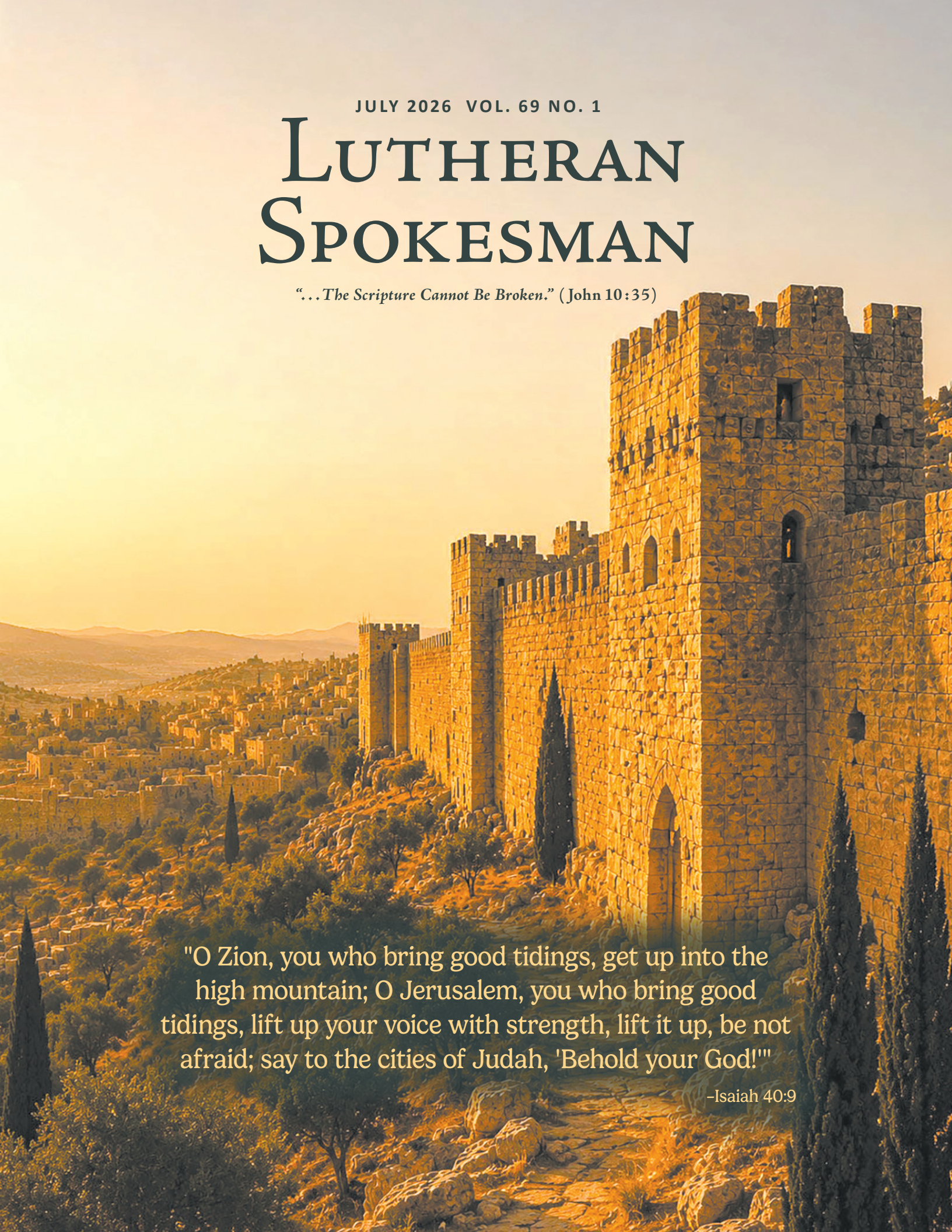


JULY 2026 VOL. 69 NO. 1

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



"O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'"

—Isaiah 40:9



Pages 10-11

IN THIS ISSUE JULY 2026

COVER STORY - EVANGELISM

Bearers of the Good News 3

DEVOTION - CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH

"Out" Reach and "Our" Reach 4

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

Bartholomäus Ringwalt 5

STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Are You Walking in the Light? 6

GEMS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

God's Workmen and Women 7

KNOW YOUR BIBLE BOOKS - 3 JOHN

A Short Book That Is Long on Love 8

VOICES FROM THE PAST - ROBERT MACKENSEN

Sharing Jesus with Others 9

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

A Decade of Blessings at the HBI 10-11

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Grace Lutheran Church - Sleepy Eye, Minnesota 12-13

BREAD OF LIFE READINGS, JULY 2026 14

ILC NEWSLETTER

Meet the Other Dr. Dan 15

SEEN IN PASSING 16

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BEARERS OF THE GOOD NEWS

“O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’” (Isaiah 40:9 NKJV)

“Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.” (Psalm 96:2-3 NKJV)

Since the days of the Old Testament, the people of God have been invigorated to proclaim the good news. Likewise, in the New Testament, we are exhorted to spread the glad tidings of great joy to all people. This is evangelism. The word *evangelism* comes from the Latinized version of the Greek word, *euangelion*: *eu* means “good,” *angelion* means “a message.” *Euangelion* refers to a good message or good news. While this word was used in the secular world (good news of a military victory, for example, or good news of the crowning of a king), the adoption of this term in the New Testament gradually resulted in this, that today “evangelism” refers almost exclusively to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Were it not for the Son of God, there would be no good news. Jesus accomplished salvation by overthrowing the forces of evil. At the beginning of His ministry, He defeated Satan in the wilderness. At the end, He defeated him on the cross. Three days later, He defeated him by rising from the dead. Now, He reigns at the right hand of God and continues to defeat Satan by sending evangelists into the world.

