

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

Arise,  
O Lord of hosts,  
Be jealous for Thy name  
And drive from out our coasts  
The sins that put to shame.  
O Lord, stretch forth  
Thy mighty hand  
And guard and bless  
our Fatherland.

The Lutheran Hymnal  
Hymn #580 verse 2\*

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\*"To Thee, Our God, We Fly" Author: William W. How, 1871 Composer: William Croft, 1709



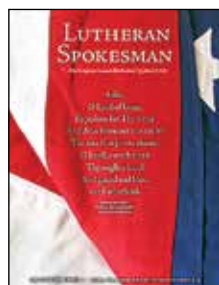
Pastors attending a Bible seminar at Marangu, Tanzania

## Marangu, Tanzania:

*“Teaching isn’t so much about reciting or referencing a list of facts as it is about giving others the tools to discover the truth on their own.”* Nathanael Mayhew—See story on page 9

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# Let's Talk about God's Program

In the introduction to his Sunday sermon, a pastor referred to the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:25, *“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city and house divided against itself will not stand.”* After the service, he was approached by a visitor who said, “When you began your sermon by talking about how ‘a house divided will not stand,’ I thought your message was going to be political.” She was thinking of the political divisions in our country and expecting that the pastor would use his Sunday sermon to address them.

We may find this woman's expectations about a Sunday sermon troubling, but we probably are not surprised at them. We know that many preachers use their pulpits for political messages. They endorse candidates, comment on legislation, and freely give their opinions about foreign policy.

Why is it that our pastors do not use the pulpit, or the church bulletin, to promote a political point of view? It is because behind these practices lies the idea that the mission of the church is the transformation of human society by means of social reform. But the Bible from beginning to end tells us that the problems of this world, age-old problems such as poverty, war, disease, and injustice, will never be eradicated; we are not to look for a golden age in this world because the world's problems have their roots in human nature.

God's word reveals the nature and extent of the problem. After they fell into sin, God expelled Adam and Eve from Eden. They were no longer fit for the garden with its tree of life. The way back to paradise was permanently barred by the cherubim with the flaming sword (Genesis 3:22-24). By this, already God tells us that paradise cannot be restored in this world. And from



## Why is it that our pastors do not use the pulpit, or the church bulletin, to promote a political point of view?

there forward, Bible history tells a story of crimes of man against man: of murder, theft, injustice, cruelty. The Bible tells us that the problems of society which we see throughout history and down to our own day are really only the symptoms of something deeper. Man's problem is not just with his neighbor or his environment; it is with his Creator. The real problem is the distance that sin has placed between man and God.

Man's solution to his problem with God is always some kind of program of moral improvement. But only God Himself could bring about reconciliation between Himself and man. This He did through His own Son, who became a Man and atoned for human sin by His sacrifice on Calvary.

Political programs have their place. As citizens we are right to be interested in them and concerned about them. But we have a better message to proclaim in our pulpits, as well as in our homes and communities. Unlike human programs for reform and improvement, God's program of salvation for sinners was completely successful. Jesus Christ really did take away our sins and reconcile us to

God. He really did win eternal life for us. Let it always be God's "program" that we proclaim from our pulpits and promote in our churches.



**John Klatt** is pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Loveland, Colorado.

# The Gift of the Public Ministry

*“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ”*  
(Ephesians 4:11-16).

**A**s we gather on a Sunday morning to worship our risen and ascended Lord, we may take for granted some of the blessings which He has given to His Church on earth. We take for granted that the pastor will be standing there before the altar ready and prepared to deliver a message from Holy Scripture. We may take for granted that the Sunday school teachers will have lessons prepared for our children. We may take for granted that the elders of the congregation are doing their part in assisting the pastor in the care of the souls of the church. Some of these things go on right before our eyes every Sunday as we gather around the Word. Others take place in the church’s classrooms or during the week while our minds are occupied with other things.

All these different activities have something in common: they are administrations of the Ministry of the Keys, that special authority which Christ gave to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners. These are, however, special administrations of the Keys because they are being carried out by individuals on behalf of the group of believers with which they are associated. These individuals are also gifts which Christ, as our ascended Lord, gave to His Church on earth. Pastors and teachers are given special mention in the passage before us, but deacons or elders are also among these gifts which the Lord gave to His Church on earth (compare I Timothy 3:8-13) in the institution of the public ministry of the gospel. It was the Lord Jesus Who gave these individuals to His Church on earth to serve

**People are better built up in their faith and life when things are done according to the Lord’s order, and with His blessing.**

the Lord and His Church, “each one . . . according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (Ephesians 4:7).

Individuals do not take this authority upon themselves. Even as the Lord is the One Who according to His grace measures out gifts, so the Lord in His wisdom and grace has entrusted this authority of the ministry to His Church, and it is administered by groups of believers. Those who are serving the Lord do so as representatives of one or another of these groups of believers. Then the public administration of the Gospel in Word and Sacrament proceeds in an orderly manner for the edification of the body of Christ. In other words, people are better built up in their faith and life when things are done according to the Lord’s order, and with His blessing. The public ministry is a sacred trust presented to the Church, just as it is a sacred trust for those who are called to serve as pastor, teacher, elder, or any other office which assists the church in the proclamation of the Gospel and in the care of souls dearly bought with the precious blood of Christ.

