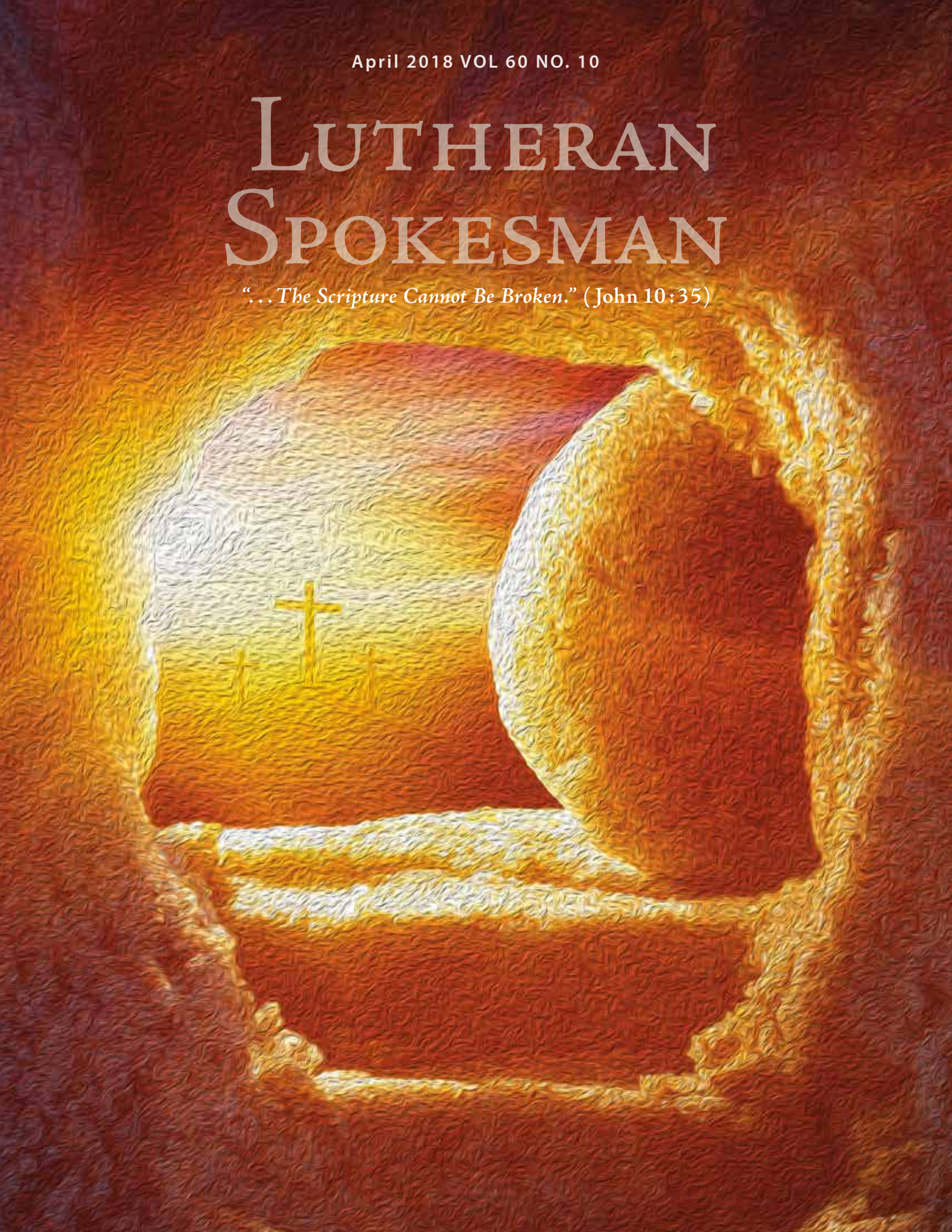


April 2018 VOL 60 NO. 10

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



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Editor: Paul Naumann, 3732 Claymore Lane, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, E-mail to 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, Michael Roehl, Robert Sauers, Thomas Schuetz, Chad Seybt, Mark Weis.

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Is

there any more
glorious day than Easter?
Christ is risen from the dead!
From the **DEAD!** What is more
dreadful or final than death? Death
is a bleak reminder of the horror of our
sin, the wages of which must be paid. It
violently tears the soul from the body. It
tears a loved one from family and friends.
No one has power to stop death. No
one can escape it, or even lessen
its blow. No one can release
death's grip.

No one except Jesus!

Jesus said that He has power to lay down His life and power to take it up again. (John 10:18) He proved it when He rose from the dead. He conquered death for us. Praise be to God Who gives us the victory! What a glorious event!

That being said, do you ever wonder why Jesus didn't show Himself to everyone? After all, His suffering and death were on public display. He was crucified near Jerusalem where everyone could see His agony and disgraceful death. Why didn't He go and stand in the Temple and show everyone that He was alive? He won the victory. Why not appear to the whole world as He did to Saul, shining brighter than the sun? Let the world see that He is the Son of God!

