

November 2017 VOL 60 NO. 5

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



**GIVE THANKS**

**"OH, GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD,  
FOR HE IS GOOD! FOR HIS MERCY  
ENDURES FOREVER."**



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Editor: Paul Naumann, 3732 Claymore Lane, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, E-mail to [paul.naumann@ilc.edu](mailto:paul.naumann@ilc.edu); Assistant Editor: Craig Owings; Art Director, Graphic Designer, Print Production: Matthew Schaser; Proofreaders: David Lau and Paula Naumann; Staff: James Albrecht, Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Timothy Daub, Wayne Eichstadt, David Fuerstenau, Frank Gantt, Norman Greve, Mark Gullerud, John Klatt, Ross Kok, Joseph Lau, Delwyn Maas, Bruce Naumann, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, John Reim, Michael Roehl, Thomas Schuetze, Chad Seybt, Steven Sippert, Mark Weis.

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# Don't Forget to Give Thanks

*“Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.”*

(Psalm 107:21-22)

*“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”*

**T**his prayer, drawn from the Psalms, has been a favorite of many a Christian down through the years. As believers have called to mind the Lord's generosity in providing so many good things to eat and drink, they have united their hearts with the psalmist's in exclaiming: “Thank You, Lord!”

At this time of year we're especially mindful of the Lord's mercy. How lavishly our Thanksgiving tables are spread with a veritable smorgasbord of delicacies from His gracious hand! “Turkey and all the fixings,” as they say.

As children of God we know that we have reason to thank our heavenly Father for His cornucopia of blessings not just on a single day towards the end of November, but each day of our lives. In the verse quoted above from Psalm 107 we're encouraged to do just that. Four times the psalmist's call rings out: *“Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”* (verses 8,15,21,31) We might wonder why he made a point of repeating this thought. He did so undoubtedly for emphasis, because he knew God's children need this reminder again and again. Aren't we inclined to take God's blessings for granted? Isn't the temptation strong (especially for those living in an affluent culture) to forget that *“every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights”* (James 1:17) and to begin thinking that the material benefits we enjoy are the product of our own doings and labor? (see Deuteronomy 8:11-17) The result of such misguided thinking is that we may neglect to lift our hearts in praise to the One from whom our blessings flow.

What is the remedy for this spiritual weakness? Let us petition the Lord to give us hearts that meditate on His



lovingkindness daily, hearts that remember daily that, were it not for His tender mercy and mighty protection, not only would we not have in our possession any spiritual blessings (treasures like forgiveness for our sins, spiritual life, and the crown of life awaiting us in heaven), but we wouldn't enjoy any earthly blessings either. The devil would see to it! As Martin Luther wrote in the Large Catechism: “If it were in [the devil's] power and our prayer (next to God) did not prevent him,

we would not keep a straw in the field, a farthing in the house, yes, not even our life for an hour. This is especially true of those who have God's Word and would like to be Christians.”

Then let us ponder often on the windfall of blessings our heavenly Father bestows on us each day in His undeserved love. For big blessings like the Bread of Life for our soul's nourishment in His Word, and for small blessings like food for our bodily sustenance. Let's think of them when we arise in the morning, as we go through our day, and when we lay down our heads on our pillows at night. Let such memories of our Father's goodness lead us to praise Him both with our lips and with lives of loving service rendered to Him in Jesus' name.

**Oh, may we ne'er with thankless heart  
Forget from whom our blessings flow!  
Still, Lord, Thy heavenly grace impart;  
Still teach us what to Thee we owe.  
Lord, may our lives with fruit divine  
Return Thy care and prove us Thine.  
(TLH 567:2)**



**Thomas Schuetze** is pastor of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lakewood, Colorado.

# Semper Paratus

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

(Hebrews 10:23-25)

**Semper paratus** is the motto of the fifth branch of our military, the U.S. Coast Guard. It’s a Latin phrase that means “always ready.” Through extensive training in meteorology, naval safety, communications and rescue operations, members of the Coast Guard keep themselves prepared for adverse conditions on the sea. They must always be ready to handle their own ship in dangerous situations, to assist disabled vessels in a storm, to intercept and arrest drug smugglers, and to repel enemies from our coastlands.

It’s a good thing that people are able to specialize, isn’t it? Not everyone can have the advanced training it takes to handle a ship in a storm like a Coast Guardsman. In the same way, not everyone has the specialized skills which are needed to treat a trauma victim like an emergency room doctor, or to safely rescue someone from a burning building like a firefighter. Also, it’s not enough just to learn the skills and procedures once; it takes continuous practice and drilling. Why? In an emergency, there is no time to look up the right procedure in a book. There may not even be time to think about it. In the confusion of a crisis, training and muscle memory have to take over in order to save lives.