We live in a dangerous world—dangerous to the faith of tender souls. It is the goal of the ministry, and has been since the days of the Apostles, to build up and strengthen the members of Christ’s Church against the attacks of the false teachers. Their doctrines do not come labeled as dangerous, but rather seem as inviting as any candy. The craftiness and trickery of false teachers has deceived many, and confused many in their understanding of the truth that saves. So let us appreciate hearing the truth that is spoken to us in love by the ministers of the Gospel, that we might “. . . grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”  
(2 Peter 3:18).



**Theodore Barthels** is pastor of St. Paul’s Ev. Lutheran Church in Austin, Minnesota.

# Providence

**Providence** is not a word we use very often in our daily lives. In fact, the first thing that comes to my mind when I hear the word is Providence, Rhode Island. That city was founded by the religious dissenter Roger Williams. He left Massachusetts Bay Colony because he believed in the separation of church and state. He also believed that the Native Americans should be compensated for the land that the English were occupying. He chose the name *Providence* for the town because he believed God had directed him to that spot. *Providence* means “that activity of God whereby He uninterruptedly upholds, governs and directs the world.”

The topic of divine providence is an important one. Either one believes that God is in control of everything that happens, or one believes that it is fate, random chance, or luck that determines outcomes. If we cannot accept divine providence, can we be certain of our salvation? If God is not in control of all things, then God is not God.

Thankfully, Scripture provides us a myriad of passages that assure us of God’s providence. The universal nature of His providence is shown in Psalm 103:19—“*The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.*” “*He does according to His will . . . no one can restrain His hand*” (Daniel 4:35). Please read Psalm 37, also.

Not only does Scripture point to God’s ability and power to direct all, but it also emphasizes again and again how He directs human affairs for the benefit of His children. “*The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works*” (Psalm 145:17). “*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28).

The Bible also teaches that humans have the power to reject God and to do things that are displeasing in His sight, resulting in evil. How can it be that God controls all things on the one hand, while on the other hand humans are free to commit sin? A similar question could be raised: If God already knows the outcome before it happens, why are we told that our prayers can make a

**While man may sin and commit evil acts, God ultimately remains in control.**

difference? “*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*” (James 5:16).

God’s ways are higher than our ways. We cannot explain it, but the Scriptures clearly teach that, while man may sin and commit evil acts, God ultimately remains in control, and can even turn those evil acts to good. God’s Word provides us with many examples of how this works. Perhaps the clearest is the example of Joseph. His brothers sinned by selling him into slavery, but God used that sin to preserve His chosen people and the promise of the Savior (Genesis 45). Judas sinned by betraying Jesus, yet God used that betrayal to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies requiring the death of His Son by crucifixion (John 18). It was a sin for the Jews and Romans to persecute the early church, but God used that persecution to disperse His followers throughout the earth, fulfilling the Great Commission.

What a wonderful thing God’s providence is! As Christians we can be assured that everything that happens in life, whether seemingly good or bad, is governed and directed by God for the benefit of His children.

**In Thee I place my trust,  
On Thee I calmly rest;  
I know Thee good, I know Thee just,  
And count Thy choice the best.**

**What-e’er events betide,  
Thy will they all perform;  
Safe in Thy breast my head I hide,  
Nor fear the coming storm.**

**Let good or ill befall,  
It must be good for me;  
Secure of having Thee in all,  
Of having all in Thee.**

*(The Lutheran Hymnal, 435:2-4)*



**Joe Lau** is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

# A HIGH PRIEST LIKE NO OTHER

*“For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was”* (Hebrews 5:1-4).

**H**ebrews is the only New Testament book to refer to Jesus Christ as High Priest, and it uses this title for the Savior twelve times over thirteen chapters. Such an emphasis on the high priesthood is understandable. The first readers of Hebrews were Jewish Christians, and for Jews, no religious office was more important than that of high priest.

And yet, the Old Covenant with its sacrifices and high priesthood could not bring true atonement for sin. It was “. . . not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). True atonement required a New Covenant and a high priest like no other; namely, Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 5:1-4, the inspired writer presents four qualifications of a high priest. In subsequent verses and chapters, he demonstrates how the high priesthood of Christ meets and exceeds each of these qualifications.

The first qualification: IDENTIFICATION. Every high priest was “taken from among men” and “appointed for men in matters pertaining to God” (5:1). This is an important qualification. For a high priest truly to represent his people, he had to identify with them. And to fully identify with them, he had to be one of them.

And so we read also of Jesus in Hebrews 2:17, “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” And where do we find this merciful, faithful High Priest in the Gospels? Identifying with the lost and lonely; eating with the outcasts and misfits—this, while the Levitical high priests remained pompously aloof.

The second qualification: MEDIATION. The primary

responsibility of a high priest was to “offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (5:1). It was necessary therefore that Christ “. . . also have something to offer” (Hebrews 8:3). He met this qualification in presenting an offering, but vastly exceeded it in what he offered; namely, Himself. “With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal salvation” (Hebrews 9:12).

The third qualification: COMPASSION. As human beings, high priests also shared in human sinfulness and weakness. A serious consideration of their own condition should have made them compassionate toward “. . . those who are ignorant and going astray” (5:2).

Jesus, of course, had no sin; but Scripture teaches that He did carry our sins and experience all of our tears, sorrows, temptations, and infirmities. His eternal compassion as God led Him to become Man. His experience as a Man qualifies Him to be a merciful, compassionate High Priest. “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

The fourth qualification: COMMISSION. High priests did not appoint themselves; they were “. . . called by God, just as Aaron was” (5:4). Did Christ meet this qualification? Indeed he did; and, as with all other high priestly qualifications, he immeasurably exceeded it. Aaron was a sinful man. Jesus was the sinless Son of God. Aaron was appointed to the high priesthood in his lifetime. Jesus was appointed as High Priest from eternity. As the inspired writer explains: “So also, Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten you’ ” (5:5).