What a wondrous thing that human beings have been entrusted with the work of evangelism (see Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5)! This is the central message of the public ministry. Whether missionaries evangelize the heathen or pastors evangelize their congregations or professors their students, their mission is to proclaim the good news wherever God places them. *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (Isaiah 52:7 NKJV)*

What a wondrous thing that human beings have been entrusted with the work of evangelism!

However, the psalmist, Isaiah, Matthew, Mark, and Paul are not speaking to called servants of the Word only. When Isaiah calls upon Zion to “bring good tidings,” he is talking to us. We are Zion; we are Jerusalem—that is—the Holy Christian Church (see Hebrews 12:22-23). It is to us that God calls out, “Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.” (Psalm 96:2 NKJV) This we do in our homes as we evangelize our families. We do it in our neighborhood, in the work place, at school, in the military, in our recreational activities, and, of course, through our church and synod. Time, talents, possessions, and our feet are dedicated to evangelism (that’s what makes them beautiful). Jesus is in all these places, ever ready to receive the lost into His kingdom of grace, through those who have personally witnessed His grace. We are the ones who carry the spark of the Gospel that ignites faith in our children, neighbors, coworkers, recreationists, and comrades. Weak though we are, we have the confidence that the evangel is “the power of God for salvation.” (Romans 1:16)

Now, Jesus speaks to you and me: *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV)*



John Pfeiffer is retired from the pastoral and teaching ministry. He is a former president of Immanuel Lutheran College.

“Out” Reach and “Our” Reach

The word *outreach* has been around a long time. In the early 1900's, it referred to social welfare programs to help those facing challenges and needs. By the 1960's, outreach was also being used to refer to an organization's or business's contacts to expand operations. In the 1980's, AT&T produced the “Reach Out and Touch Someone” campaign to encourage long-distance calling. Today, “Steve reached out to me” simply means “Steve phoned me.”

Congregational outreach involves all of the above. Jesus reached out to the community of people around Him—the sick, the needy, the sinners—showing kindness and compassion for their welfare. The disciples would do likewise. Peter and John healed the cripple at the Temple, Paul healed the cripple at Lystra. Sad to say, we often leave it to someone else to help those with needs.

Further, Jesus instructed His disciples to be “fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19), to reach out to bring others into God's kingdom of forgiveness, new life, and eternal salvation. It's through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus that sin and its consequences—death and damnation—are removed. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19 NKJV) “How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” (Romans 10:14 NKJV) Sad to say, we often leave it to the individuals themselves to find their way to our congregation's message of pardon and life through Jesus. Outreach is part of a Christian congregation's life. This publication regularly prints reports from CLC congregations, sharing their methods of Gospel outreach.

The devil does not want anyone, any congregation, or you, to share the Good News of Jesus with others. He convinces you that it's too much work, too time consuming, too expensive, produces too few results, and is just plain outside of “my” realm. Seek the Lord's forgiveness and help. Ask the Lord to show you opportunities suitable for you. If you or your congregation are satisfied with “maintaining membership,” then little outreach will be done. When numbers dwindle, then the thought arises, “We need to do something!” For

whose sake? For your own sake? For the congregation's sake? How about, for others' sake! Gospel outreach is done for the sake of others.

A first step is often, “Let's start a program. Let's get somebody's help. Who can do this for us?” It takes a long time to get to, “I will do something.” Indeed, one-on-one contact is very precious. Example: in your visits at the nursing home,

get to know the roommate of the friend, relative, or church-member you're visiting. This opens the one-on-one door for sharing the compassion and kindness of the Lord, and sharing His lifting-away of the burden of sin, guilt, and death—sin's punishment. Jesus suffered all and rose in glorious victory, for each one. Be alert to opportunities to lift someone's burdens through Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, Rescuer and Redeemer.

Why? To feel good, useful, or worthy of God's love? To do your share and help the congregation grow? The goal is not numbers.

Rather, it is concern for another who—apart from Jesus—faces only doom. Eternal rescue in Jesus is the fuel for the fire of outreach!

Do you lack the fire? Well, how do you feel after worship? Discouraged, burdened, ho-hum-same-old-thing? Instead of tuning out at worship and turning away to other thoughts, which the devil wants, take to heart the great news of the Father's mercy and forgiveness through Christ. It may take some mental “work” at worship. The pastor is not an entertainer like the TV. Comfort and fire are in the message of Scripture! The recipe for your willingness and zeal for outreach is, “Forgiven and spared in Jesus!”—a gift! Breathe the fresh air of the Gospel of salvation in Christ. Go forward as a humble yet privileged fisher of men!



Richard Kanzenbach is pastor of Saint Luke's Lutheran Church in Lemmon, South Dakota.