Instead, He appeared to only a select few. Enough to provide plenty of reliable witnesses, but very few compared to all the people of Israel or the world. When He did appear, His glory was still hidden in His human nature. The angels in the tomb appeared more glorious than Jesus. Why not show His glory now that His work was accomplished? Wouldn't that bring many more to faith?

God, in His wisdom, chose to hide Jesus' glory from sight and reveal it in His Word. Already on Easter day, God was directing His disciples to His trustworthy Word. The angel told the women, "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee . . ." (Luke 24:6) When Jesus appeared to two disciples in a form they didn't even recognize, He said, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! . . . And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the

Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:25-27) "It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21) We can see the glory only in His infallible Word.

Thank God that He chose to do so. The brightness of His glory is always terrifying to sinful people, but He comes to us in His Word and says, "Don't be afraid."

Tomorrow you will still have troubles and temptations, but Jesus says, "Don't be afraid. I died for you and rose again and I will be with you always. You are still weak and will fall into sin, but I died for your sins." "Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you." (Matthew 9:2)

You still live in a world that hates God. "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

The grave still lies ahead of you, but don't be afraid, Jesus has already conquered it completely and taken the sting out of death. "Because I live, you will live also." (John 14:19)

The day is coming when you will see Jesus in His full glory and not fear, for then you shall share His glory in perfect holiness. Until then, continue to see His glory hidden in His Word and promises. The world still cannot see it, but you see it and rejoice in this Easter Glory.



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

A Perfect Prayer from Our Perfect Lord

“Our Father who art in heaven.”

We address the heavenly Father who sent His beloved Son to save us from our sins and in His amazing grace chose us to be His children. Just as a three-year-old child is unafraid to ask her dad for whatever is on her heart, let us boldly bring our prayer to the Father Who made us and saved us.

“Hallowed be Thy name.”

What we say and do can either ruin our family name or bring glory to it. Jesus teaches us to pray that the Father’s name, which we carry with us as His children, would be holy among us by what we say and what we do. Because only the Bible identifies who our Father is and describes all that He has done to save us, we pray that His Word would be taught faithfully among us. Pray for our pastors, professors, teachers (Sunday school and parochial), and missionaries who proclaim the Father’s name to you.

“Thy kingdom come.”

The Father’s kingdom is not some tyrannical, oppressive kingdom, *“but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”* (Romans 14:17) Pray that as the Father’s name is spread through His Word, His kingdom would come, bringing righteousness, peace, and joy to us and to others.

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

As children of the heavenly Father, we do not pray *“MY will be done,”* but with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane we pray *“THY will be done.”* As the angels of God in heaven obey His Word and do His pleasure (Psalm 103:20-21), we His children on earth want to carry out His will and not our own.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

While the Father gives food, clothing, and shelter to believers and unbelievers alike, we His children look to Him for these things and pray He would give us what we need for

today. We also give thanks to our Father for giving us FAR more than just our daily bread. We are confident in faith that when tomorrow rolls around, He will open His hand and satisfy us again.

“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

How many times have we “crossed the line” and trespassed against our Father’s will? Do we even know? We pray that the Father would forgive us for all those trespasses, and we rejoice in the full and free forgiveness His Son died to give us. Children love to imitate their dads. So we also pray that the Father would help us to imitate His forgiveness when someone “crosses the line” and trespasses against us.

“Lead us not into temptation.”

Remember what your Father said about temptation: *“God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”* (1 Corinthians 10:13) Pray your Father that when temptation comes, He would show you the “emergency exit” to flee it.

“Deliver us from evil.”

Make no mistake about it, the Evil One is on the prowl. He *“walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* (1 Peter 5:8) Pray for yourself and your fellow believers (us!) that our Father would rescue us from the evil that is around us and even within us (our old man of sin). We pray it confidently because the “kingdom, power, and glory” all belong to our heavenly Father.

May this perfect prayer from our perfect Lord continue to echo from the lips of young and old alike in our churches, homes, and classrooms. *“Amen! Amen! that is, ‘Yes, indeed, it shall be so!’”* (Luther’s Small Catechism, Sydow Edition, page 225)



Nathan Pfeiffer is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington.

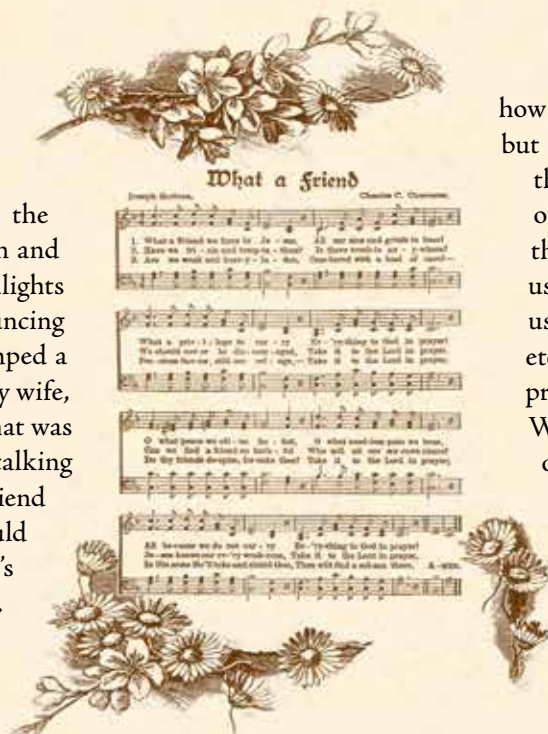
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“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