You may never find yourself on the open sea in a hurricane. You may never need the skills to treat a car crash victim, or enter a burning building to rescue a child. One thing you will certainly face, though, is the world’s greatest calamity of all time, the return of Jesus on Judgment Day. That is why Jesus

urges us, in Matthew 24:44, to “...**be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

You don’t know when that day is coming, and there won’t be any time to prepare once it arrives; you need to be in training for it right now. Are you “semper paratus”—always prepared—for the Lord’s return? In Hebrews 10 we are told how to stay in practice, to be always ready, as we “see the Day approaching.”

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.”* Our hope of standing victorious on that great day is found in our daily trip to Jesus’ cross, repenting of our sins and receiving the Lord’s full forgiveness because of Jesus’ death in our place.

*“Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.”* The exercise and practice of our faith is strengthened daily by our fellowship with like-minded believers.

*“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”* Weekly worship at church is not just a frill; it is the Lord’s way of keeping

us and our fellow believers in practice with the Gospel, so that we know by heart the path to safety at Jesus’ cross.

On the day of our Lord’s arrival, there will be multitudes who will be unprepared. They will wish they could hide from the righteous judgment of God, but there will be no place to hide. As for us, with regular use of God’s Word, and fellowship in that Word with like-minded believers, we’ll be “always ready” to greet our returning Savior with joy!

**Bruce Naumann** is associate pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



Are you  
“semper paratus”  
– always prepared –  
for the Lord’s return?



TLH 36; LSB 895

# “Now Thank We All Our God”

## When do Christians give thanks?

Initial answers would likely include mealtimes, happy times and moments of success. It’s relatively easy to express appreciation to God when something pleasant is *at hand* or *in hand*. But what about those times when things seem to get *out of hand*, when a serious hardship lingers, when uncommon difficulties become common? Could such times ever be filled with thanksgiving?

The inspired apostle left no room for doubt. In his first letter to the Thessalonians he directed the people of God to give thanks “*in everything*.” (I Thessalonians 5:18) Since all things are under the direct control of a Lord Who loves us and wants only the best for us, it is fitting to thank Him not only during times of peace and pleasure, but also during turmoil and trouble. We are assured that the Lord “*is righteous in all His ways*.” (Psalm 145:17) He always has reasons for doing what He does and for allowing what He allows. Christians throughout the ages, therefore, have been led by the Spirit to express gratitude also during uncommonly difficult times—Christians such as Martin Rinckart (1586-1649).

Little appears to have come easily to this servant of the Lord. Raised in humble circumstances, he scraped together what he could to support himself as he studied to become a Lutheran pastor. And when he did complete his studies he was initially passed over when he presented himself as a candidate for ministry in his home town of Eilenburg, Germany. It was only after a number of years in service elsewhere that he was welcomed to serve where he had spent his youth.

A return to his hometown, however, did not ensure that Rinckart’s life would be comfortable, for he lived and served during the tumultuous Thirty Years’ War, one of the most devastating events in European history. The walled city of Eilenburg became a refuge for many who were seeking safety. As a result, food became scarce. Extreme poverty was rampant. And the plague struck with particular force. Approximately 8000 residents died. At one point Rinckart, the only surviving pastor in the city, was conducting up to

fifty funeral services a day. And in 1637 one of them was for his wife.

It was an uncommonly unpleasant time. Death filled the air. But so did songs of thanksgiving for the promise of salvation God had provided through His Son. Later in life, when Rinckart wanted to provide his children with a hymn appropriate for the time, he penned *Now Thank We All Our God* (TLH 36; LSB 895). Even after all the devastation he had seen and all the heartache he had experienced, he sang with gratitude for God’s grace in Christ.



**Rinckart shared Paul’s confidence that the Lord who had secured his salvation in Christ, would “free us from all ills in this world and the next.”**

Martin Rinckart recognized that, even during the struggles of a lengthy and destructive war, the Lord is One Who “**wondrous things has done**” and Who “**has blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love.**” This faithful servant of the Word acknowledged being “**perplexed,**” but, in manner similar to that of the apostle Paul, did not allow perplexity to result in despair. (See 2 Corinthians 4:8) Rinckart shared Paul’s confidence that the Lord Who had secured his salvation in Christ, would “**free us from all ills in this world and the next.**”

The faithful theologian and poet, Martin Rinckart, continues to serve the Christian community as an example of giving thanks “*in everything*.” Despite the sorrows and hardships which accompanied his earthly journey, the Good News of Jesus was able to replace his sighs with songs and dirges with doxologies.

**All thanks and praise to God the Father now be given,  
The Son, and Him Who reigns with them  
in highest heaven,  
The one eternal God, Whom earth and heav’n adore;  
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.**



**John Reim** is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



# Palm Prints

*“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands.”*

(Isaiah 49:15-16a)

**F**or nearly seven centuries, from the time of Moses to the time of Isaiah, God repeatedly warned His people against disobedience and idolatry. He not only warned, He pleaded. *“I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts.”* (Isaiah 65:2)

Eventually, however, even God’s patience ended and divine judgment fell. In 722 B.C. the Northern Kingdom of Samaria was defeated and deported by the Assyrians. In 586 B.C. the Southern Kingdom of Judah met the same bloody fate at the hands of the Babylonians.

