors of the congregation (and former organists as well) returned to lead the joyous worship. The service theme centered on the heart and core of all Bible teaching—the Gospel Good News of how the whole world of sinful mankind has been “Redeemed—With the Precious Blood of Christ.”

Worshiping and serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has always been front and center at Our Redeemer’s. Over the years many families—from inside and outside the Red Wing area, some driving forty-five minutes one way—have joined in worship at and/or taken membership in the congregation. In recent years a member of Our Redeemer’s was able to attend Immanuel Lutheran Seminary in Eau



Children's Christmas Eve program: "Precious is the Child"



Claire; Pastor Paul Agenten and family are now serving at the dual parish of Calvary, Marquette; and St. Peter's, Iron River, Michigan.

Latest upgrades to the church property include landscaping, removal of some huge (and very old) trees, installing an upper-level parking lot for easier church access, resurfacing of the lower parking lot, painting the church, and re-shingling and painting the parsonage.

The decades since 1960 have seen a sharp demographic decline in the number of families with children, and this, among other factors, has resulted in a similar decline in church membership across all denominations. Our Redeemer's has not been immune. Our last two resident pastors were David Baker (2010-18) and Edward Starkey (2019-2025). At the time of this writing, the congregation is experiencing a pastoral vacancy. Thankfully, regular worship and Bible class continues under the leadership of retired CLC pastors in the area, including two members of the congregation (Michael Schierenbeck and this writer).

But with all the comings and goings of members in recent years, average attendance for worship has averaged in the mid-twenties, which makes it difficult to support a full-time resident pastor. With that in mind, in January of this year the possibility of forming a joint parish was discussed with representatives of a sister CLC church, St. Paul's of Austin, Minnesota (a bit over an hour away). Many questions were addressed such as the following: With both churches having parish homes, where should the pastor reside? When and where would regular worship services be held at each

location—especially since remote/virtual worship is far from ideal for any community of Christian?

The following was also agreed upon: in-person, face-to-face pastoral preaching and teaching, counseling, and soul care would remain top priority for any under-shepherd of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who endeavors to minister to a widely scattered flock.

We know not what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future—as our Redeemer Himself has promised: *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."* (Matthew 18:20 NKJV) As the poet James Russell Lowell once said,

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
 One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
 Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne—
 Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
 Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

In the face of all Satan's attacks against the Word, our confidence remains that the God of all Truth—Whose Word cannot be broken—is indeed *"keeping watch above His own."*



Paul Fleischer is a retired pastor and former editor of the *Lutheran Spokesman*. He is a member of Our Redeemer's, Red Wing, Minnesota.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS APRIL 2026

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
April 1	TLH 153 / LSB 451	1 Chronicles 3	Out of a humble shepherd boy, the Lord has raised up a mighty royal family. Though the earthly kingdom of David has come to an end, the royal line of David continues in the eternal reign of Jesus Christ.
April 2	TLH 305 / LSB 636	1 Chronicles 4	The inspired writer lists descendants of Judah and descendants of Simeon.
April 3	TLH 171 / LSB 453	1 Chronicles 5	The inspired writer lists descendants of Reuben, descendants of Gad, and members of the half-tribe of Manasseh. These are the tribes that settled east of the Jordan.
April 4	LSB 454	1 Chronicles 6	The inspired writer lists descendants of Levi, the priestly tribe.
April 6	TLH 193 / LSB 469	1 Chronicles 7	The inspired writer lists descendants of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher.
April 7	TLH 196 / LSB 468	1 Chronicles 8	Returning to the tribe of Benjamin, the inspired writer records a genealogy of the family of Saul, the first king of Israel.
April 8	TLH 195 / LSB 458	1 Chronicles 9	The inspired writer records a genealogy of the Israelites who returned to Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity. Then he returns to the genealogy of Saul.
April 9	TLH 360 / LSB 528	Psalms 96	David used this psalm to celebrate the victorious bringing of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16). Later the Judeans used this psalm to celebrate the rebuilding of the temple following the Babylonian captivity.
April 10	WS 733 / LSB 482	Psalms 97	The psalmist declares the power of the Lord and His glorious rule over all creation. When all people stand before almighty God, everyone will experience either terrified humiliation or joyful thanksgiving.
April 11	TLH 87 / LSB 387	Psalms 98	Regardless of the many discouragements that we may experience in life, our Lord has won for us the victory over sin, death, and the devil!
April 13	TLH 199 / LSB 457	Acts 21	Paul travels to Jerusalem and reports to James the work that God has accomplished among the Gentiles. After being arrested in the temple, Paul requests and is granted permission to address the people.
April 14	TLH 200 / LSB 461	Acts 22	Paul made his defense, retelling his life as a persecutor of the Christian church, his conversion, and his call into the ministry of the Gospel. The Jews refused to listen, and the Romans led Paul away. Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship to escape flogging.
April 15	TLH 201 / LSB 490	Acts 23	Paul makes his appeal to the Jewish council. The Jews plot to kill Paul. The Romans send Paul to Governor Felix.
April 16	TLH 278	Acts 24	Paul stands on trial before Felix. Felix declines to pass judgment, but keeps Paul in prison.
April 17	TLH 202	Acts 25	The new governor, Porcius Festus, speaks with Paul. Paul appeals to Caesar. Paul stands on trial before King Agrippa.
April 18	TLH 108	Acts 26	As Paul makes his defense before Agrippa, he recounts his conversion. Agrippa finds Paul to be innocent, but must send him to Rome since he has appealed to Caesar.
April 20	TLH 198 / LSB 480	Acts 27	The voyage to Rome is difficult. The ship runs into a storm and is wrecked.
April 21	TLH 205 / LSB 478	Acts 28	The soldiers and the prisoners on board the ship manage to swim to land and find themselves on the island of Malta. Eventually Paul is brought to Rome where he testifies of Jesus to the Jews.
April 22	TLH 495	Ezekiel 20	Through Ezekiel the Lord confronts the elders of Israel on their rebellion against the Lord. Even so, the Lord promises to restore Israel.
April 23	TLH 518 / LSB 750	Ezekiel 21	The Lord threatens violence against Jerusalem and against the land of Israel.
April 24	TLH 342 / LSB 611	Ezekiel 22	Through Ezekiel the Lord holds Israel accountable for her abominable sins against the Law of the Lord.
April 25	TLH 324 / LSB 609	Ezekiel 23	Ezekiel uses allegory and satire to help his stubborn countrymen understand the severity of their unfaithfulness.
April 27	TLH 323	Ezekiel 24	The king of Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem. The wife of Ezekiel dies, and the Lord forbids Ezekiel to mourn, in order to teach the people about false sorrow and false repentance.
April 28	TLH 611 / LSB 508	Ezekiel 25	Ezekiel prophesies against Ammon, against Moab and Seir, against Edom, and against Philistia.
April 29	LSB 509	Ezekiel 26	Ezekiel prophesies against Tyre.
April 30	TLH 607	Ezekiel 27	Ezekiel laments over Tyre.