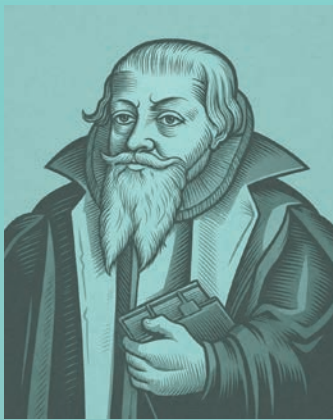
HEARTS IN HARMONY—
PROFILES OF THE HYMNWRITERS WHO SHAPE OUR WORSHIP

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

Bartholomäus Ringwalt

"The Day Is Surely Drawing Near"

As you may have realized from previous articles in this series, some of our Lutheran hymn writers have rather dramatic and even grievous “back stories” to their lives. Paul Gerhardt, Johann Heermann, Nikolaus Selnecker, Philipp Nicolai, and of course Martin Luther all stood fast in the pure doctrine of the Gospel against powerful opposition to the truth, and emerged victorious from both personal suffering and professional ordeals.



Consider, for example, Hymn 611. In Verse 4, we are reminded this about the Day of Judgment:

*Then woe to those who scorned the Lord
And sought but carnal pleasures,
Who here despised His precious Word
And loved their earthly treasures!
With shame and trembling they will stand
And at the Judge's stern command
To Satan be delivered.*

Verses 1-3 set the stage for this dire warning, and—if the hymn ended with Verse 4—it well might be considered to lack a Gospel focus. However, having proclaimed Law in Verses 1-4,

The subject of this month's article, Bartholomäus Ringwalt (1532 - 1599 or 1600), did not suffer those tribulations. He was the pastor of two parishes before becoming the pastor of Langenfeld near Sonnenburg, Brandenburg. Compared to those other hymnwriters, Ringwalt was blessed to live a relatively trouble-free life. The Peace of Augsburg signed in 1555 meant that Ringwalt, living in the Lutheran territory of Brandenburg, enjoyed legal protection for his ministry without interference from the (Catholic) Holy Roman Empire. The devastating Thirty-Years War, which brought death, famine, and disease throughout central Europe, started in 1618—nearly two decades after Ringwalt's death. So it was that in the relatively peaceful Lutheran stronghold of Brandenburg, Pastor Ringwalt became an influential writer of didactic (teaching) poetry, as well as at least 165 hymns. We have two of those hymns, “O Holy Spirit, Grant Us Grace” (TLH 293) and “The Day Is Surely Drawing Near” (TLH 611) in *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

Although the lack of personal and professional drama in the “back story” to Ringwalt's life is unlikely to make him the subject of a Hollywood “biopic,” the edifying theological content of his poems and hymns, and especially their applicability to our lives as 21st Century American Christians, certainly express material worthy of our consideration.

Many of Ringwalt's poems and hymns focus on eschatology (the branch of theology dealing with the end times). In those, Ringwalt exhorts Christians to always remember that in this life, we are merely pilgrims on our way Home. He warns about being so focused on temporal matters that we neglect matters of infinite importance and eternal consequence. Given the ease and affluence of our lives as Americans today, this is an important truth for us to bear in mind.

Ringwalt then proceeds in Verse 5 to soothe our hearts with the Gospel assurance of the free forgiveness of all our sins, apart from any merit or worthiness in us, solely because of the perfect life and vicarious death of our Savior, Jesus Christ:

*O Jesus, who my debt didst pay
And for my sin wast smitten,
Within the Book of Life, oh, may
My name be also written!
I will not doubt; I trust in Thee
From Satan Thou hast made me free
And from all condemnation.*

Antinomianism, such as found in the most liberal churches in our day, avoids proclaiming the stern truth of God's Law. Legalism, such as is common in some denominations, preaches the opposite error: works righteousness. Ringwalt walked the Biblical line between those two opposite errors. His poems and hymns declare the Law in all its sternness, and the Gospel in all its sweetness. May our lives always be blessed with such faithful teaching.



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

Are You Walking in the Light?

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:5-7)

The young couple had been attending worship services for months. They appreciated the sermons and the welcoming attitude of the congregation. They felt at home and inquired about becoming members. Everything was very positive until suddenly without explanation they stopped coming. The pastor reached out to them to ask if something was wrong. The couple’s response was straightforward: “We realized that if we were to become members, we would have to change, and we weren’t ready to do that.” They recognized a truth about Christianity which many do not know or choose to ignore. Following Christ is more than sitting in the pew and saying the right words. It’s a dramatic change in attitude and lifestyle. The Apostle John urges believers to “walk in the light.”

To have fellowship with God means living in His light. Yet there are many who call themselves Christians who go on living in the darkness of unrepentant, sinful lifestyles. “God made me this way,” they argue. “He wants me to be happy. It’s my life.” But light and darkness cannot coexist. *“For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery. . . hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy. . . I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:17, 19-21 NIV)*

At one time we were all lost in the darkness of sin and death, but God has called us out of darkness into the brilliant sunshine of His light in Christ. We have received Jesus’ righteousness and are saints in God’s eyes.

Are you walking in that light of Christ, or harboring hatred and grudges as payback toward those who have hurt you? Do you ignore the Word in order to blend in with the world? Are you holding onto some pet sin? That’s not walking in the light.