Several years ago on a family vacation, we were traveling Highway 401 between Toronto and Montreal around one o'clock in the morning. The children were drifting in and out of restless sleep when the headlights illuminated a blue and white sign announcing the “Joseph Scriven Monument.” I jumped a little in the driver’s seat and prodded my wife, “Look! Joseph Scriven! I had no idea that was here!” She mumbled, “What are you talking about?” I said, “You know—‘What a Friend We Have in Jesus!’ We really, really should stop!” She answered something like, “It’s the middle of the night. It’s pitch dark. Would they still give us one phone call when they catch us in a cemetery with flashlights and cameras?” She prevailed, and we didn’t stop; but that sign appearing out of nowhere was a sudden reminder of one of the most beloved hymns in all Christendom.

Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819-1886) was born and educated in Ireland. After obtaining a bachelor’s degree from Trinity College, Dublin, he emigrated to Canada and lived the last quarter-century of his life in Bewdley and Port Hope, Ontario. His was a life of tragedy and trouble. His first fiancée died by drowning the night before their wedding. His second fiancée, Eliza Roche, contracted pneumonia and also died shortly before their intended marriage. Scriven, keenly aware of the world’s sorrows, joined the Plymouth Brethren church and devoted his life to serving the poor.

He would be little known to history were it not for a poem he wrote to his ill mother in 1855 that was accidentally discovered by a neighbor. It began, “**What a Friend we have in Jesus, / All our sins and griefs to bear! / What a privilege to carry / Ev’rything to God in prayer!**” Those four simple phrases comfort the suffering Christian with four great truths: 1) Jesus is a Friend to us. He is not “out to get us” no matter



Those four simple phrases comfort the suffering Christian with four great truths

how difficult our circumstances may seem, but He stands by His believers and holds them in His loving care. 2) He bears all our sins and griefs. He Himself went to the cross carrying all our sin, suffering for us so that those very things which trouble us today will not be able to trouble us in eternity. 3) What a privilege we have to pray to Jesus! It is a privilege indeed. Without His shed blood to cleanse us of our sinful stains, we would have no right to address the very Son of God. 4) We can bring *everything* to God in prayer! There is nothing we cannot tell our dear Savior—no guilt so great, no worry so small that we cannot share it with Him and make it His concern too.

The poem continues along those same lines, urging us to prayer by highlighting what a blessing it is to take our troubles to the Lord. “**We should never be discouraged, / Take it to the Lord in prayer. / Can we find a Friend so faithful / Who will all our sorrows share?**” True friends do share one another’s sorrows, don’t they? “*Carry each other’s burdens . . .*” (Galatians 6:2 NIV).

“**Are we weak and heavy laden, / Cumbered with a load of care? / Precious Savior, still our Refuge— / Take it to the Lord in prayer.**” Scriven’s death was mysterious. He disappeared from his room the night of August 9, 1886, and was found drowned the next day. The plaque at the Joseph Scriven Monument today contains the full text of his poem, ending with the famous line, “**In His arms He’ll take and shield thee, / Thou wilt find a solace there.**”



David Schaller is pastor of Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sister Lakes, Michigan. He also prepares the ‘Bread of Life’ devotions for the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

Going Awl In

Having one's ears pierced physically may be a fashion statement.

Spiritual piercing is a confessional statement.

“Going all in” is a phrase commonly used by poker players.

With a short stack of chips, the player bets them all in a somewhat desperate attempt to win the pot. In other words, he commits everything to stay in the game.

The Old Testament Hebrews lived in a time and culture when slavery and indentured servitude were commonplace. Slaves could be bought and sold. A person in financial straits could sell himself as a bond servant to pay off his debts. Today we consider this very unseemly at best, but theirs was an entirely different culture from ours. And God gave His people certain civil laws to ensure that slavery among the Jews would not be severe and cruel (Leviticus 25:43), and even included certain rights and protections for slaves and bond servants.

One situation involved a Hebrew man bought as a servant (Exodus. 21:1-6) God stipulated that such a one was to serve for six years, but be set free in the seventh. If he entered servitude with a wife and/or children, they also were to be set free. If the master had provided a wife during the six years, resulting in children, the man went free, but the wife and children remained with the owner.

However, if the man loved not only his wife and children, but his master also, and wanted to stay with them, then he could choose to give up his freedom. This contract was publicly finalized before judges and at a door(post), where the master would pierce the servant's ear with an awl. This signified the servant's "going all in" with his obligations and position, for he would now serve his master forever.

Surely Jesus "went all in" for us and the whole world of sinners. St. Paul explained that even though the Christ was God, He came to earth in the likeness of men, humbled Himself, and took the form of a servant. He was sold for thirty pieces of silver, and His willing obedience to His Father led Him to the cross, where with His death He redeemed and reconciled the

world. No wonder Isaiah called the Messiah not just God's Servant, but the obedient, suffering and sin-bearing Servant. This was stipulated, seen, and finalized by His lacerated head and back, and pierced hands, feet and side.