Both of these invasions brought unspeakable suffering to Israel—slavery, loss, destruction, families torn apart. Yet, for the Jews, the Babylonian Captivity was a disaster of immeasurable proportion; not merely because of the carnage, death, or enslavement, but even more so because of the destruction of Jerusalem and its holy Temple.

Since the reign of Solomon, the Temple in Jerusalem had been the symbol of God’s presence among His people, the place for His Name. But now, with the Temple gone, presumably God had gone too—or so many Israelites thought: *“But Zion said, ‘The LORD has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.’”* (Isaiah 49:14)

But God had not forgotten or forsaken His people, though He had every right and reason to do so. Instead, amid judgment He displayed mercy. Amid sorrow He promised joy. Even when grieving over Israel’s downfall, the prophet Jeremiah wrote: *“Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.”* (Lamentations 3:22-23)

The Babylonian captivity was dreadful. Yet, there are other forms of captivity and exile. A troubled marriage or disabling

disease can feel like captivity. Loneliness and loss can seem like exile. In such difficult circumstances we too may cry out with the captive Israelites: *“The LORD has forsaken me. My Lord has forgotten me.”*

Yet, though we may feel forsaken and forgotten by God, He never forsakes us; He never forgets us. Not only do we have His word on this—*“I will not forget you”* (verse 15); we also have His palm prints.

Using unmistakable imagery, God assured the frightened, forlorn Israelites: *“See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands.”* (verse 16) The Hebrew word for inscribed in this verse, CHA-KAK, literally means “to cut into.” God’s constant reminder of Zion would not be a string tied around His finger or ink dried on His hand; rather, the name of Zion, His people, cut into His palms—always close, always visible, everlasting.

Personally, I can’t read about ‘cuts in God’s palms’ without thinking about the nail-prints in Christ’s hands. One of the first things Jesus did after His resurrection was to show His disciples the wounds in His hands, feet, and side—the proof of His identity, the proof of their salvation, the proof that they had nothing more to fear.

The same nail-prints speak the same message to us: *“I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands.”* And on the basis of those PALM PRINTS we exclaim with Paul: Nothing in all creation *“shall be able to*

*separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!”* (Romans 8:39) **Mark Weis** is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Cape Coral, Florida.



# Faith's Certain Hope Concerning Things to Come

*“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.”*

(Hebrews 11:20-22)

**A**nxiety. Trepidation. Dread. These are words which some older Christians have used to describe how they feel concerning things to come for their children and grandchildren. They are anxious about the swift moral decline they see happening in our country. They are certain that things are bound to get worse after they are dead and gone, and the prospect fills them with trepidation and dread. The Scripture before us is a wonderful reminder that things look much different when viewed through the eyes of faith—a faith which trusts in the loving God who has rescued us from sin, death, and eternal hellfire through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The godly examples of faith mentioned in our text above took place when each of the individuals were well advanced in age, and when two of them were near death. Each of these patriarchs, in his old age, put his faith in the sure promises of God, and passed on to his progeny a word of certain hope concerning things to come.

When Isaac blessed Jacob, he said, *“And [God] give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.”* (Genesis 28:4) When Jacob blessed Joseph’s sons he spoke of *“the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil,”* and then later said to Joseph, *“God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers.”* (Genesis 48:16, 21) And finally, when Joseph was on his deathbed he said to his brethren, *“God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this*

*land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”* (Genesis 50:24)

**These patriarchs had no expectation of seeing God’s promised land for themselves, and yet they could speak to their descendants with full certainty that God would surely do as He said.**

With the short time they had left on earth, these patriarchs had no expectation of seeing God’s promised land for themselves, and yet they could speak to their descendants with full certainty that God would surely do as He said. Why? Because the same God Who had been faithful to them even into their old age had also promised to be faithful to their descendants.

Our God is the mighty I AM. He is the God of the past and present as well as the God of the future. *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* (Hebrews 13:8) God’s Word endures, and so do the promises He’s placed there. Are there dark days that lie ahead for our children or grandchildren? Perhaps, but there is no darkness that can ever overshadow the sure promises which God reveals to us in His holy Word. God’s Word guarantees to those who trust in Jesus alone for salvation that they will reach the promised land of heaven. Let us then hope to secure the future of our children and grandchildren the same way that Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph did, by passing on to our offspring the precious promises of God’s Word. As we do, we will confidently proclaim with the psalmist, *“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”* (Psalm 90:1)



**Chad Seybt** is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

## "Many churches just 'hire' a new pastor, but CLC churches 'call' a pastor. What is the difference?"

I'm not sure why some churches hire their pastors, but I can show why we call ours.

