

November 2018 VOL 61 NO. 5

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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





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On the cover: The Last Judgment, Michelangelo
The Last Judgment is a fresco by the Italian Renaissance painter Michelangelo covering the whole altar wall of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City. It is a depiction of the Second Coming of Christ and the final and eternal judgment by God of all humanity.

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What Is the World's **Expiration** Date?

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

(2 Peter 3:10)

It's general practice, when people visit the local food market, to check the expiration date on products they are intending to purchase. By confirming that the expiration date is well out into the future, they can be reasonably certain that the milk they buy will taste good (at least for a while), the chips will be crispy, not stale, and the hamburger excellent for grilling. If they purchase an item with an expired date stamped on its label, chances are good that it will spoil soon and be unusable.

Most would agree that checking expiration dates on food products before buying them is a good idea. There's another date that is critically important for all to be concerned about: the expiration date of the world, when the Lord will keep His promise to return in glory as Judge of all, to destroy the godless, and to take His believers home.

On what date will this happen? Though many have tried to prognosticate this, the truth is that no one knows when it will be, since the Bible doesn't provide that information. Rather, the Bible teaches that the Last Day will come out of the blue, without warning, like a thief breaking into a house in the middle of the night. Since this is true, an important question for each person to ask is, “What shall I do to get ready for that Day so that, whenever it happens, I will be safe?”

We thank the Lord that He hasn't left us in the dark about how to get prepared for the world's final day. In loving concern for our eternal well-being, He has supplied us with much good advice about this in His holy Word. He teaches

the importance of staying in close touch with Him through hearing and learning His Word, which He promises to use to fortify our faith (John 8:31-32). He counsels us to center our hearts on things above, where He is sitting at God's right hand and where we shall one day be (Colossians 3:1-2).

Further, He warns us about becoming engrossed in the things of this temporary world (1 Corinthians 7:31) and to guard against living as unbelievers do who foolishly think that the world does not have an expiration date (2 Peter 3:3-5). He exhorts us to live lives of godliness that reflect our faith and our heavenly hopes (2 Peter 1:5-11, 2 Peter 3:11-13). He teaches us to live in daily repentance, confessing our sins to Him, looking to His cross for forgiveness, and to find joy in the Gospel message which assures us that “*if you confess with*

your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

When you go to the grocery store and check the expiration date on that milk carton or the “sell by” date on that bag of Doritos, let it serve as a reminder to you of the expiration date the Lord has stamped on our world (which only He knows). Ask Him to help you to keep spiritually alert for that Day, whenever it happens, with your hopes anchored in Him. Look forward to it with eagerness. It will be, after all, your heavenly homecoming day!

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



Most would agree that checking expiration dates on food products before buying them is a good idea.

There's another date that is critically important for all to be concerned about: the expiration date of the world.

Frequently Asked Questions about HEAVEN

The promise of life in glory, forever in heaven, is the Christian's most cherished hope. We would like to know more, of course, about the wonderful place which will be our home for all eternity. Many of our questions can only be answered when we arrive, but here are some answers God has provided us now.

Can I know, for sure, that I'm going?

Most people hesitate to answer "yes, definitely" to this question, because of the sins which we commit daily. But when our trust is in *Jesus'* work—His life, death, and resurrection—then His promise will certainly hold true, "Because I live, you will live also." (John 14:19) Apart from Christ there is no hope, but WITH Him there is no doubt!

Will I be some kind of angel or spirit?

No. The Bible is very clear that what happened to Jesus is the same thing that will happen to us. He rose with His physical body (Luke 24:39), and the Bible says that we, too, will have glorified bodies in heaven: "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." (Romans 8:11) See also Job 19:25-28 and Philippians 3:20-21.

Are we going there, or is it coming to us?

The answer is "yes" and "yes." We correctly say that when a believer dies, he or she "goes to heaven." This is what Paul expected according to Philippians 1:23. It is also what Jesus promised the thief on the cross in Luke 23:43, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." The Bible also tells us that, at the end of the world, the present heaven and earth will pass away (2 Peter 3:10). God will then create new heavens and a new earth, which He will bring to us (Isaiah 66:22, 2 Peter

3:13, Revelation 21:1-2). Exactly how all these things take place will remain a mystery until we experience it firsthand.

What will be there for us to DO?

The answer is "plenty!" The stereotype of heaven as a place of idleness, sitting on soft clouds, is all wrong. The praise and worship of our gracious God will, of course, be a major and blessed activity. That there will also be important and enjoyable work for us to do in heaven is shown clearly in the parable of the talents, in which the master says "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord." (Matthew 25)

Will there be any chance of falling away once we're in heaven?

No, none at all. Every promise that the Lord makes to us that heaven will be eternal and incorruptible is a promise that He will certainly keep! (see Luke 20:35-36, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Hebrews 9:15).

Where can I find out more?

A good concordance or topical Bible can point you to other verses of Scripture that reveal some fascinating visions of heaven and certain details about it. Beware, though, of modern authors who try to take advantage of people's curiosity by claiming to have extra-biblical knowledge about heaven. The only reliable information that we have about it comes from the Word of God. While we'd like to know more, we have the promise that every question will someday be answered in full . . . when we get there! "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." (1 Corinthians 13:12)



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

TLH 609

“Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying”

We know that trials will always be a part of every believer's life, for the Bible tells us that “we must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22) But we would never go looking for trials, nor would we ever ask God to send them. We are content to leave the time, place, and degree of these things entirely to Him.