Indeed, we have been bought with a price: the Redeemer's own precious blood. Do we demand or expect to be free of Him? After six years? Or do we love Him with such a passion that we willingly give ourselves into His service as faithful slaves forever?

Then approach your Master, who said "I AM the Door," and willingly submit to be pierced of ear, signifying your desire and intent to "go awl in" with Him, totally and forever. Hear and remember the terms of your contract. "Give ear, O my people, . . . Incline your ears to the words of my mouth." (Psalm 78:1) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says . . ." (Revelation 2:7)

And forget not the gracious result.

"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it." (Luke 11:28) "In Him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." (Ephesians 1:13) "My ears You have opened. . . . I delight to do Your will, O my God." (Psalm 40: 6,8) "If You abide in My Word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32)

Having one's ears pierced physically may be a fashion statement. Spiritual piercing is a confessional statement. And faithful pierced-ear servitude on earth can only result in the glorious everlasting freedom of heaven: freedom from all sin, pain, sorrow, weariness and every form of evil; freedom to serve God in perfect holiness. Truly blessed are they who go "awl in" for their Lord and Savior.

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



Triumphant Faith in the Face of Persecution

Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

(Hebrews 11:35-40)

With these words, the inspired writer brings to a close a long list of Old Testament believers who lived by faith. While the preceding verses make special mention of the names of exemplary believers, whom we seek to emulate, here specific names are not given. What stands out quite prominently is the type of extreme persecutions they endured for the faith and by faith.

Instead of renouncing the faith and forsaking the ways of God, these heroic believers were willing to suffer the verbal abuse of mockery and the physical cruelty of whipping. Giving up their personal freedom, they were put in chains and in prison. Suffering the loss of their homes and personal possessions, they fled for their lives and wandered about in deserts and mountains, living in caves and dens, and being clothed in sheepskins and goatskins. Forfeiting their lives for Christ's sake, they were tortured to the point of dying, stoned to death, cut in two, and slain by a sword.

If this hadn't been quoted from Holy Scripture, we might have thought this reporting was from current times. We have heard of some of the same kinds of severe persecutions inflicted on Christians in other parts of the world, such as in Africa, the Middle East, eastern Europe, the Far East, and Southeast Asia. While in Bible times believers were persecuted at the hands of unbelieving Jews and godless governments, in our time the perpetrators are radical Muslims and Hindus, as well as ruthless dictators and communist governments.

When we hear of such spiritual heroics, the natural questions that arise are *why* and *how*. Why have believers been willing to suffer these kinds of severe persecutions, and how are they able to stand firm in the faith when faced with such fearsome opposition? The answer to these two questions resounds again and again throughout Hebrews 11. It is due to the faith that the Lord works in their hearts.

Christians willingly endure mockery and ridicule, for they believe that, on account of the Lord's redemption, they will be exalted on high in the world to come and will live and reign with God in heaven. Believers have been ready to undergo torture even to the point of death, because they know by faith that they will be resurrected with glorified bodies on the last day and never again suffer any kind of pain or death. Children of God do not consider it to be a great loss to give up their homes, temporal possessions, and earthly comforts for the sake of the kingdom of God; for in the heavenly mansions in the sky they will forever possess priceless riches and treasures.

The strength and courage of heart to withstand any and every fierce and deadly opposition is not to be found within, but comes rather from outside of us. Every persecuted believer looks by faith to our almighty and faithful God, relying on Him to uphold him and carry him safely through the various trials and tribulations of life.

Old Testament believers looked forward in faith to the redemptive work of the promised Christ which was still to be fulfilled. We, however, look back in faith to the fulfilled accomplishment of that work by Jesus.

What is truly amazing is that both the believers of the Old and New Testaments receive by faith all that Jesus worked out for us so that together we can enjoy the everlasting bliss of heaven!

Thanks and praise to God who gives us the victory through faith in our Savior Jesus Christ!



Mark Gullerud is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bowdle, South Dakota, and Zion Lutheran Church in Ipswich, South Dakota.

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. The series continues with major events in the life of the Reformer that took place after 1517.

—1525—

Luther's Struggle with Erasmus



In the Reformation's early days, many recognized the hypocrisy of the papacy, but Luther was careful not to ally himself with just anyone, lest he compromise any doctrine of the Bible.

Desiderius Erasmus, a humanist scholar, rejected the idea that the Pope could specify which good works earned heaven, and called the indulgence system deplorable. Erasmus advocated a return to the Bible's original languages, even producing a more accurate Latin translation to help reveal the church's errors.