With the inspired writer then we gratefully proclaim, “For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26).



Jesus Christ, a High Priest like no other.

**Mark Weis** is pastor of the Church of the Lutheran Confession in North Port, Florida.

# Oh, the People Some People Marry

**S**ummer traditionally is a time for weddings, joyous in their circumstance and hopeful in their outlook. But soon the reality of sin surfaces, even to the point of comment, “Oh, the people some people marry!”

Perhaps Abigail had that said of her. Her husband’s name was Nabal, and what an evil character he was: proud, harsh, unthankful, and even a drunken lout. But what a woman he had married! Scripture describes her as “. . . a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance . . .” (1 Samuel 25:3). Husband and wife seemed like polar opposites. “Oh, the people . . .”

Things reached crisis mode in their lives (1 Samuel 25) when David asked Nabal for “some consideration.” David at the time was sort of an outlaw-king, chosen by God to replace Saul, but on Saul’s Ten Most Wanted List. Together with his six hundred men, David was living in the wilderness of southern Judah. His neighbor was wealthy Nabal, who owned a thousand goats and three thousand sheep. Part of the service David and his men provided for the locals was protection against thieves and marauders. Nabal had so benefited. But when David asked for a “consideration,” Nabal refused and even insulted David.

With his blood boiling in outrage over this disrespect, David took four hundred of his men—girded with swords—to teach Nabal a lesson. But when Abigail heard what was about to unfold, she took immediate action to intervene, to placate David and so save her husband. In short order she gathered enough food to feed David’s hungry men. What a loyal wife she was! What a quick-witted, resourceful woman!

Abigail also displayed her humility when she sought to take the blame for the debacle. She commiserated with David’s problems, reminding him that as a man of God he would not want his conscience burdened with a vengeful killing. Abigail was successful in her plea, for David relented of his anger, and thanked God for sending her, who in her wisdom kept him from doing something he surely would have regretted. What a godly peacemaker!

When drunken Nabal heard what his wife had done

**Abigail is an outstanding example of a beautiful, intelligent, God-fearing woman and wife who remained loyal to her husband for better or worse.**



without his knowledge, he suffered a heart attack and died ten days later. After Nabal’s funeral David asked Abigail to be his wife, which proposal she accepted.

We will not assume Abigail’s life suddenly became idyllic. For one thing, she also became a fugitive. But surely she proved herself a child of God, using her wisdom and abilities to save her husband, remaining faithful to her marriage vows until God Himself “*put asunder*” their union through Nabal’s death.

Very few women, even Christians, have perfect marriages. All have less-than-perfect husbands, perhaps some as outwardly evil as Nabal. Abigail is an outstanding example of a beautiful, intelligent, God-fearing woman and wife who remained loyal to her husband for better or worse. A better example is hard to imagine.

The fact that she was wed by a king also instructs and encourages us. For David was a type of his greater Son—our Lord Jesus Christ. In Holy Scripture, our Savior is pictured as the Bridegroom and His people the bride. For His bride, the Bridegroom-King gave Himself on the cross, that He might redeem her, forgive her, and so present her “. . . to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

No doubt all God’s married people experience at least some marriage problems on earth. But we know a better life is coming, and are exhorted to remain steadfast, loyal and faithful. Abigail surely did. What a woman, what a wife! And by her faith in the Messiah, what a glorious, eternal bride! By our faith we have great hopes of joining her. Oh, the people the gracious King has married!



**David Fuerstenau** is pastor of Holy Truth Lutheran Church in Ketchikan, Alaska.

# What Will Happen to Me If I Don't Attend Church?

## Short answer: **nothing.**

**N**o lightning bolt will fall from the sky warning you about spiritual danger. No one will return from the dead to plead with you about using your time of grace wisely. Nothing visibly upsetting may happen at all. In time, your conscience problems will go away, as well. Soon, there will be enough of a callus that you won't feel a thing.

Jesus shared the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus in order to bring focus to this very issue. The man who "*fared sumptuously every day*" failed to realize that while he felt alive and well satisfied, he was severely malnourished and dead. His soul and conscience had flat-lined, evidenced by an obvious lack of concern for his neighbor in need. Nothing happened to him, of course. Until he died. Then oh, how he wished that God would send Abraham back from the dead to warn his brothers! "Nothing doing," to paraphrase the response. "*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them*" (Luke 16:29).

The apostle Paul testified before Felix and Drusilla at Caesarea. They had front-row seats in an opportunity of a lifetime, but brushed aside the invitation and call to repentance. "*Go away for now; when I have a convenient time, I will call for you*" (Acts 24:25). As far as we know, nothing happened: no further discussion, no repentance, and no faith. Nothing.

As they passed through Samaria, James and John earned their nickname, "Sons of Thunder," for wanting to call down fire from heaven. The target was a village of Samaritans who did not care to welcome Jesus to their town. "If that's how they feel," the two surmised, "then allow us to give them the judgment they deserve." But no fire flashed from the sky. No plague ravaged that

## Where nothing happens, there is no spiritual growth.

community. Instead, nothing happened at all. Jesus simply by-passed the town. No miracles were performed. No Gospel was preached. No sinners were saved (Luke 9:54-56).