Our forefathers used the phrase *von Gemeinschafts wegen* to describe what a call is and does. It means "in behalf of the community or group." Every Christian has the right to forgive and retain sins, to share God's Word, to comfort the sorrowing, to perform Baptisms, and so forth. When one functions on behalf of the whole group, then a call is required.

The first call meeting is recorded in Acts 1. Following the tragic death of Judas, the apostles sought his replacement. The call list contained two names: Joseph (Barsabas) Justus and Matthias. The apostles turned to the Lord in prayer. "*And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias.*" (Acts 1:26) Though lots were used to determine the Lord's will in the Old Testament, this is the last time the practice is mentioned in the New. Once cast, the apostles, the members of the early church, and Matthias, himself, could move forward knowing that this was God's will. "*The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.*" (Proverbs 16:33)

Another call meeting took place in Antioch, the new headquarters of the early church. The list included Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. In answer to their prayers, "*the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'*" (Acts 13:2)

Notice how this process is described. There is a list of qualified men. The group turns to the Lord in prayer and the Lord calls the one whom He has chosen. This is more than a congregational hire. The call comes *through* the congregation, but also comes *from* the Lord. This is knowledge every called

worker needs to have. Not only is he accountable to both, he is assured of God's blessing.

Look at 2 Corinthians 11:22-29. As you ponder the trials that Paul endured, ask yourself, Why was it important for him to know that his call was not just from a group of people, but from the Lord Himself?

The Head of the Church  
certainly knows what  
His body requires.  
He Who sees the future  
as plainly as the past  
is better able to  
determine this  
than we are.

Today's called servants aren't likely to experience shipwreck or stoning as Paul did. But the prospect for discouragement is always lurking in the shadows. Sooner or later every called worker comes face to face with issues that leave him wondering, "*And who is sufficient for these things?*" (2 Corinthians 2:16) The answer? "I'm not. But God is. He knew this was coming before He ever called me. He will sustain me."

Congregations need that certainty, too. When there is a vacancy to fill, we may think we know what skill sets and gifts are most needed, but the Lord may have other plans. The Head of the Church certainly knows what His body requires. He Who sees the future as plainly as the past is better able to determine this than we are.

In the corporate world, hiring someone to a position of trust without a lengthy interview process would seem absurd; an act of blind faith. In the church? It's an act of faith, alright. But it's not blind. It's scriptural. The Lord graciously matches the Church's needs with gifts, just as He promised (See Ephesians 4:11-16).

If you'd like more information, check out the CLC pamphlet *Concerning Church and Ministry*. It is available online or from your pastor. He will be happy to discuss it with you.



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



## THE ROAD TO REFORMATION

*In observation of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, we are presenting a brief survey of the life of Martin Luther.*

# Luther on Trial—1518-1520



he posting of the Ninety-Five Theses started a series of events which can only be described as a trial. Luther published and distributed the theses to many of his friends. But soon someone had translated them into German and had them widely distributed. At least two Latin editions were also published.

### No reply at all

Luther immediately sent a copy to the Archbishop of Mainz along with a letter, urging him to greatly modify the instructions he had given to Tetzel concerning the sale of indulgences. This letter was sent on to Rome, but Luther himself received no reply.

The first reaction of Pope Leo X was indifference. This, he said, was just “a monkish squabble.” But soon he saw it in a more serious light, and began to take legal actions against the troublesome monk. First, he sought to silence Luther through his superiors in the Augustinian order. Next, he asked a Dominican friar called Prierias to draft a formal response to the theses. This was then sent to Luther, accompanied by a summons requiring Luther to come to Rome for interrogation.

But Frederick, the Elector of Saxony and Luther’s prince, insisted that the venue be changed to German soil to ensure a fair hearing. Since Frederick would soon be influential in choosing the next emperor (indeed was thought to be a candidate himself), Leo could not easily afford to refuse, and a meeting was arranged in Augsburg. While traveling to this meeting, Luther preached to the emperor and his court, but Frederick declined to meet with Luther personally, and made a point of being absent from Augsburg so as not to become enmeshed in the proceedings.

### There will be no debate.

Instead Cardinal Cajetan was sent to preside, with instructions not to debate with Luther; he was simply to insist that Luther recant. For three days Luther refused to meet him, until an official safe conduct arrived from Emperor Maximilian.



Cajetan was a cultured and intelligent man and very able to debate. He tried to convince Luther that the matter was not of such importance that he should resist. For three days they sparred, but he could not grant what Luther most wanted: engagement in the issues on the basis of Scripture.

Cajetan was not personally ill-disposed toward Luther. He saw sincerity in him rather than simple stubborn arrogance. In his report to Rome he admitted that Luther ought to have been allowed to debate his theses and found nothing to condemn

in the theses themselves, but only in statements Luther had made more recently.

### Grace, free will, and faith

Luther had recently composed and debated another set of theses at Heidelberg, not on indulgences, but on the topics of grace, free will, and faith. This brought out his differences with Rome more clearly, specifically in regard to the role that faith plays in a person’s salvation.