OUR EASTER HOPE

"In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you." (1 Peter 1:3-4 NIV84)

"And hope does not disappoint us." (Romans 5:5 NIV84)

When the Apostles Peter and Paul penned the Bible verses above, it was during the golden age of the Roman Empire. Rome had reached its zenith of power, peace, and prosperity. But if you scratched beneath the surface, you could see it was also a time of intense hopelessness. "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die" was one popular philosophy; while another taught, "Since there is little joy in life, and soon we will die, all we can do is persevere and do the best we can." While different philosophies, they share a common theme: "There is no hope! Hope is dead!"

Yet into that world came Peter and Paul, and many others, proclaiming how hope had come alive! What happened to turn hope around? The only thing that could. God came into the world. God was born, a baby in a manger. God became a flesh-and-blood man. The God-man, Jesus, lived a sinless life so God could cover all sinful people with a robe of righteousness. God was nailed to a cross, where He bled and died to pay the penalty for all sin. He took the curse of sin—which had destroyed all hope—and sealed it away in His tomb forever.

Yet it was impossible for death to hold Him. You can take the God of hope and put Him in a grave, but you cannot keep Him down for long. Jesus came alive, and so did hope! As Paul says in our Romans verse, He gave the world a hope which does not disappoint. As Peter says in his first epistle, He brought the world a hope which cannot perish, spoil, or fade away.

Someone once described our Easter hope this way: "Easter means that the worst things are never the last things!" Hope in Jesus does not mean that we won't have to face hard and heart-breaking situations in this life. But it does mean that, as believers



Giovanni Francesco Romanelli (1610-1662) - St John and St Peter at the Empty Tomb of Christ

in Christ, God is always there for us, and our lives will not end in sorrow and pain. For the risen Jesus has triumphed over death and hell! Peter, tradition holds, was crucified upside down for preaching the Gospel. But that was not the last chapter of his life's story. Now Peter has an inheritance in heaven beyond the reach of change and decay. Paul may have been beheaded for his faith in Jesus, but that was not the end of the road for him either. His path did not run into a dead end of disappointment! As he writes: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18 NIV84)

Look around. In many ways our world today is a mirror image of the world two thousand years ago. It's a fallen world, aching with despair and hopelessness. But that's not true for

those who, by faith, know Jesus as their risen Savior. Because of Him we have hope, hope to keep our hearts brave in the face of life's many struggles, and our eyes looking up with joyful expectation as we await the life that knows no tears. In the words of a new favorite hymn, "This joyful Easter-tide, away with sin and sorrow! . . . Had Christ, who once was slain, not burst his three-day prison, our faith had been in vain. But now is Christ arisen, arisen, arisen; but now is Christ arisen!"

With Peter and Paul let's tell one and all of the one hope that can never disappoint or fade away!



Michael Wilke is pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Saginaw, Michigan, and president of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Lutheran Spokesman

501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2026 West Central Delegate Conference

May 19-21

Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Agenda:

- “For in much wisdom is much grief”—A Study of Ecclesiastes and Finding Joy in Sorrow—Teacher Andrew Roehl
- Daniel’s Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks—Pastor Paul Krause
- A Devotional Study of Romans 8:31-39—Delegate from Cheyenne
- A Comprehensive Review of the Chief Article of the Christian Faith, The Doctrine of Justification—Pastor Cory Drehle
- A *Simple* Paper on the Genus Maiestaticum—Pastor Timothy Daub
- Practical Applications of 2 Corinthians 6:14, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”—Pastor Michael Roehl
- “Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy”—Lament in the Christian’s Life—Pastor Caleb Schaller
- Benefits of Attending “In-person” Rather than “Online” Church—Delegate from Bismarck
- Faithfully Engaging with Unmarried Couples Living Together—Delegate from Valentine
- Speaker: Pastor Aaron Ude
- Chaplain: Pastor Samuel Naumann

—Submitted by Pastor Timothy Daub, Secretary



Attendees at Saturday women’s Bible study on the Immanuel College campus.

Installation. In accord with our usage and order, **David Schierenbeck**, who was called by Berea Lutheran Church of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, to be assistant pastor was installed on February 22, 2026.

—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer



I-r Pastors Nathan Pfeiffer and David Schierenbeck of Berea Lutheran Church.



Faculty and student body of Wittenberg Lutheran Seminary Arusha, Tanzania.