Christians sin, but they don’t continue to walk in the darkness as though it doesn’t matter. *“How can we who died to sin still live in it?” (Romans 6:2)* Love for the Lord Who first loved us moves us to turn from sin in sorrow, and look to the cross and empty tomb for the peace of forgiveness. *“The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (verse 7)*

It’s healthful to regularly ask, “Am I walking in the light?” Do my words and actions reflect a new heart in which the Spirit dwells? Every act of Gospel-motivated kindness, service, and worship says, “Yes, you are walking in the light.” Let us walk in the light and cherish our fellowship with God and one another.



Michael Eichstadt is a retired pastor and former president of the CLC. He lives in Phoenix, Arizona.

God's Workmen and Women

(Read Exodus 35-36)

Roy was the envy of little boys. He was a long-time member of his Lutheran church. Earlier in life, Roy had served as a soldier in Germany after World War II. Now retired, he drove a pickup truck with all sorts of tools in the back. When something broke at church or the parsonage, Roy came with his truck and tools to fix it. Roy seemed to know how everything worked and how to make repairs.

I'm sure you all know a Roy or two in your congregation. Or maybe it's a Shelly, who knows how to repair garments that are torn or can sew a new gown for her pastor when his wears out.

The gifts God gives His Church on earth are not limited to the man in the front of church on Sunday morning or the woman in front of the classroom during the week. Paul reminds all of us that *"we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* (Ephesians 2:10)

God's Son did the hard work of saving us through the wood, nails, and blood of the cross. God then worked a mighty thing in us when He brought us from the blindness of unbelief to faith in His Son. With our eyes of faith, we now see that we can use our different gifts, abilities, and interests for His glory and the good of His people. God has prepared us for this. We are His workmen and women.

This has always been the case in His Church on earth. After God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, He established new worship laws for His people. Part of that worship required a Tabernacle, Ark of the Covenant, and priestly garments.

God could have miraculously provided these things, but He didn't. Instead, God involved His people in this work of

the church. God had prepared men and women beforehand with skills to be able to do these good works. *"Every skillful woman spun with her hands, and they all brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen."* (Exodus 35:25) Just like the Shelly at your church,

God gifted these women to prepare fabric for the Tabernacle and the priests.

And like your Roy, the Lord had prepared a project manager named Bezalel for this important work. *"He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft."* (Exodus 35:31-33) Furthermore, Moses writes that the Lord inspired Bezalel with the ability to teach others to join

him in doing the work.

Isn't this remarkable? God prepares opportunities for you to do work in His kingdom. It might be mowing the lawn at church, keeping track of attendance, or preparing spreadsheets. It might be making banners for church, or the simple joy of keeping the communion ware shiny and clean.

Praise be to God Who not only calls us into His Church by grace, but then also equips us to serve Him and our fellow believers. Thank God for Roy, Shelly, Bezalel, and you: God's workmen and women!



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KNOW YOUR BIBLE BOOKS

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.

3 John

A Short Book That Is Long on Love

The author is “the elder,” (1:1) the last living apostle. He wrote from Ephesus (A.D. 85-95) to “the beloved Gaius,” leader of a church under John’s authority. This shortest book in the Bible is long on love’s relation to “the truth.”

As Pilate famously dithered over the fate of Jesus, he asked: “What is truth?” Blinded by unbelief, he could not see “the truth” before him. Truth was relative to him, an abstract that cannot be known absolutely.

John knew “the truth” absolutely. In his third letter, the word *truth* is found six times. No wonder! His Gospel is all about “The Truth”: The eternal “Word . . . became flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth . . . grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:14-17) John 14:6 has Jesus’ words: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”

As in John’s first two letters, the third shows that when “the truth” is believed, it produces works of love in those who are “of the truth.” This letter is short but sweet for Gaius, whom John loved “in the truth.” (verse 1)

He prays that Gaius’ bodily life may go well, just as his soul was well. John knew that Gaius’ soul was on the wellness path—“walking in the truth,” faithful to Christ’s Word—since “the brothers” spoke of his “truth.” John had “no greater joy” than to “hear” that his spiritual “children” were “walking in the truth.” (verses 2-4) So too, every faithful pastor rejoices to hear that those he has served in Christ are walking in the truth to eternal life!

The “brothers” also told of Gaius’ “love before the church.” (verse 6) Music to John’s ears, love’s harmonious note! For Gaius not only talked the truth; he walked it in love!

Gaius is praised for his “faithful” work “for these brothers” in the faith though “strangers” to his face. (verse 5) They went out to “Gentiles” as witnesses “for the sake of” Christ’s “name,” accepting no help from the heathen, but freely giving what they

had freely received! John encourages Gaius to care for them in a “manner worthy of God.” (verse 6)

As in John’s first two letters, the third shows that when “the truth” is believed, it produces works of love in those who are “of the truth.”

John also speaks to us when “brethren,” yet “strangers” to us, go out “for the sake of” Christ’s name.” Think of the ILC Tour Choir, Traveling VBS, and Mission Helpers. John says, “We ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.” (verse 8)

Diotrephes was no “fellow worker”! Puffed-up with self-importance, he put down the authority of the Apostle and Gaius with slander, did not welcome “the brothers,” and “stopped” those who did by putting them out of the church.