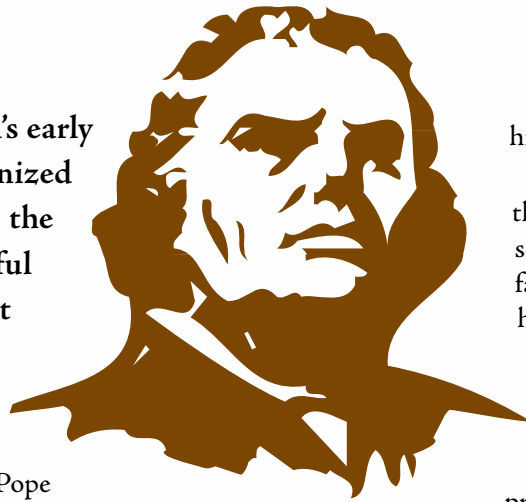
This all sounds amazingly "Lutheran," but Erasmus differed from Luther in a key Reformation principle: *grace alone*.

God's grace is His undeserved favor toward you, whereby He accepts, forgives, and justifies you by His work alone.

This Scriptural concept of grace differs from the thinking of natural man. Without the Gospel, the sinner thinks something about himself is the reason he will enter heaven.

Every Christian faces this temptation.

Peter did. When Jesus said, "All of you will be made to stumble," Peter denied that that could mean him: "I will never be made to stumble!" (Matthew 26:32-33) With these words, Peter intended to cry out, "I am not like others!" He claimed there was something in



**Without the Gospel,
the sinner thinks
something about
himself is the
reason he will
enter heaven.**



him that would keep him faithful.

Erasmus fell into Peter's error, claiming that Christians accepted God's grace due to something different inside their soul. This false distinction came from his reliance on human reason.

Luther taught that Scripture was the sole source of doctrine, while Erasmus contended that both Scripture and human reason could prove the truth. In practice, Erasmus came to regard the Bible as highly as he did because—from his point of view—it "made sense" to do so.

Erasmus's 1524 treatise against Luther, "On Free Will," shows how human reasoning skewed his understanding of the Bible.

He admitted that many Bible passages teach that man cannot earn his salvation, but he contended that commands like "repent" and "believe" presupposed man's ability to accomplish them. Erasmus thought that God's Law was more clearly presented in

Scripture than the attributes of Christ; from this he reasoned that man's will retained enough power after the Fall to access grace.

He falsely ascribed an inherent difference to believers, that they are the "kind of people" who use their free will correctly when presented with the Gospel.

In his 1525 treatise "On the Bondage of the Will," Luther used Scripture to defend the teaching that faith is solely the work of God.



Title: Portrait of Erasmus
By: Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/1498–1543)

Description: Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam with Renaissance Pilaster.

Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/69–1536) was a renowned humanist scholar and theologian. He moved in 1521 to Basel, the city where Hans Holbein the Younger lived and had his workshop. Such was the fame of Erasmus, who corresponded with scholars throughout Europe, that he needed many portraits of himself to send abroad. Holbein painted three much-copied portraits of Erasmus in 1523, of which this is the largest and most elaborate. It is likely the one sent to William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, in England.

Holbein's portrait of Erasmus includes a Latin couplet by the scholar, inscribed on the edge of the leaning book on the shelf, which states that Holbein would rather have a slanderer than an imitator. According to art historian Stephanie Buck, this portrait is "an idealized picture of a sensitive, highly cultivated scholar, and this was precisely how Erasmus wanted to be remembered by future generations" (Stephanie Buck, Hans Holbein, Cologne: Könemann, 1999, ISBN 3829025831, p. 50).

**Erasmus fell into Peter's error,
claiming that Christians accepted God's
grace due to something different inside
their soul. This false distinction came
from his reliance on human reason.**

**"By burning Luther's books you
may rid your bookshelves of him,
but you will not rid men's minds
of him." — Desiderius Erasmus**

Peter thought there was something special in himself. But the rooster's crow cried out, "You're just like the others after all!" On Easter evening, though, Jesus graciously showed him His hands and side with words of forgiveness, "Peace be to you."

This grace alone was the cause of faith and its fruits in Peter's heart. The Risen Lord asked him, "Do you love Me?" Peter responded, "You know that I love You." (John 21:17) Peter no longer looked inside, but to God, saying, "Of course You know. This is all Your doing."

Have you thought more highly of yourself than you ought? Have you thought too lowly, and wondered whether your faith is enough?

Looking inside yourself only brings confusion and doubt. Look to Christ's death and resurrection. There His Spirit makes the beautiful truth of your eternal life clear as day.

It's all grace.

Timothy Daub is pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Hecla, South Dakota.



Erasmus taught there were two kinds of people, but the Bible says "There is no difference; for all have sinned." (Romans 3:22-23)

The command for the sinner to believe has the same life-giving power as the command for Lazarus to come forth. The Word creates the response. The Gospel is the power.

Faith is not your work, but rather the work of God's Spirit in your heart: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The sinner would like to find something different or special in *himself* to explain why he is saved.

But the Gospel is the great leveling field; when a person is saved, the only reason is God's grace.

Zion Lutheran Church Ipswich, South Dakota

Zion Lutheran Church is numbered among the oldest congregations in the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Its early beginnings reach back to 1917, when a handful of families gathered for worship in Union Township, southeast of Ipswich. Served by a Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) pastor out of Roscoe, this small band of Christians held services in family homes (Wietgrefes, Gerhards, and Habecks), a school house, and a vacant church building.