Where nothing happens, there is no spiritual growth. Where there is no spiritual growth, there is spiritual atrophy. Some will remember the days when having a baby landed the mother in the hospital for two weeks. Total bed rest seemed like the best treatment after the rigors of labor. Today we know that it was the worst thing to do. When the new mom finally got out of the hospital, she was so weakened by the days of doing nothing that she could barely handle the duties of motherhood.

Faith grows through the Gospel. Where Christ is preached, hearers are blessed and made stronger. It works that way, not because the preacher is so dynamic or the music so uplifting, but because God operates through His Word and Sacraments. These are the tools He supplies for our spiritual good. If you knew that Jesus would be in your church on Sunday to bless your children, to put His hand on your shoulder, to personally assure you of His forgiveness and love, would you be there? He is there, and He does that through the Gospel.

What if you can't make it on a Sunday? What if your ox falls in a pit and you need to get it out? (Luke 14:5) Then get it out. But, as the old joke goes, "If it falls in the pit every Sunday, you'd better either fill in the pit or get a new ox."

If you can't come to church, ask your pastor about ways the church might come to you: video recordings, printed sermons, online services and so forth. But do it before nothing happens.



**James Albrecht** is pastor of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church in Okabena, Minnesota.



# MARANGU, TANZANIA

*“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:17-18).*

It was Saturday. I was near the city of Marangu, Tanzania, at the eastern foot of beautiful Mount Kilimanjaro. I had conducted a seminar with the pastors and church leaders of the area the day before and visited a congregation in the area in the afternoon. On this day, Pastor Malyi (who is the leader of the Moshi district of the Tanzanian Church of the Lutheran Confession—TCLC) scheduled me to meet with his congregation and lead a Bible study for them. This wasn’t just for adults. It wasn’t just for children. It was for the whole congregation. The church wasn’t full, but I was excited to see how many of the members had come to church on a Saturday afternoon. Especially on a market day!

I had decided to teach a lesson on angels. I like to ask a lot of questions when I teach, especially in Africa. It helps me get a hold on how much the people are comprehending through the language barrier. When we read a passage, I ask, “What do we learn from this passage?” I could tell them what the passage means, but I want them to study it for themselves. I want them to look into the depth of God’s Word and find the riches which are to be found there.

Teaching isn’t so much about reciting or referencing a list of facts as it is about giving others the tools to discover the truth on their own. This is one of the greatest problems in education today, both secular and religious. This is part of the reason there is so much debate about what “truth” really is. Everyone has his own version because we aren’t being taught HOW to find the truth; we are just told, “This is what truth is” (even if it isn’t truth at all).

The same also applies in our witnessing to others. When we have the opportunity to witness to others, we can tell them what the Bible teaches, or we can help lead them to find the answer they are seeking on their own. Don’t you think that the second is the better approach in most cases? Witnessing shouldn’t be about reciting or referencing a list of passages that prove a certain Biblical truth. It should be about giving people the tools they need to read



Members of the Lutheran congregation at Marangu

and understand God’s Word. We need to consider our approach with those around us. Paul says that God “. . . desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). This is the work of God through His Word, not our work. The Holy Spirit leads us to a knowledge of truth through the study of His Word.

Even though there was a difference in language, I was able to connect with the members of the congregation on that day. They were eager to open up and read their Bibles. They began to ask questions, and together we grew in our knowledge of God through our study of the Scriptures. In our study, it was amazing to me (once again!) how much we could learn about God, His character, His work, and much more—just from one small verse!

Yet, isn’t that the way God is? He reveals Himself to us slowly, a little bit at a time. Maybe He does this to keep us from being overwhelmed. No matter the reason, we see that there is much to be learned and comprehended in the treasure trove which is God’s precious Word. Even the smallest of gems should not be taken for granted. Even they are of greater value than we can comprehend!



Thanks be to God!

**Nathanael Mayhew** is pastor of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, and part-time missionary to Africa.

# Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther

**C. F. W. Walther (1811-1887)** was the first president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (1847-1850). He also served a second time (1864-1878). Except for Martin Luther, perhaps no one is more quoted among confessional Lutherans than Walther.

Walther was born in Langenchursdorf in Saxony, Germany, one of twelve children. He was instructed in the faith by his pastor father. At the age of eight, he attended a Latin school. He confessed his faith in the Lord Jesus, though by his own later description he remained “unconverted.”

While in college in 1829, he began to read the book of Acts for its examples of unmovable faith. When he entered the university in Leipzig he felt himself “. . . born for nothing else than music.” His father changed the young man’s mind.

In Leipzig he joined a group of pietists. Pietism originated in the 17th century in the Lutheran Church. It emphasizes personal behavior and intense feeling. It stresses piety over orthodox doctrine. Within Pietism lie the seeds of work-righteousness. While at Leipzig, Walther was overtaken by spiritual despair. He also suffered a severe lung disease that forced him to leave school. His mother nursed him back to health. Surely the hand of the Lord was evident. At home, an intense reading of the works of Martin Luther formed his confessional position. He was ordained in 1837.