Fearing arrest, Luther left Augsburg early one morning, using a side gate to avoid notice, and returned to Wittenberg to resume teaching. But there was now an uneasiness in the air. He expected excommunication at any time, and made preparations to leave Wittenberg and the Empire and go to Paris, where he would be out the reach of the emperor and in territory in which there was more resistance to papal power. Staupitz released him from his monastic vows, freeing him to go. Luther wrote to Frederick offering to resign from the university. This was accepted. As he was eating his last meal with his colleagues, however, word arrived that he would be permitted to stay after all.

Luther’s fears proved justified. Though delayed for more than a year, a papal edict was finally sent. It condemned Martin Luther in strongest terms, calling him “a wild boar” that had invaded God’s vineyard.

**Norman Greve** is pastor of St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iron River, Michigan.





## Bringing the Little Children

**J**esus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 19:14, ESV)

Teaching God’s Word to children has been an important part of our work since the Reformation, when Luther wrote his Small Catechism. In the United States we have a number of ways in which we bring God’s Word to children, and the same is true of our churches overseas.

### Sunday Services and School

The churches in India are brimming with children. On a typical Sunday, as villagers begin to gather for church, those who are the first to arrive begin singing God’s praises. One person takes a microphone and leads the song so that the singing is broadcast to the surrounding village. Others carry the beat with a hand drum or with the clash of cymbals. These songs act as a call to gather and hear God’s Word. It isn’t only the men and women who lead the singing, but the young boys and girls are also eager for their turn at the mic to sing God’s praises.

Most of the children who are old enough to read have their own Bible, which they bring to the service and eagerly open to follow along with the Bible readings of the day. Some even volunteer to read the passages or read verses referenced during the sermon. Many of these Bibles were provided free or at a reduced cost through the Mission Development Fund (MDF). The Bibles we provide become treasured possessions and make the children wise for salvation.

After the Sunday service, the children go to Sunday school where they learn more about their Savior.

### Confirmation

Luther’s Small Catechism is an important tool to instruct children and adults in God’s Word. Most of my work consists of traveling to the different districts to teach continuing-education seminars for the pastors. This includes reviewing Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, and the expanded



Children of the BELC display the pictures they colored at Vacation Bible School.

explanations of Bible teachings, so that the pastors are better equipped to teach the men, women, and children in their congregations. At one seminar this past May, six young boys joined the pastors at the seminar. They eagerly followed the explanation of the Lord’s Prayer and took copious notes. Maybe one day some of them will desire to be pastors as well, so they can teach the life-giving Word of God.

### Vacation Bible School

Like we do in the United States, the churches here also have Vacation Bible School (VBS) in the summer. Through the MDF and Project KINSHIP the CLC provides many thousands of copies of Bible lessons, boxes of crayons, and other materials for these VBS programs for children in the BELC and the CLCI. The children hear about their Savior through the lessons, the color pictures that reinforce what they learn, and the songs about their Savior that they are taught. At the end of the VBS sessions, the children from different congregations gather for big VBS conclusion celebrations in several areas. These celebrations consist of singing, groups from the different churches performing action songs, and a short message from God’s Word, usually given by the CLC missionary.





## Mission Helper Program

Another important way in which we bring God's Word to the children overseas is through the Mission Helper Program. During the trip, which usually lasts two to three weeks, the mission helpers divide up into groups of four or five people. During the day, the pastors who come on the trip may teach a seminar for the local pastors. In the afternoon or evening, the group travels to a church and conducts a special children's program that begins with creation and goes all the way through Christ's return. On the 2016 Mission Helper Trip, this message was shared with over 1,500 children in Southern India.

Imagine being thronged by smiling children eager to hear what you have to say, and eager to try out their English by asking, "What is your name?" or "How are you?" The presence of foreigners and the sounds of English (followed by a translation into Telugu and/or Tamil) draws children and adults from all around the village, even those who would not



normally come to the church. It is a great opportunity to be Jesus' witnesses to the end of the earth.

The next Mission Helper Trip to India will be the summer of 2019. It is not too early to pray about it, nor to make plans yourself to come share God's Word with the children here. This trip will make a lasting impression on you and, most importantly, on the children who hear God's Word through you. If you are not

able to come, considering sponsoring someone else so that they are able come to India.

Participating in and/or supporting the Mission Helper Program, contributing to the MDF and/or Project KINSHIP, and supporting the CLC general budget through your local church's contributions to the synod are all ways in which you can help bring the little children to Jesus so that the kingdom of heaven is theirs.



**Peter Evenson** is a full-time foreign missionary. His home is in Chennai, India.

Top: CLCI children at VBS concluding ceremonies. Above: VBS class in the BELC.



# Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church Loganville, Georgia

*“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.” (Psalm 50:2 ESV)*

For years—over a quarter of a century—the God of grace has sustained a remnant of His people in the Atlanta area. At first, it was just a preaching station, CLC members distant from their home congregations, gathering monthly to hear God’s Word and to offer the praise of thanksgiving to Him. In time, the Lord permitted this small group to establish an “official” church to which was given the name Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. Zion then issued its first call to Pastor Emeritus John Johannes.

Since its founding, various locations have served as the sanctuary for Zion: homes, hotel rooms, rented offices, and others. Each location could certainly be described, in the words of Asaph from Psalm 50:2, as *“the perfection of beauty.”* The beauty of these locations was to be seen not in their architecture, landscapes, or even location. Their beauty was to be found in the glory of God shining forth from His Word and sacraments. Wherever the Word of God is preached, and His sacraments administered according to their institution by Christ, is the most beautiful place on earth—a true Eden.

God continued to reveal the beauty of His grace through the ministry of the Gospel under Pastors John Johannes,



Members of Zion gather after worship.

Wherever the Word of God is preached, and His Sacraments administered according to their institution by Christ, is the most beautiful place on earth—a true Eden.

Loganville is a city in Walton and Gwinnett counties, Georgia, United States. The population was 10,458 at the 2010 census, up from 5,435 in 2000. Loganville is in western Walton County, with the city limits extending west into southeastern Gwinnett County. U.S. Route 78 passes through the center of town, leading east 12 miles to Monroe, the Walton County seat, and west 32 miles to downtown Atlanta. Loganville takes its name from James Harvie Logan, who purchased the city’s original acreage for \$150 at a sheriff’s sale. The city incorporated in 1887.



Wikipedia

Nathanael Mayhew, and more recently Ernest Bernet who, sadly, has since left our fellowship. In the spring of 2017, Pastor Frank Gantt accepted the call to serve Zion as its pastor.

It wasn’t long after the Gantts’ arrival that the Lord made His glory known by allowing the congregation to find a property on the far east side of the Atlanta area that would be more than adequate for relocation. Just five miles south of the town of Loganville, Georgia, lies a seventeen-acre property with a home and a sanctuary. There is also a third building with various potential uses. Through a loan from the CLC’s Church Extension Fund, the congregation was able to



purchase the property and begin preparing it as the permanent location of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Those CLC members from other congregations who have visited the property have all gazed in amazement at what the Lord has allowed this small congregation to obtain. It truly is a beautiful piece of property, even if there is considerable work to be done. The sanctuary, for example, is in need of a new roof, an upstairs restroom, an entryway, and a stairway to the basement before it can be used as a sanctuary. Through the Lord's blessings, these renovations have already begun. In the meantime, the ministry of the Gospel continues as we meet weekly in a room in the spacious parsonage.

But, there is more work than this to be done. The beauty of God's glory isn't to be seen chiefly in buildings or grounds. It is to be seen in the salvation of sinners, which means that it is to be seen in the proclamation of the Gospel. Right away the Lord has provided us with opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the community of Loganville. Most of these opportunities have arisen from personal, one-on-one conversations. In the future, when we have the space to accommodate them, we hope to increase these opportunities by hosting weekly Bible study, monthly Bible seminars, weekly radio programs, and yearly Bible camps.



The members of Zion are thankful to the membership of the CLC for its years of loving support and for its prayers on our behalf. We are thankful to the Board of Missions for its faithful guidance and encouragement as we seek to fulfill our calling to be a light in the world. We are thankful to the Board of Trustees, who took seriously the responsibility of deciding how best to use the funds in the CEF, and then prayerfully deciding to finance the purchase of this

property. Above all, we are thankful to the Lord for making this Zion the perfection of beauty by shining forth His glory in the face of Christ Jesus.

Zion invites any who pass through the Atlanta area, for business or pleasure, to look us up and to stop by for a visit. Whether you are here for the weekend and would like to join us for worship, or just passing through during the week and would enjoy an opportunity to visit, our brothers and sisters in Christ are always welcome to come and see and hear our God shining forth from Zion, the perfection of beauty.



You may also find us on the internet at [www.zelcloganville.com](http://www.zelcloganville.com).