It wasn't until 1923 that this fellowship of believers organized as an independent congregation in the town of Ipswich, South Dakota. Their first resident pastor was the Reverend Walter J. Meier.

For most of Zion's existence, the congregation has shared their pastor with other like-minded congregations.

They had a dual parish with a small congregation in Loyaltown during Pastor Egbert Schaller's tenure. When the next pastor was called, Zion established a joint parish with First Lutheran in Faulkton, South Dakota. In more recent years, the multi-parish was expanded to include Redeemer Lutheran in Bowdle, South Dakota. And when First Lutheran disbanded, Zion went back to being part of a dual parish with Redeemer.

Some of the pastors that served Zion over the years, who are familiar in our fellowship, include Pastors Egbert Schaller, Marvin Eibs, Leland Grams, David Fuerstenau, and George Dummann.



Above: longtime Zion Pastor Leland Grams pronounces the benediction.
Top right: the older church, which the congregation moved in from the country.
Bottom right: The church Zion built in 1981.

Zion got its first permanent worship home in 1931. The congregation acquired a small country church located in Cloyd Valley, southwest of Roscoe. The cost of moving the church building to Ipswich was \$100.00, which had to be borrowed. This little church was a humble sanctuary without modern conveniences. The basement floor was unwashed gravel. The church had no indoor plumbing, and a coal furnace served as its source of heat.



Over the years, the Lord blessed the congregation with numerical growth.

In the 1950's and '60's, the pre-communicant members attending Sunday School averaged in the forties. In 1958, the number of baptized members was 110.

With the sanctuary and classrooms filled to capacity, it became apparent that a larger church building was needed. A piece of property in Ipswich was purchased in 1974, and in 1978, ground breaking was held and construction started. Planning and construction was all done by volunteer labor from within the congregation. Moss rock and petrified wood was hauled in from fields around Hettinger, North Dakota. The rock was used for the front exterior and interior wall, altar, pulpit, and lectern. The new church was dedicated in 1981.





In the following years, most of the younger members moved away in order to seek employment elsewhere.

With the membership becoming smaller in number and older in age, it became increasingly difficult to adequately maintain the property. To remedy this situation, an arrangement was worked out with a local funeral home business. The property was sold to Gramm Funeral Home. A joint-use agreement was established in which the congregation could continue to conduct worship services and other church-related functions in the expanded, remodeled facility without any cost to the congregation, for as long as it continues to exist.

During the early years of the congregation's history, Zion was affiliated with the WELS, having voted to join that fellowship in 1930. But on October 19, 1959, the congregation voted to leave the WELS over doctrinal differences. In 1962, Zion became a member congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC).

Over its long history, the Lord has blessed Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church through the Gospel ministry. Many souls were brought into God's eternal kingdom through mission outreach and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and were



spiritually nourished and sustained through the Gospel in Word and sacrament. The final end and goal of the Gospel ministry is the victory celebration of believers passing from this temporal world into the eternal habitations of heaven.

To God alone be all the glory.



Mark Gullerud is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bowdle, South Dakota, and Zion Lutheran Church in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Top: the current facility.

Right: some members of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Joint Asian Pastoral Conference Nellore, India

Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy, “*What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*” (2 Timothy 2:2 ESV) This is our guiding principle in working overseas. In every country our focus is on finding and teaching faithful men by establishing seminaries to train pastors and sponsoring continuing education classes for current pastors.

Each year the CLC sponsors the Joint Asian Pastoral Conference (JAPC) in southern India for leaders from the Berea Evangelical Lutheran Church (BELC) in India, the Church of the Lutheran Confession of India (CLCI), the Church of the Lutheran Confession Myanmar (CLCM), the Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession – Nepal (HCLCN), and the National Lutheran Church of Myanmar (NLCM).

This year the JAPC was held from February 6-8 in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh.

Eight representatives came from the BELC, six from the CLCI, two from the CLCM, two from the HCLCN, and one from the NLCM. Traveling Missionary Todd Ohlmann, and Pastor Timothy Daub from Hecla, South Dakota, also attended as special guests, along with Missionary Peter Evensen.

Each morning and afternoon session began with a devotion. These were led by Missionary Todd Ohlmann, Pastor Timothy Daub and Missionary Peter Evensen.

Each church body presented reports that shared the blessings and challenges they each face in their ministry. These reports provided encouragement as we see God producing fruit in India, Myanmar and Nepal. They



Top: U.S. and Asian leaders attending the JAPC.

Above: Pastor Jyothi Benjamin reports on activity in the CLCI.



Above: Asian leaders listen to a paper being presented.

Right: Pastor Timothy Daub enjoying breakfast with several of the BELC district chairmen.

also guide our prayers for one another, as we heard of the difficulties we often face as our old evil foe seeks to stop the spread of the Gospel.

Pastor Charles Edwards (NLCM) presented a paper on *How Lutheranism Entered into Burma (Myanmar)*.

Pastor Jyothi Benjamin (CLCI) presented a paper on *Abortion In the Light of God's Word*.

Pastor Timothy Daub presented a paper on *A Survey of Lutheran Hermeneutics* (hermeneutics being the study of how one interprets the Bible).