Opposed by rationalists as well as beset by government interference, he determined that he could not remain in Germany and fulfill his call as an orthodox Lutheran pastor. He left for America in 1838. Even his departure from Germany was plagued with problems. Authorities tried to discredit him, even charging him with the abduction of two children.<sup>1</sup> Walther finally sailed to America under another name and on a different ship from the one on which he had been booked originally. He looked forward to being able to practice his Lutheran orthodoxy in America, where he arrived in January of 1839. He was twenty-eight when he arrived. Initially Walther was called to a dual parish in Perry County, Missouri. Later, in 1841, he accepted a call to a St. Louis



## **C. F. W. Walther’s photo and 1860 U.S. Passport**

This 1860 passport is roughly the size of two letter-sized pieces of paper. The creases from where the document was folded are still visible. It was folded in half and then in thirds, making it easier to carry, perhaps in a coat pocket. Also note how, in a time before photography was common, officials could verify the identity of a person. Instead of a photograph, there is a description of a person, noting what might be expected—age, height (stature), hair color and eye color—but also including descriptions of a person’s forehead, nose and complexion, to name a few. Judge for yourself whether his passport accurately depicts him.

church, filling the vacancy created by the death of his brother, Herman.

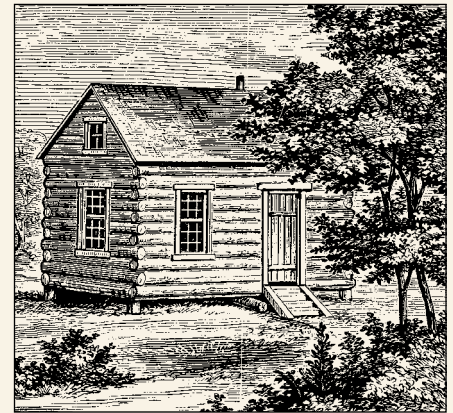
Walther and his wife, Emilie, had six children, one of whom became a pastor and served in the ministry until 1922. Emilie was called to her eternal rest in 1885, two years before her husband.

Primarily, Walther was a student of Scripture and a teacher of God’s truth. Besides his profound respect for Scripture, he valued the Lutheran Confessions. “The Book of Concord should also be in every Lutheran home. . . . Pastors should see to it that every home has one. . . . If a person isn’t familiar with this book, he’ll think, ‘That old book is just for pastors. I don’t have to preach. After plowing all day, I can’t sit down and study in the evening. If I read my morning and evening devotions, that’s enough.’ No, that is not enough! The Lord doesn’t want us to remain children, blown to and fro by every wind of doctrine; instead of that, He wants us to grow in knowledge so that we can teach others.”<sup>2</sup> The foundation of his teaching and preaching,

As we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we take a brief look at the lives of some of the most influential and important Lutheran theologians.



Walther became its first president, and held this position until his death in 1887. He also founded the St. Louis Lutheran Bible Society in 1853, and started two important publications: *Der Lutheraner* (in 1844) and *Lehre und Wehre* (in 1855). He was author of many books and periodical articles, among which the most noteworthy are *Pastoral Theology, Church and Ministry*, and his classic treatise on *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. While holding synodical and seminary positions as well as editing and publishing several periodicals, Walther was also the head pastor of the four Saxon Lutheran congregations (called *Gesammtgemeinde*) in St. Louis (Trinity, Holy Cross, Immanuel and Zion).<sup>3</sup>



1839 Woodcut Concordia Cabin College

From his youth, and throughout his years of education and ministry, Walther endured heartache. Satan sifted Walther, but by the grace of God he endured and left a legacy still appreciated by confessional Lutherans. A synopsis of Thesis XXIII (from Walther's book, *The Evangelical Lutheran Church The True Visible Church of God on Earth*) reads, "Those only are orthodox churches in which correctness of doctrine and practice is found."<sup>4</sup> Praise the Lord for providing this stalwart confessor of the

Word of God to the cause of Lutheran orthodoxy in America.



**Daniel Fleischer** is a retired pastor and former president of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. He lives in Oakdale, Minnesota.

as well as of his personal hope, was justification by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. This love of God in Christ bore him up when he, like Luther, suffered fits of depression.

One of Walther's passions was music—he played the piano and organ. At one of the churches he served, an organ was constructed. The congregation had resolved that "only pure Lutheran hymns and worship forms" were to be used. To this end a new hymnal was produced with Walther as the editor-in-chief. He wrote a number of hymns and hymn tunes, one of which is in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (Hymn 198: "He's Risen, He's Risen, Christ Jesus the Lord.")

"The 'log cabin' college [started in large part by Walther's efforts] was moved from Perry County to St. Louis in 1850 and developed into Concordia Seminary.

1 Wm. Dallmann, W.H.T. Dau, Th. Engelder, Walther and the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932) 2.  
 2 C. F. W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, Vol 2 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992) 51.  
 3 No author, "C.F.W. Walther—Biographical Note," no publication date, May 5 2015 <<http://lutheranhistory.org/collections/fa/m-0004.htm#BIOGRAPHICAL>>  
 4 Dallmann, et al., *op.cit.*, 32.

## Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church— Red Wing, Minnesota

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church of Red Wing, Minnesota, began as an independent Lutheran congregation, existing for two years before the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) in 1960. On July 24, 1958, a Lutheran congregation in Red Wing, Minnesota, voted to continue in fellowship with a false-teaching church body despite thorough instruction from its pastor that Romans 16:17 teaches that the heterodox should be avoided. A minority of the congregation was convinced that to continue fellowship with this synod was disobedience to God's Word and toleration of false doctrine.