**Frank Gantt** is pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Loganville, Georgia.



# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS NOVEMBER 2017

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

Date	Verse	Reading	Comments
Nov 1	TLH 463; LSB 678	Genesis 49:1-7	As Jacob speaks his last words to his sons, we know that some of his descendants will fall away. Praise God for all who remain faithful and true.
Nov 2	TLH 339; LSB 348	Genesis 49:8-12	A King will be born from Judah's line (Jesus) who will rightly rule over His people.
Nov 3	TLH 346	Genesis 49:13-21	Among the prophecies spoken to Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali, we find both blessings and burdens.
Nov 4	TLH 17	Genesis 49:22-28	Joseph had a heart faithful to the Lord and was the “prince among his brothers,” but His strength was really in His father's God, who helped Him (v. 25).
Nov 6	WS 798	Genesis 49:29-33	Jacob was buried with his family and gathered to his people. May we all one day join the company of God's saints!
Nov 7	TLH 429	Genesis 50:1-14	Separation from loved ones on earth is hard, but it will not last forever.
Nov 8	TLH 330	Genesis 50:15-21	We too have the authority from Christ Himself to reassure penitent sinners of their forgiveness.
Nov 9	TLH 407	Genesis 50:22-26	Joseph lived most of His life in Egypt, but he wished to rest in the land of his fathers—and more meaningfully, in the land of His God.
Nov 10	TLH 625	1 Corinthians 7:1-11	Paul begins Scripture's great chapter on marriage by warning couples against selfishness. Spouses are not their own, but they belong to their partners until death.
Nov 11	TLH 420	1 Corinthians 7:12-24	There are times when the best thing to do is nothing. In this situation, the Corinthians were urged to remain in whatever place in life the Lord had given them.
Nov 13	TLH 423	1 Corinthians 7:25-40	Whether married or not, let all make an effort to make the Lord Jesus Christ their priority.
Nov 14	TLH 405	1 Corinthians 13:1-3	If you had the world's greatest talents or abilities, but did not use them in acts of loving service, what good would they be? Lord, help us to love.
Nov 15	TLH 409	1 Corinthians 13:4-13	Love never fails, especially not God's.
Nov 16	TLH 146	Exodus 12:1-13	In those days, the death of the lamb meant safety for the people. It still does.
Nov 17	WS 755	Exodus 12:14-20	The work of Jesus is to take away our sin, pictured here by the removal of yeast from the houses.
Nov 18	TLH 164	Exodus 12:21-30	The blood on the door marked God's covenant (promise) to save the people. Jesus' blood-stained cross also reminds us of His promise to save us.
Nov 20	TLH 54	Exodus 12:31-51	In keeping with His promise, God released the children of Israel from their captivity.
Nov 21	WS 793	Numbers 6:1-12	The Nazarite vow was a symbol of a life devoted to God and separated from sin. The vow generally lasted between 30 and 100 days.
Nov 22	WS 792	Numbers 6:13-21	Of course the mere taking of a vow cannot truly purify the soul, so a sin offering was still brought—until Christ came.
Nov 23	TLH 36	Numbers 6:22-27	On this Thanksgiving Day we are especially mindful of how the LORD has blessed us.
Nov 24	TLH 143	Psalms 22:1-11	Christmas is just around the corner, but in this Psalm we remember that Jesus was born to die.
Nov 25	TLH 145	Psalms 22:12-21	In this prophecy of Christ on the cross, the Afflicted One turns to the Lord for help.
Nov 27	TLH 207	Psalms 22:22-31	After a time of suffering, God brought help to His Servant. We would do well to remember that at the end of our own times of suffering He brings joy.
Nov 28	WS 763	Philippians 2:1-11	Jesus never looked to serve His own interests, but always has His eyes on you. For this reason He humbled Himself and was exalted.
Nov 29	WS 747	Philippians 2:12-18	The good works that flow from your faith are God's work in you.
Nov 30	TLH 397; LSB 653	Philippians 2:19-30	What a blessing when God gives us friends who take an interest in our welfare!



Every other month we get an update on what's been happening at our Immanuel Lutheran High School, College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

# The Vicar Program

It is the second week in August. A young man in his early twenties is packing his suitcase with enough necessities to last for six weeks. He is a bit nervous about what he will be doing. At the same time, he is eager at the prospect of putting his learning into practice.

So it is that a young seminary student enters into a congregation, which has been selected by agreement between the dean of the seminary and the congregation. Suddenly, this young man is walking at the side of the pastor, observing him as he interacts with his congregation. Families see him when the pastor makes home visits. Nursing home residents see him sitting beside the pastor during devotions. The sick and injured see the vicar coming with the pastor to their bedside in the hospital. The church council sees him in their meetings. Children see him in Sunday school, confirmation class, and Christian day school. The ladies of the congregation see him at their meetings. The pastor's children see him in their father's office, discussing the text for next Sunday's sermon, the subject matter for Bible class, and more mundane matters, such as recordkeeping and bulletin preparation. They may even see their father listening as the young man gives advice on the use of electronic media.

Who is he anyway? He is a *vicar*, which is a title meaning "substitute." In a sense, he has come to the congregation to be a substitute for the pastor. However, the purpose is not to give the pastor a break.

For six weeks, pastor and vicar form a team as they meet the needs of the congregation. Within a short amount of time, the vicar is no longer observing the pastor. Rather, the pastor is observing him. He helps this seminary student prepare sermon texts or Bible class topics. Following the vicar's

presentation, the pastor discusses it and makes suggestions on how to improve. The pastor observes the vicar as he counsels members, comforts the suffering, admonishes the erring, and instructs the young. These efforts, also, are discussed and advice is given.