(verse 10) John would deal with him out of love for the truth, “the brothers,” and the church. Meanwhile, Gaius is not to “imitate evil,” but continue doing good. For “whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.” (verses 9-11)

Demetrius was doing good, as reported by everyone in Ephesus, by “the truth itself,” and by John. “Our testimony is true,” John adds, as Gaius knew. If Demetrius delivered the letter, Gaius and his church could trust and receive him, although a stranger. (verse 13)

John could write more, but would rather speak face-to-face, hoping to visit soon. He blesses Gaius: “Peace be to you.” Then, love glows again: “The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.” (verses 14-15) To this very day we write this way to those and of those who love one another “in the truth.”

Read 3 John. Be encouraged in the love of the Truth and the way of Truth’s love by “the elder” whom Jesus loved.



Vance Fossum is a retired pastor. He lives in West Columbia, South Carolina.



Robert Mackensen
1920-2012

In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by early leaders in the CLC. Pastor Emeritus James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Pastor Robert Mackensen (1920-2012) was a charter member of the CLC, and served congregations in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado and North Carolina. This article is from the Lutheran Spokesman of September 1988. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

Sharing Jesus with Others

In his tenth chapter, Matthew tells how Jesus sent the twelve disciples on a missionary journey. The Lord told them, “Go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” (verse 7) He meant they were to preach God’s Law and Gospel, for after Easter Jesus said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.

Sin and Grace

God’s strict Law must be preached first, for through it the Holy Spirit reveals our great sinfulness, God’s righteous anger over sin, and our impending doom. After the Law has troubled people in their minds because of their sins, they should be told the Gospel of how Christ Jesus graciously rescued the human race from its deserved punishment by dying on the cross in full payment of all our sins. Through that good news, God the Holy Spirit enables sinners to trust in Jesus for their salvation.

All Christians are privileged to share this message of sin and grace with others. The powerful words from God enable people to realize they need a Savior and that they have a Savior, Jesus.

Harsh Treatment

But Christians should not expect this world to thank them for sharing Jesus. Just the opposite! Christ warned His disciples, “Ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.” (verse 22) We are to expect the same treatment from non-Christians that Jesus received from the scribes, Pharisees, Roman soldiers, King Herod, and Pontius Pilate.

The reason for this hatred is that all who are born of earthly parents come into this world full of rebellion against our Maker, inclined only toward evil, and conceited enough to think we can merit God’s forgiveness by outward deeds of kindness.

Romans 8:7 teaches, “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Preaching the Gospel to every creature is like trying to free a vicious animal from

a trap. The beast instinctively attacks his benefactor.

Displeasing Ways

There is no God-pleasing way to avoid such hatred from the world as we carry out the Lord’s command to make Christians of all nations, but there are God-displeasing ways to do so.

One of these is to refrain from preaching God’s sharp Law to willful sinners and, instead, picture Him as a doting father Who overlooks cocky disobedience to His commands. Another God-displeasing way to avoid the world’s hatred is to teach that the act of believing in Jesus is meritorious. A third way to remain popular with the world is to use Christ’s name merely as a springboard from which to launch sensational religious ideas such as talking with spirits, reincarnation, get-rich promises, the tribulation, the rapture, and the millennium.

Such errors neglect the clear Bible teachings about Christ’s unexpected return on the Last Day, the resurrection of all the dead, His judgment of all nations, the eternal punishment of non-Christians in hell, and the everlasting blessedness of Christians in heaven. The world dislikes those Bible teachings.

“Fear Not”

Yet Christians need not fear the world’s hatred. Our Lord told His disciples, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him [God] who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

God is on our side! There is no need to fear the opposition. We can tell the good news of salvation boldly. We can preach it from the housetops. What can man do unto us when the very hairs of our heads are all numbered?

We need not be afraid when sharing Jesus with others, for absolutely nothing in all creation can cancel the love God has for us in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

A Decade of Blessing at the HBI

[Editor: The following is a report about current activities in the Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession in Nepal (HCLCN). 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.]

Dear fellow redeemed, brothers and sisters in Christ. I would like to share about our training program. The Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession Nepal started the Himalayan Bible Institute (HBI) on January 28, 2016, as a study center to equip pastors and leaders working to expand the kingdom. Since then, the HCLC Nepal has trained, equipped, and sent forty-two men into various parts of the country through the HBI. We enrolled another

batch of students in March 2026.

After a new government was elected, the country is getting better in many areas, such as corruption. However, the new government continues to limit the religious freedom of minorities. In a situation like this the work is challenging, but we pray that the Lord will help us to reach out to people who are still in the bondage to sin and the devil.



The Lord has blessed us with more men that are willing to learn from the Word of God and prepare for the ministry here in Nepal. There is good news to convey to the people in the communities that haven't heard of their true Savior. There are still areas that are unreached. The students are excited to learn and prepare themselves for the work of the kingdom.

Training and equipping and encouraging our pastors and leaders continued recently in a one-day seminar in a remote district. Thirty pastors and leaders attended. This made us all feel connected, and the participants appreciated it. They were taught from Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. They found it very helpful. There are still many areas that we need to explore where the pastors and leaders are willing to learn and be trained from the Word. There are topics and subjects that people want to learn about, getting the true meaning and knowledge from the Word of God.