Their pastor and the three Christian day school teachers terminated their membership in that synod, and approximately eighty members, including their pastor and teachers, withdrew from the congregation. On July 25, 1958, an organizational meeting was held at the Elmer Fitschen home. This meeting resulted in the formation of a new congregation: Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church of Red Wing, Minnesota. Temporary officers were chosen and a call was issued to Pastor George Barthels, who accepted the call of the new congregation and began to serve them as their God-given spiritual shepherd.

The new congregation gratefully accepted an invitation from the Arnold Raasch, Sr. family to use their home temporarily as a place of worship until a permanent location could be provided. The first service was held on Sunday, July 27, 1958. Veva Stehr and Teacher Alvin Sieg were church organists. In August of 1958 permanent officers were elected. They were Elmer Fitschen, president; Charles Sandeen, vice president; Erwin Hinrichs, secretary; and Milton Lynner, treasurer. During the month of August, 1958, the congregation purchased the current site at 1534 West Avenue in Red Wing. It was formerly a dairy farm, and the farmhouse later became the church parsonage. No other buildings were on the property. On Friday, October 17, 1958, ground was broken for the church building. The congregation set as a goal to have the Christmas Eve Service in the new church building. By the grace of God,

this goal was achieved. The building was subsequently finished and was dedicated in June of 1959.

The altar, pulpit, and baptismal font were built by Herman Ferber, a gifted member of the congregation. At first, folding chairs were used for seating. The second year the congregation was fortunate enough to get theater seats to replace the folding chairs. After a few years, Our Redeemer's purchased wooden pews from another congregation in town which had replaced its pews.

The Christian education of the young was a high priority of Our Redeemer's. Since the three Christian day school teachers from the former congregation had left with Pastor Barthels at the formation of Our Redeemer's, the congregation had the personnel to open a Christian day school. Wally Voigt and Alvin Sieg were both called to teach, while the third teacher, Lorna Schweim, moved back to her home town of Mankato, Minnesota, and became a member at Immanuel, another CLC congregation. The Christian day school was opened in September, 1958, with 13 students. Classes were held in a large room in the parsonage. It soon became evident that there were not enough students for two teachers, so Wally Voigt found secular employment and Alvin Sieg continued as teacher at the new school. Over the years, more students were added to the school. At times there were up to twenty children attending the Our Redeemer's Christian Day School. Pastor Barthels also found secular



Fortieth Anniversary of Our Redeemer's in 1998 (left to right): Alvin Sieg, Marion Fitschen, Wally Voigt, Pastor Jim Sandeen, Pastor John Hein, Walter Priebe, Pastor Robert Mackensen



employment. He worked full time at the Red Wing Boat Factory (Midwest Marine).

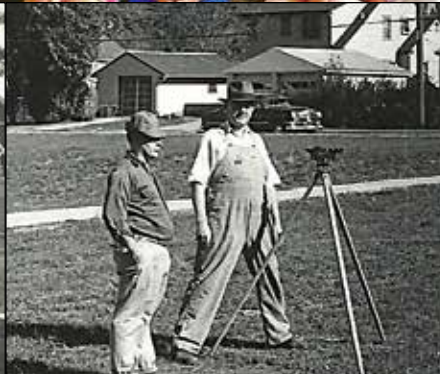
In August of 1959 Our Redeemer's hosted a meeting of the

"Interim Conference," the precursor to the CLC. In 1960 delegates from Our Redeemer's attended a meeting of the "Interim Conference," held in Watertown, South Dakota, at which the Church of the Lutheran Confession was formally organized and Our Redeemer's became a charter member.

In 1967 Pastor Barthels accepted a call to Grace, Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. Later that same year Pastor Robert Mackensen accepted the call to Our Redeemer's and was installed as the new pastor of the congregation. In the summer of 1968 teacher Alvin Sieg accepted a call to teach in Golden, Colorado. When no teacher accepted the call to teach, the school was closed for one year until a teacher could be found. An Immanuel Lutheran College graduate, Miss Karla Kroeger, was assigned to Our Redeemer's Christian Day School and began teaching in September, 1969. The doors of the Christian day school closed in 1984. However, the congregation has not lost its zeal for Christian education: it maintains an active Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and regular confirmation instruction for the young.

In the year 2000 an entryway was added to the church, which included wheel chair accessibility to the sanctuary. At the same time, the church basement was remodeled, adding another Sunday School room.

The following are sons and daughters of the congregation who later entered the preaching or teaching ministry: Pastor Emeritus James Sandeen, Pastor Theodore Barthels, Pastor Emeritus Jerome Barthels,



(Clockwise from top left:) Exterior view of Our Redeemer's; VBS children; the altar; Marchand Lynner and Pastor George Barthels surveying the church property in 1958, a truck delivering materials to the construction site.

Teacher Emeritus Marion Fitschen, and Teacher Dan Barthels.

Since its formation, the regularly-called pastors of Our Redeemer's include George Barthels, Robert Mackensen, David Lau, Norman Greve, Wayne Mielke, John Hein, Rick Grams and David Baker (current). Teachers who served at Our Redeemer's Christian Day School include Alvin Sieg, Wally Voigt, Karla Kroeger, Miriam Duehlmeier, Ruth Gurgel, Barbara Drews and Walter Priebe.

Many of the original members of Our Redeemer's have relocated to other places, and many have since received their eternal reward. Yet some of the original members still remain and continue faithfully to support the church. Our Redeemer's continues to preach and teach the true and pure Word of God, and to administer the sacraments according to the institution of Christ. The one who thirsts after salvation may come to the waters and freely drink, so that ". . . out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38), and he will gain eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.