Most of all, the vicar learns by studying God's Word and proclaiming it to real people with real needs in their real lives. This kind of learning cannot be duplicated in the classroom. Here is the excitement. Ever since he first desired the pastoral ministry, this vicar has been studying and preparing himself. After years of study, he gets to experience what he has desired. It is hard for some, after completing their internships, to go back to the classroom. Such is their excitement and their desire to serve the Lord. But, go back they must.

At the end of the six weeks, the vicar returns to the seminary. Shortly thereafter he meets with the dean. The dean opens the report of the supervising pastor evaluating the vicar's work: preaching, teaching, counseling, comforting, admonishing, studying, and other aspects of the ministry. He reports on the vicar's interaction with children, youth, adults, and the elderly. The dean and the vicar then discuss the report, as well as the vicar's personal observations about the ministry.

Now, the vicar returns to the classroom with a new perspective on the relationship between his studies and the ministry. Likewise, the dean of students has a new perspective of the student, which will help the dean as he continues giving instruction and advice.



Study and experience prepare this seminary student to assume the blessed call of the Lord to be a shepherd to His flock.

**John Pfeiffer** is a retired professor and past president of Immanuel Lutheran College. His home is in Fall Creek, Wisconsin.



Some of the CLC pastors who participated in the Great Lakes Pastoral Conference, September 12-14, at Messiah Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Vicar Sam Naumann, back row center.

## SEEN IN PASSING

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

### Stealing from God (literally).

A recent LifeWay survey of 1,000 Protestant senior pastors revealed that about one in ten Protestant churches has experienced embezzlement; i.e., has had a person in a position of trust steal funds from the church. The thefts generally take place over time, and often run into tens of thousands of dollars. “Churches run on trust—but they also know people are imperfect and can be tempted,” said LifeWay executive director Scott McConnell. “That’s why safeguarding a church’s finances is an important part of ministry.” But churches often fail in that department, as well. While half of churches said that their books are independently audited yearly, over one-third said that their last audit was over five years ago, or that they never audit their books at all. Smietana, Bob. “Robbing God, Literally: 1 in 10 Protestant Churches Experience Embezzlement.” *Facts & Trends*. ChristianityToday.com, 3 Aug. 2017. Web. 19 Sept. 2017.

### Where’s the Beef? On Menus in India, says Supreme Court.

In a July decision, India’s Supreme Court suspended a recent ban by the Hindu government of Narendra Modi prohibiting the slaughter of cows for food. “It is a fundamental right,” said the Supreme Court, “and it is the freedom of every citizen to choose their own food.” This was seen as a blow to the Modi government, which is the first in recent memory to openly promote the Hindu faith, and discriminate against Christians, following many years of secular government in India. Cows are considered sacred in the Hindu religion. N.a. “Livestock and beef trade: the Supreme Court suspends the ban.” *Asia/India*. Fides.org, 13 Jul. 2017. Web. 19 Sept. 2017.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minnesota Area CLC congregations will commemorate the **500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation** in a special service on Sunday, October 29, at 4:00 P.M. at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato. “God’s Grace in our Reformation Heritage and Legacy” will be the theme, with both children’s and adult choirs participating. A luncheon will follow the service. Area CLC members are invited to attend.  
— Pastor David Schierenbeck.

**Nominations for ILC President.** The Board of Regents invites nominations for the office of President of Immanuel Lutheran College. The current term of Professor Steven Sippert concludes on June 30, 2018. All pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of the CLC are entitled to nominate a man from the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary to serve a two-year term beginning July 1, 2018. Nominations are to be received by email or letter no later than midnight, December 15, 2017 (letters postmarked December 1, 2017) to: Dr. Daniel Schierenbeck; 23 SE 240 Rd.; Warrensburg, MO 64093; email: [danschierenbeck@gmail.com](mailto:danschierenbeck@gmail.com).  
—Pastor John Hein, Chairman, Board of Regents



A **Luther Slide Show for Children** was prepared by Kathryn Ubl, a CLC Sunday school teacher in Austin, Minnesota, in honor of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Entitled “Who was Martin Luther?,” its purpose is to help children (and adults) familiarize themselves with the life and importance of the great Reformer. You may view the slideshow online at: <http://godshand.clclutheran.org/lutherforchildren.pdf>

### Study Confirms: Church-Going Youth Less at Risk.

Recent work by Columbia University professor of psychology Lisa Miller lends credence to what various studies have been indicating since the early 1970s – that religious belief, far from being antithetical to the mental wellbeing of youth (as was long thought), is actually a strong predictor of mental and social wellbeing. Miller’s study,

recently promoted in a national lecture tour, shows that “religiously aware adolescents who feel connected to a higher power” are 40 percent less likely to abuse substances, 60 percent less likely to suffer depression, and 80 percent less likely to engage in at-risk sexual behaviors. VanDen Berghe, Betsy. “Spiritual IQ in a Secular Age.” *Newsletter*. RealClearReligion.com, 29 Apr. 2017. Web. 19 Sept. 2017.