They said that seminars like this are needed in their local areas and churches as well. Another seminar is planned for pastors and leaders in a different province. They will be trained on the Means of Grace and other subjects.

Additionally, we are planning a third mission trip soon to one of the largest and most rural provinces of Nepal. It was recently connected by road with the major cities of Nepal, and there are many people there who have not yet heard the Gospel. We have some contacts there, and we look forward to assessing the situation and training the local pastors and leaders to carry the Gospel to the lost souls in the Himalayas.

The HCLC Nepal appreciates your prayers, cooperation, and support as we reach out to the souls in Nepal. God has been faithful to us for a decade and more, and we continue to trust in His grace.

A pastoral training session sponsored by the HCLCN



Grace Lutheran Church

Sleepy Eye, Minnesota

As our Savior stood with the eleven, He was just about to ascend to the right hand of God the Father Almighty. However, before this monumental event took place, He first assured the apostles that all authority had been given to Him in heaven and on earth. The Savior, in whom their faith trusted, had all power and grace to guide the affairs of earth to work toward the good of His Church. Having said this, He commissioned them to make disciples of all nations, employing the saving means of grace given in Baptism and the enlightening Word of Truth which encompassed all things that He had taught them. Thousands of years later, as we wait for our ascended Lord's return,



the way in which disciples of Christ are made remains the same: the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. Grace Lutheran Church still employs the same grace entrusted to her by the Savior. Though every change at Grace brings something new, God's grace in Christ still remains His glory and our salvation.

On September 29, 2024, Pastor Zachary Sippert was installed as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church. This was a change. But the eternal promise of salvation, given to Grace congregation and to the whole world, remains the same as it has been given by Christ Jesus. Regardless of the new face, the Savior crucified and risen remains the same grace.

To add to our list of "What's New," changes have been made in connection with Grace's Christian day school ministry, which will begin its tenth school year this coming fall. On July 17, 2022, our Principal, Nathan Wales, was installed at Grace Lutheran School. Mrs. Vanessa Wales and Mrs. Danielle Sippert were later installed as teachers on August 24, 2024. Just as the apostle Peter was instructed two millennia ago (John 21:15-18), and as Moses commanded Israel even longer ago (Deuteronomy 6:6-7), so Grace's servants of the Lord have been instructed, to use the same means—the Gospel of Christ—to train up and feed the lambs of Grace.

Along with the new faces in her public ministry, Grace's physical plant also received a "new face," if you will. On January 29, 2023, Grace had a dedication service for its newly-built classroom addition, including two furnished classrooms and a copy room. The addition has proved to be a blessing from the Lord, providing a beneficial improvement to the educational environment. Currently, our enrollment is ten students. We pray the Lord of the harvest that He may fill these classrooms with hearts and minds, ready to be





Instructors and students of Grace Lutheran School



This year's confirmands

formed by the Word of God.

Over the years, Grace's membership total has gone down. A membership above 200 a few decades ago now stands at 116 souls. Though this may tempt us to discouragement, we ought to be reminded that higher numbers should not be the be-all, end-all goal. Our aim is to preach the same grace that was entrusted to the apostles years ago. Our aim is to preach Christ and Him crucified. And so, despite the drop in membership, we rejoice in Christ's saving grace for our brothers and sisters who have joined the Church Triumphant. Those whom the Lord called home this past year include a couple of Grace's charter members, gifts from the Lord given to both Grace and the Church of the Lutheran Confession—Charles Romberg and Walter Romberg. Both victory services served as tremendous opportunities to not only reassure the membership of Grace of our Lord's resurrection grace, but also to show the community of Sleepy Eye that we proclaim the grace of a Savior slain and risen.

The Lord has blessed Grace with a few mission prospects here and there. Contacts have come about by interest in our Christian Day School, by a non-member spouse whose heart was worked on through continued encouragement and exposure to the Word, by response to a simple "come and see" invitation, or by neighbors from the apartment complex close by our property who come to see and hear. With these opportunities, we are encouraged to preach the same grace, for this grace is what will convince hearts and minds. Furthermore, despite a drop in overall membership, Grace has been blessed in recent years to have received a few new members into the congregation.

As we strive to proclaim this Gospel truth to others in our community through all means available, Grace also offers Vacation Bible School, which was once held in early June, but has since changed to the last week of July.

There have been other changes in our congregation's ministry. For over twenty years, Grace enjoyed the blessings of a joint parish call with Faith Lutheran Church in nearby New Ulm. This sharing has

since come to an end, as Faith has now formed a new joint parish with our sister congregation, Salem of Eagle Lake. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless these congregations in their use of His holy Word. With this change, Grace has moved its Bible class and Sunday school time from 8:00 A.M. to 10:15 A.M., following the 9:00 A.M. Sunday service. Grace also takes opportunity for further spiritual nourishment with its seasonal services, enjoying an Advent and Lenten rotation with Immanuel of Mankato, Salem of Eagle Lake, and St. John's of Okabena. Along with these changes, Grace has also made available a once-a-month Bible Study for its youth. Senior Youth Bible Study (SYBS) is made available for our high school-aged members. This includes a Bible Class and an entertainment activity.