**David Baker** is pastor of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in Red Wing, Minnesota.

## August 2015

TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941; WS = Worship Supplement 2000; SC = Martin Luther’s Small Catechism;

[ ] = Minor Festivals or commemorations in the Christian Church Year

Date	Reading	Verse
<b>Aug 1</b>	<b>John 5:30-38</b>	<b>PS 2</b>
	There can be no doubt that Jesus is God’s Son. John says so, Jesus’ own works say so, and the Father’s voice says so.	
<b>Aug 3</b>	<b>John 7:14-24</b>	<b>PS 149</b>
	Everything Jesus teaches is the Word of God, and nothing He does violates that Word.	
<b>Aug 4</b>	<b>Jeremiah 23:21-32</b>	<b>TLH 490</b>
	Those who speak in God’s name had better speak His message and not one of their own making.	
<b>Aug 5</b>	<b>Exodus 16:2-15</b>	<b>TLH 374</b>
	God responds to the rude grumbling of the people with amazing grace!	
<b>Aug 6</b>	<b>1 Kings 19:1-8</b>	<b>PS 10</b>
	Even when we feel ready to give up on Him, God is willing to strengthen and support us.	
<b>Aug 7</b>	<b>Exodus 32:1-14</b>	<b>PS 119:41-48</b>
	When disaster threatened, Moses held God to His Word. That’s exactly what God wants us to do, too.	
<b>Aug 8</b>	<b>1 Timothy 6:6-10</b>	<b>TLH 430:4</b>
	Earthly wealth will pass away, but godliness with contentment you will have in heaven—so make it a priority even now.	
<b>Aug 10</b>	<b>Mark 12:38-44</b>	<b>WS 787</b>
	The fancy scribes looked as if they were honoring God, but the poor widow actually was.	
<b>Aug 11</b>	<b>Ephesians 4:17-5:2</b>	<b>WS 767</b>
	It’s surely tempting to “do what everyone else is doing,” but the forgiven in Christ see a new way of life instead.	
<b>Aug 12</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 4:23-31</b>	<b>PS 97</b>
	Running after other gods is also common in our day. Thankfully, the repentant sinner can still cling to God’s mercy.	
<b>Aug 13</b>	<b>Acts 4:13-20</b>	<b>WS 744</b>
	Do you ever have such good news that you just can’t keep it a secret?	
<b>Aug 14</b>	<b>Matthew 21:33-46</b>	<b>PS 12</b>
	Those who reject Jesus will face judgment, for Christ is the Cornerstone upon which our salvation depends.	
<b>Aug 15</b>	<b>Luke 11:27-28</b>	<b>TLH 78</b>
	[Mary, Mother of Jesus] Yes, it was a great blessing for Mary to bear the Lord Jesus, but you and all Christian are just as blessed as she.	

Date	Reading	Verse
<b>Aug 17</b>	<b>Micah 2:1-13</b>	<b>SC Commands. IX-X</b>
	The wicked people said, “Do not preach,” but whatever God wishes to say to us, we need to hear.	
<b>Aug 18</b>	<b>2 Timothy 4:1-8</b>	<b>PS 119:1-8</b>
	Be patient with others as you share the Word of God, even if your hearers are not patient with you.	
<b>Aug 19</b>	<b>John 9:1-7</b>	<b>PS 18</b>
	Jesus faithfully highlighted the wonderful works of God whenever He had the opportunity.	
<b>Aug 20</b>	<b>1 Samuel 7:1-17</b>	<b>PS 40</b>
	[Commemoration of Samuel] When Samuel spoke of the Lord’s deliverance (v. 3), the people were led away from their worthless idols.	
<b>Aug 21</b>	<b>Ephesians 5:6-21</b>	<b>SC Lord’s Prayer III</b>
	We are forever realizing how little time we have in this life, so hear the apostle invite you to use that little time wisely.	
<b>Aug 22</b>	<b>John 6:51-59</b>	<b>TLH 379</b>
	Jesus isn’t talking about the Lord’s Supper here, but rather illustrating that to “eat” of Him is to believe in Him.	
<b>Aug 24</b>	<b>John 21:1-19</b>	<b>WS 735</b>
	[Bartholomew, Apostle] Just follow Jesus in everything, dear children, whether you are fishing or feeding sheep.	
<b>Aug 25</b>	<b>Ephesians 5:22-33</b>	<b>SC Commandment VI</b>
	In marriage, husbands and wives have different needs as well as different responsibilities toward one another.	
<b>Aug 26</b>	<b>1 Peter 3:1-11</b>	<b>TLH 404</b>
	Husbands are called upon to love their wives, while wives are called upon to respect their husbands.	
<b>Aug 27</b>	<b>Proverbs 5:1-23</b>	<b>PS 14</b>
	Adultery is expected and accepted by much of society today, but God warns how dangerous it really is.	
<b>Aug 28</b>	<b>1 Corinthians 13:4-7</b>	<b>PS 5</b>
	Love isn’t how you feel about your spouse, it’s how you act toward your spouse.	
<b>Aug 29</b>	<b>Matthew 3:1-12</b>	<b>TLH 63</b>
	[Martyrdom of John the Baptist] John’s preaching led many to see their sin clearly—and to see their Savior clearly, too. May the same be said of our preaching.	
<b>Aug 31</b>	<b>Genesis 2:18-24</b>	<b>WS 790</b>
	No, you can’t define marriage any way you want, because it’s God’s institution, and He defines it.	