Missionary Peter Evensen presented a paper on *The Blessings of God*, which focused on all the heavenly blessing we have as described in Ephesians 1:3-14.

Missionary Todd Ohlmann presented an overview of the CLC mission work in the United States and around the world. It is truly amazing what God allows us to do with the limited resources we have.

The 2018 JAPC provided an invaluable opportunity to fellowship, share in the Lord's Supper, and grow in the



knowledge of God's Word. Pray that each attendee be given a renewed zeal to preach and teach the good news that Jesus has taken away the sins of the whole world, and pray that God would continue to produce fruit in our various fields.



Peter Evensen is a fulltime foreign missionary for the CLC. His home is in Chennai, India.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS APRIL 2018

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

Date	Verse	Reading	Comments
Apr 2	TLH 211; LSB 483	Exodus 3:1-15	Our God is a God of deliverance, especially deliverance from our slavery to sin.
Apr 3	WS 731	1 Samuel 17:34-51	Our God is a God of victory, giving victory to His people over sin and every evil.
Apr 4	WS 729; LSB 479	Psalms 40	Our God is a God of salvation, saving us from troubles and from the dust of death.
Apr 5	WS 732	Job 28:12-28	Our God is a God of wisdom, and they are wise who respect and honor Him.
Apr 6	TLH 198	Jeremiah 10:1-16	The sinful world will always be filled with idols, but your God is the only One who is truly living and almighty.
Apr 7	TLH 199	Mark 7:24-30	Jesus shows His power over the devil and his demons—and His compassion toward all who trust in Him.
Apr 9	TLH 207:6	1 Corinthians 11:17-32	The carelessness of the Corinthians with respect to the Lord’s Supper was serious because they were sinning against the very body and blood of Christ.
Apr 10	TLH 520; LSB 809	Exodus 6:22-7:9	Although the people refused to be comforted by His words, the LORD was still committed to their deliverance.
Apr 11	WS 733; LSB 763	Psalms 42	When you are oppressed and downcast, remember the God of your salvation and put your hope in Him.
Apr 12	TLH 206; LSB 472	1 Samuel 23:1-6	Although his soldiers were afraid to attack the Philistines, David led them into battle because of God’s promise to give them the victory.
Apr 13	TLH 209	Jeremiah 15:11-20	Jeremiah asks God not to carry him away with the wicked, and He receives reassurance that the LORD will deliver Him.
Apr 14	TLH 172:6-8	Mark 10:17-27	Our natural inclination is to love money more than Christ, so when anyone puts Christ first, it is a work of God!
Apr 16	TLH 623	1 Corinthians 13	Notice that true love is an activity, not a feeling that we fall “into” or “out of.”
Apr 17	TLH 38	Exodus 12:31-40	The LORD watched over His people carefully as they left Egypt, providing for all their needs.
Apr 18	TLH 529; LSB 828	1 Samuel 28:3-19	In the day of trouble Saul did not turn to God, but to sorcery. We are reminded that God invites us to come to Him—always.
Apr 19	TLH 262	Psalms 46	A Mighty Fortress is our God, He helps us free from every need!
Apr 20	TLH 432	Jeremiah 17:5-8	Amid echoes of the first Psalm, we are reassured that our confidence in the LORD is not misplaced.
Apr 21	TLH 202	Mark 12:1-12	The King, Jesus Christ, cannot be overcome by His enemies—and He is on your side!
Apr 23	TLH 187; LSB 486	1 Corinthians 15	Christ is risen! Therefore your ministry and mission work are not in vain.
Apr 24	TLH 192	Exodus 15:1-21	Let songs of victory resound from the people of God!
Apr 25	TLH 436	Psalms 48	The LORD makes His people secure forever.
Apr 26	TLH 465	Jeremiah 23:1-6	The days Jeremiah spoke of have now come, and Christ reigns forever and ever!
Apr 27	WS 755	Mark 14:22-26	Jesus still gives us the “blood of the covenant” in His Supper today, forgiving our sins and strengthening our faith.
Apr 28	TLH 523	2 Corinthians 1:1-7	Do you have troubles? Be comforted by God, and then share that comfort with others who are hurting.
Apr 30	TLH 416	Exodus 18:5-26	The LORD often uses the older generation to bless the younger. May elders and young people both love and respect one another.

Vernon Congregation Goes Self-Supporting

Over the years, the Lord has opened many doors for the CLC to support domestic mission congregations. Throughout our history, we have supported more than fifty congregations across the United States and Canada. Over half of those congregations are now self-supporting with a full-time pastor.

The most recent addition to that list is **St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Vernon, British Columbia**, who became a self-supporting congregation in January of this year. Like many of our mission congregations, St. Paul's started out as a preaching station. In 1994, Pastor Bertram Naumann of Lynnwood, Washington, started making monthly visits to Vernon to conduct worship services. In the fall of 1996, the congregation was approved for mission status and began calling for a full-time pastor. In May of 1997, Pastor David Reim was installed as St. Paul's first full-time pastor and continues to serve the congregation today.