Change or no change, if grace were no longer preached at Grace, we would surely be the most pitiable! But we praise God for the continued preaching and teaching of His Saving Word, and we pray that the same may continue.

*Grace first inscribed my name in God's eternal book,
and grace has brought me to the Lamb who all my sorrows took.
Grace led my wandering feet to tread the heavenly road,
and grace supplies each hour I meet while pressing on to God.
(WS 778:2)*



Zachary Sippert is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JULY 2026

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
July 1	TLH 156 / LSB 431	Leviticus 16	The Lord gives Moses regulations regarding the Day of Atonement. Through ritual sacrifice, the people of the Lord are cleansed of sin. The Day of Atonement foreshadows Jesus Christ, the one atoning sacrifice for our sins.
July 2	TLH 157	Leviticus 17	The Lord requires that all sacrifices be offered to Him at the Tabernacle. The Lord forbids the consumption of blood.
July 3	LSB 860	Leviticus 18	The Lord forbids His people to follow the wicked examples of the pagan nations in their unlawful sexual relations.
July 4	TLH 412 / LSB 698	Leviticus 19	The Lord is holy and the Lord desires that the lives of His people reflect His holiness. The Lord provides His people with instructions for holy living.
July 6	TLH 349 / LSB 683	Leviticus 20	Child sacrifice and sexual immorality are punishable by death. The people of the Lord are to live in holiness, not adopting the wicked practices of their pagan neighbors.
July 7	TLH 483 / LSB 682	Leviticus 21	The Lord provides standards of holiness specifically for His priests.
July 8	TLH 438	Leviticus 22	The Lord distinguishes between who is permitted and who is not permitted to eat what is holy. The Lord distinguishes between animals that may and animals that may not be offered to Him.
July 9	TLH 439 / LSB 852	Leviticus 23	The Lord provides regulations regarding the observance of His appointed feasts: the Sabbath, the Passover, the Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Booths.
July 10	LSB 786	Leviticus 24	The Lord provides regulations regarding the lamps in the Holy Place and the bread for the tabernacle. Blasphemy against the Lord is punishable by death. In general, a punishment is to fit the crime: eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life.
July 11	TLH 443	Leviticus 25	Because the land also needs rest, every seventh year is to be a Sabbath year. Every fiftieth year is to be a Year of Jubilee, on which land is returned to its original owner, Israelite slaves are freed, land is given rest, and loans are forgiven. Israelites are to deal kindly with their poor brothers.
July 13	TLH 382	Leviticus 26	Obedience results in blessing. Disobedience results in punishment.
July 14	LSB 782	Leviticus 27	The Lord provides regulations regarding vows and gifts offered to Him.
July 15	TLH 395 / LSB 696	Hosea 1	The Lord uses the marriage of Hosea to illustrate His faithfulness, and the unfaithfulness of Israel.
July 16	TLH 607	Hosea 2	The Lord punishes the unfaithfulness of His people. The Lord has mercy on His people.
July 17	LSB 809	Hosea 3	Again, the Lord uses the marriage of Hosea to illustrate His faithfulness, and the unfaithfulness of Israel.
July 18	TLH 19 / LSB 819	Hosea 4	The Lord accuses Israel of idolatry. The priests in particular are guilty of permitting and encouraging idolatry among the people.
July 20	TLH 2	Hosea 5	Those who refuse repentance are subject to just punishment.
July 21	TLH 331 / LSB 614	Hosea 6	Israel and Judah remain impenitent.
July 22	TLH 318 / LSB 613	Hosea 7	Impenitence prevents Israel and Judah from receiving forgiveness from the Lord.
July 23	TLH 605 / LSB 513	Hosea 8	Without forgiveness, Israel and Judah face just punishment.
July 24	WS 763 / LSB 512	Hosea 9	The Lord has been faithful to Israel, but now the Lord will punish unfaithful Israel.
July 25	TLH 611 / LSB 508	Hosea 10	Israel has plowed iniquity, reaped injustice, and eaten the fruit of lies.
July 27	WS 784 / LSB 722	Hosea 11	The Lord continues to love Israel. The rebellion of Israel grieves the Lord.
July 28	TLH 369 / LSB 562	Hosea 12	Jacob once wrestled with the Lord in faith and received a blessing. Now Israel fights against the Lord in unfaithfulness and will receive a curse.
July 29	TLH 585	Hosea 13	The judgment to come will be violent and horrifying.
July 30	TLH 398 / LSB 704	Hosea 14	The Lord calls His people to return to Him in faith.
July 31	TLH 522 / LSB 615	Psalms 102	Whether we are crushed by the guilt of our sins or are experiencing any crisis in life, our hope is in the Lord. He will show us mercy. This is the fifth of the seven “penitential psalms.”

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.

Meet the Other Dr. Dan

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN
HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE & SEMINARY

The ascension of Jesus, which we commemorated a few months ago, marked several key points in the Savior's work. It was the acknowledgment that Jesus had successfully completed the work of salvation for all mankind. He was received triumphantly back into heaven as the mighty Victor over sin and death. Jesus took on the active role of Prophet, Priest, and King for us, God's people. As Prophet and Head of the Holy Christian Church, He sends out preachers and teachers as gifts to His Church (Ephesians 4:8-15).