# Reaching People AT WORK

These brief topics were written to help Christians think about the ways in which they share the Gospel with others. Cut this page out if you like and post it on your refrigerator. Decide for yourself whether this is a helpful addition to your “outreach repertoire.”

**FACT: The average North American will spend about ninety thousand hours at work in his lifetime. That’s over ten years spent in the company of people, many of whom do not know Christ!**

During your time at work, you and your faith are on display for all to see. Your fellow-Christians at church see you for an hour or two each week, but the folks who really get a good look at you are those who see you eight hours a day, five days a week, twenty-two days a month—they are the people most influenced by what you say and how you live.

## What can you do in this sphere of influence?

One Christian writer spoke of the office building in which he worked. About three times a week, he saw

- The same person delivering inter-company mail pushing a cart by his desk.
- The woman whose job was to water the house plants on people’s desks.
- The same security guard doing his rounds through the complex.
- The same checkout clerk in the cafeteria.

## Think about your

- Clients.
- Vendors who visit you regularly.
- Immediate co-workers (boss, people you supervise).
- Other co-workers with whom you regularly interact.
- Custodial staff.
- Mail delivery person.
- Cafeteria staff.



Which of these connections can you develop a little deeper today?

Which ones don’t yet know Jesus as their Savior?

Which ones don’t yet have a church home?

Which of them might have recently had a life-changing event (birth or death in the family, a wedding or a divorce, and so forth) that might make them especially receptive to an approach from a concerned friend?

Take a moment today to pray and ask the Lord to show you whom He is underlining for you to intentionally develop a deeper relationship with.

## SEEN IN PASSING

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

### Christians Relegated to “Hated Minority,” Panel Warns.

“Christians may be about to face a new status as a ‘hated minority’ in the U.S. because of their support for biblical man-woman marriage.” This according to a panel of experts assembled by Dr. James Dobson. The panel cited recent legal attacks on certain types of businesses—such as bakers, florists and venue owners—who refuse to cater to same-sex “marriages,” and as a result risk the loss of their business and personal ruin. Further, new government regulations may prohibit the licensing of Christian counsellors and therapists who cannot endorse the LGBT agenda. Unruh, Bob. “Dobson Panel Decries Bureaucracy’s Attacks on Christians.” *WND Faith*. WND, 23 Mar. 2015. Web. 24 Mar. 2015

### Magazine Names Top 100 Christian Leaders in U.S.

In April, *Newsmax* magazine published its annual ranking of the one hundred most influential Christian leaders in America. Heading the list were Franklin Graham and Joel Osteen. Not all are preachers, however; number three on the list was Mark Burnette, creator of the TV series *The Bible*. Rounding out the top ten (in order) were Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Billy Graham, Rick Warren, Mike Huckabee, Jerry Falwell, Joyce Meyer and Pat Robertson. Victoria Osteen trailed her husband at number 18, Tim Tebow came in at number 37, Creflo Dollar at number 46, Chuck Norris at number 50, and Pat Boone at number 67. Sarah Palin came down in the world, registering at a modest number 87 this year. Breen, L.D. “Newsmax’s Top 100 Christian Leaders in America.” *The Wire*. Newsmax, 20 Apr. 2015. Web. 24 Apr. 2015.

### Pulitzer Prize Winners Blame Bible for Domestic Abuse.

The South Carolina newspaper that won this year’s Pulitzer Prize for public service journalism has drawn criticism for linking the Palmetto state’s domestic violence problems with its residents’ belief in the Bible’s teaching about gender. The *Charleston Post and Courier’s* winning series “Till Death Do Us Part,” published last August, probed why South Carolina has one of the highest rates of abuse-related death of women in America. They laid much of the blame on Christians. Among other attacks, the authors claimed that much of the state’s domestic abuse stemmed from “. . . conservative Christian tenets about the subservient role of women,” and that Christian pastors contributed to the problem. Roach, David. “Pulitzer winners tie domestic abuse to Christianity.” *Baptist Press News*. Baptist Press, 23 Apr. 2015. Web. 24 Apr. 2015.

### Critique of Youth Ministry and Youth Groups among Evangelicals.

In a recent article, a thirty-something convert to Lutheranism reflects on the youth group experience in his former Evangelical denomination: “I attended youth group for

three reasons: 1. My parents made me, 2. I actually enjoyed socially interacting with my peers, and 3. Girls were present. While I may be an anomaly, I would venture to say that a majority of cultural Christian youth attended for similar reasons.” He was disillusioned to discover, later, that a majority of young people not only left the youth group, but drifted away from church altogether. Where was the problem? “The argument from the youth leadership was that if we’d just get them in the door, then they’d hear the gospel and possibly make a decision for Jesus or something like that. Most of the time, the talks were light, fluffy and centered on self-help life lessons. Any time the study waded to the deep end, the lessons focused on law centered warnings. In any case, the gospel was glaringly absent. In the end the bait and switch was really just bait and release. Of the core youth group attenders, a large majority have left the church, [because of] the lack of adequate teaching coupled with an unhealthy focus on obedience and outreach.” Rodebaugh, Jonathan. “Spiritual Daycare: Why Youth Pastors Shouldn’t Exist.” *Steadfast Lutherans*. N.p., 4 Feb. 2015. Web. 24 Mar. 2015.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### Audio Version of the *Lutheran Spokesman* Available.

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