On January 21 of this year, the congregation celebrated achieving self-supporting status during the worship service. In his sermon, Pastor Reim expressed his thankfulness for the support received from those in our fellowship: "For the past twenty plus years we have been receiving subsidy from our brothers and sisters throughout the CLC. We might ask, why should people give so generously to support us? They don't know us. They don't even live in the same country. It is the love of God in their hearts. By God's grace they love those who share the love for God's Word and want to see that Word spread." It is very possible that St. Paul's would not have gotten started without the support of members and



churches throughout the CLC. This is another example of how the Lord has blessed our fellowship and how He uses our small church body to spread the gospel.

Though our financial support of St. Paul's has come to an end, our support of their mission in central British Columbia certainly does not. We will still want to support them with our

prayers and encouragement as they go forward. As with many of our congregations, St. Paul's has seen ups and downs over the years. Several years ago, membership numbers reached the mid-forties. However, in recent years, that number has dropped to the low thirties. Still, there is much to be thankful for and encouraged about as the congregation just received two new couples into membership in January. Pastor Reim has recovered from a heart attack

he suffered in November and reports that he has been able to fully resume his duties. The congregation is planning new outreach efforts after Easter including an evening dinner and Bible study where members invite friends and neighbors to join them. They are also looking into doing a number of public seminars on Biblical topics as they have done in the past.

The congregation remains committed to carrying on the work of the Gospel, and they are looking forward, in faith, to the opportunities and challenges ahead. Please keep St.

Paul's in your prayers as they begin this new chapter in their history.



Robert Sauers is pastor of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Morris, Minnesota, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions.

SEEN IN PASSING

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

A Rare Win for Freedom of Religion in California.

A California superior court has issued a ruling in favor of Cathy Miller, owner of Tastries Bakery in Bakersfield, California, who was sued when she declined to make a cake for a same-sex wedding. The ruling is only a preliminary injunction, however, which allows Ms. Miller to continue operating the bakery until the next hearing, set to take place in June 2018. Much more important, on the national level, may be the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in a similar case, Jack Phillips of Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission. That decision is expected in June as well. Reed, Anne. “Not Just a Piece of Cake.” *AFA Journal*. AFA.net, 12 Feb. 2018. Web. 13 Feb. 2018.

Do You Know a “None”? Don’t Give Up Hope!

For years, people who track religious trends have been reporting on the so-called “nones”—those people who, when asked their religious affiliation, reply “None.” That this cohort has been expanding quickly in America since the turn of the century is not news. What is news is that many “nones” apparently do not stay “nones” forever—they change. In a four-year study tracking 9,500 people, the Cooperative Congressional Election Study found that 40% of those who were “nones” in 2010 had changed their religious affiliation by 2014. Some had become agnostic or atheist. But an encouraging 17.3%—or about one in six—reported becoming Christians. Among the groups studied, the three groups least likely to change religious affiliation were Catholics, protestants, and atheists, respectively. Burge, Ryan. “Plenty of the ‘Nones’ Actually Head Back to Church.” *Research*. Christianitytoday.com. 6 Feb. 2018. Web. 13 Feb. 2018.

The Four Stages of Liturgy.

You’ve heard of the five stages of grief. Now Jared Melius, a Lutheran pastor in Denver, Colorado, has identified the “Four Stages of Liturgy,” the progression of feelings commonly experienced by newcomers exposed to the Lutheran order of worship: “1. Confusion – where am I? what page? am I supposed to be standing or sitting? 2. Boredom – This is the most dangerous phase. At this phase, people begin to conclude that because the liturgy is repetitive, it is therefore non-spiritual. . . 3. Love of the liturgy itself – If phase 2 didn’t drive people away from the liturgy, it is usually and ironically replaced by the love of the liturgy for the liturgy’s sake. Here people begin to love the “feeling,” the “reverence,” and the connection to history. They have a sense that this is old and therefore good. . . 4. Love of the content – The liturgy is a conduit for the Word of God and the means of grace. There isn’t, in my opinion, a better such conduit on the market. If there were, I myself would adopt it. In this phase, one uses the liturgy for the sake of the Gospel itself, not for the sake of the liturgy itself.” Melius, Jared. “The Four Stages of Coming into the Liturgy.” *World Wide Wolfmueller*. Wolfmueller.co. 31 Jan. 2018. Web. 13 Feb. 2018.

At an October 2017 service, Pastor Aaron Ude burns the mortgage of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Rapid City, South Dakota. The congregation’s message to the members of the CLC: “Thank you brothers and sisters in Christ for joining us all these years in declaring, *‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.’*” (Exodus 34:6)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Twenty-fifth Anniversary.

Messiah Lutheran Church of Hales Corners, Wisconsin, will be celebrating twenty-five years of their Christian Day School, Sunday, May 27, 2018. All alumni, former members, and friends of the congregation are invited to be part of this celebration of thanksgiving to the Lord. Pastor Samuel Rodebaugh of Winter Haven, Florida, will be the service speaker; Mr. Ryan Mueller of Lake City, Iowa, will be the guest organist. The celebration service will be at 9:30 A.M., a program at 10:45, and a meal and fellowship time will follow.

— Teacher Theodore Quade