In 2019, Dan Schierenbeck was given by God to serve as a professor on the campus of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary. He became one of the few profs who have served over ILC's 60+ year history to hold a doctorate. Over the years, the students have come to refer to him affectionately as Dr. Dan. This fall something special is coming to our campus when another Dr. Dan arrives. Let's meet him.

Gifted to be a Gift, Blessed to be a Blessing

It is the way of our God to equip His children with gifts so that He can use them as gifts to serve others. The Lord gifted Dan Sullivan with life when he was born in 1978, a gift to Paul and Jan Sullivan. Dan is the middle child of four sisters, Rachel, Hannah, Tabitha and Elizabeth. He was blessed to have godly parents who provided a Christ-centered home. Dan was baptized and confirmed in the Christian faith. He spent most of his childhood in eastern Wisconsin while being homeschooled. When his father accepted the call in the Fall of 1997 to serve as a professor at ILC, the family moved to Eau Claire.

Among the gifts the Lord gave to Dan was the special talent for

music. Dan continued his education at Oberlin Conservatory, graduating in 2002 with a Bachelor of Music degree. He went on to Yale School of Music, graduating in 2004 as a Master of Music and then to the Juilliard School, graduating in 2006 with an Artist Diploma and in 2010 as a Doctor of Musical Arts. He performed throughout the US and Canada, giving organ recitals. Eventually, he returned to Eau Claire and went to work at Menards as an industrial mechanic. During these years, he taught music at Messiah School and took turns on the organ bench for worship services. The Lord also used the gifts He had given Dan to bless Messiah congregation, where Dan served faithfully on various boards, and for several years on the committee that developed Messiah's new hymnal, *O Sing of Christ*, for which Dan even wrote some original music.

In 2013, the Lord gifted Dan with a godly wife, Amanda Stratton, and has blessed the couple with two children, Gideon (10) and Margaret (6).



Professor Daniel Sullivan and family

The Lord has also blessed Dan with a love for the Gospel, a solid foundation in the Bible, and a desire to serve Him and God's people. And now the Lord has given to our campus and our fellowship the one He has gifted. Welcome to campus, Dr. Dan 2—and thank you, ascended Lord Jesus for yet another special gift.



Paul Tiefel, Jr., is a retired pastor. He lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Lutheran Spokesman

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SEEN IN PASSING

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

Imprisoned Chinese Pastor Won't Yield. China's campaign against unregistered Christian churches continues to intensify, with pastors and lay leaders increasingly charged with "subversion of state power." One such pastor, Ezra Jinn, profiled in the *Wall Street Journal*, refuses to join the state-approved Three Self Church or temper his preaching. His congregation has endured raids, surveillance, and detentions; yet he insists that "Christ, not the state, commands our loyalty." Authorities aim not only to suppress dissent but also to reshape Christianity into a controllable, patriotic expression of faith. The pastor's steadfastness has made him a symbol of spiritual resistance in an era of tightening authoritarianism. His story highlights both the cost of discipleship in China and the resilience of underground churches. Spegele, Brian. "China Is Throwing Christians in Jail, but This Pastor Refuses to Back Down." *Religion*. WSJ.com, 18 May, 2026. Web. 26 May 2026.

Ban On Religious Symbols Threatens Constitutional Crisis in Canada. A major constitutional showdown is unfolding in Canada as Quebec's secularism law—Bill 21—heads to the Supreme Court. The law bars public sector workers such as teachers, judges, and police officers from wearing religious symbols, and was shielded from legal challenges by invoking the "notwithstanding clause," a constitutional mechanism allowing governments to override certain rights. Critics warn that Quebec's sweeping use of the clause is "spine chilling," raising fears it could justify restrictions on everything from abortion to political speech. Supporters argue the law protects state neutrality and reflects Quebec's identity rooted in *laïcité*. Over 50 interveners, including the federal government, are urging the Court to set limits on the clause's use, saying it was never meant to "annihilate" Charter rights. Several provinces, however, accuse Ottawa of threatening national unity by challenging provincial sovereignty. The case is widely described as the most consequential constitutional battle in a generation, with implications far beyond religious expression. Murphy, Jessica. "How a Ban on Religious Symbols Has Triggered a Canadian Constitutional Debate." *Canada Digital*, BBC.com, 22 Mar. 2026. Web. 26 May 2026.

More Women Than Men in Church? That May Be Changing. An article in *First Things* argues that American churches face a widening gender divide, with young women leaving organized religion at sharply rising rates while young men show renewed interest. Women under thirty now report religious disaffiliation at 43 percent, a dramatic shift from historic patterns. Larow attributes the trend to cultural forces—feminism, #Me Too, and online influencer culture—that frame traditional Christianity as restrictive or outdated. Young men, by contrast, are drawn to communities offering moral clarity, responsibility, and counter cultural identity. He warns that churches risk losing both sexes if they dilute their message into "a softened, middle-of-the-road version of themselves." The solution, he argues, is a robust, confident vision of Christian theology that speaks meaningfully to both men and women. Larow, Eddie. "The Church's Gender Gap Problem." *News*. FirstThings.com, 30 Apr. 2026. Web. 26 May 2026.