Still, we know that when God does permit trials in our lives, He intends that they should be for our blessing. By them He brings us closer to Him as we go to Him for relief. By them He directs our hopes away from this life and this world to the life and world to come.

We see this in the life of Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608), German Lutheran pastor, poet, and composer; the author of our hymn. This great hymn that expresses the believer's longing for eternal life grew out of great adversity in the author's life.

In 1596 he was called to be pastor in the German town of Unna. During his time there, the town was devastated by the plague. The toll on Nicolai's congregation was staggering. Over 1,300 of the members died. Burials were a daily occurrence, sometimes as many as thirty in a single day. Death was on Nicolai's mind constantly as he conducted burial services and when he was in his study with its window looking out on the church graveyard.

For life in the midst of all this death, Nicolai turned to the Word of God, especially the promises of eternal life in Christ. And from his studies of these passages came a book of devotional meditations called *Freudenspiegel* (*Mirror of Joy*), an expression of his hope of eternal life. His stated purpose in writing it was that it would be a witness of his faith should he also be taken by the plague. And if it were God's will that he should survive, he would use it to comfort grieving members of his congregation. In the preface to this work, Nicolai wrote, “There seemed to me nothing



Philipp Nicolai was a German Lutheran pastor, poet, and composer. He is most widely recognized as a hymnodist.

more sweet, delightful, and agreeable, than the contemplation of the noble, sublime doctrine of Eternal Life obtained through the Blood of Christ. This I allowed to dwell in my heart, day and night, and searched the Scripture as to what it revealed on this matter. . . . Then day by day I wrote out my meditations, found myself—thank God!—wonderfully well, comforted in heart, joyful in spirit, and truly content.”

Included as an appendix to *Mirror of Joy* was the hymn “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying.” It is based on several biblical texts. In the first two stanzas we see Jesus' parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) in which the return of Christ in glory is pictured as a wedding procession. Believers are encouraged to be ready for His coming by continuing to believe in Him as the Savior, drawing strength for their faith from the Gospel. **“The Bridegroom comes, awake! Your lamps with gladness take! Hallelujah! With bridal care Yourselves prepare To meet the Bridegroom, who is near.”** In the third stanza, Christ has come, and the believers have entered into eternal life with Him, as it is pictured for us in Revelation 21. **“Of one pearl each shining portal, Where, dwelling with the choir immortal, We gather round Thy radiant throne.”**

On the closing Sundays of the Church Year as we consider death, Judgment Day, the Resurrection, and eternal life, many of us will be singing Philip Nicolai's great hymn in a Sunday service. But why wait? God intends the trials and troubles that He allows in our lives to turn us to thoughts of the glory that awaits us. When those trials begin to weigh you down, turn to this hymn and let it transport you to the life and world to come. **“No vision ever brought, No ear hath ever caught, Such great glory; Therefore will we Eternally Sing hymns of praise and joy to Thee.”**



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

“Purge Me with Hyssop”

THE HYSSOP PLANT is mentioned twelve times in Scripture¹—ten times in the Old Testament and twice in the New. The most familiar reference may be Psalm 51:7, where David writes, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Of the twelve verses in which hyssop is mentioned, nine have to do with ceremonial purifications. In Leviticus 14, for example, hyssop is used to ritually purify homes cleansed of mold, and lepers cured of leprosy. In Numbers 19, hyssop is part of the red heifer sacrifice, and later in the chapter is used to sprinkle water on those defiled by touching the dead.

As for other passages and contexts . . .

In Exodus 12, at the first Passover, hyssop is used to smear blood on the lintel and doorposts of Israelite homes. In 1 Kings 4, hyssop is listed as part of Solomon’s botanical lore: “Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall.” And in John 19 a hyssop stalk is used to raise a sponge to the crucified Christ’s parched lips.

What is the significance of hyssop in Scripture?

Most botanists identify biblical hyssop with a species of plant called *Origanum syriacum*, commonly referred to as Syrian oregano, or *za’atar*—a bushy perennial that grows prolifically in the Middle East. Part of the mint family, this plant has highly aromatic leaves, grows as tall as three feet, and produces white or pale pink flowers in spring.

For millennia, oregano has been used as seasoning and has been prized for its health benefits. Numerous studies have shown it to be anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiseptic,

antibacterial, antifungal, and useful for treating a variety of ailments, especially those caused by infections or inflammations.

Hyssop is a “purifier.” And this may help explain its use and significance in certain Bible passages. For example, in Psalm 51:7 David says, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” Why hyssop? Because hyssop is an internal cleanser, and therefore symbolic of the internal or spiritual cleansing, the “clean heart” (Psalm 51:10) that David seeks in this confessional psalm—the cleansing power of God’s forgiveness.

As noted above, hyssop is used in Leviticus 14 and Numbers 19 to ceremonially purify once-moldy homes, cured lepers, and Israelites who came into contact with corpses. As a medicinal cleanser, hyssop perfectly symbolizes ceremonial and spiritual cleansing. But who knows? Given the antibacterial and antiseptic nature of hyssop, it may also have been intended as a biological cleanser in these infectious settings.

In Exodus 12:22, hyssop is used as a brush to apply lamb’s blood to the lintel and doorposts of Israelite homes—something to which the plant’s stalk, leaves, and blossoms are well suited. But given the purifying nature of hyssop, surely more is meant. Using hyssop to apply the blood points to the purifying, protective power of the blood itself; and ultimately, to the atoning blood of Christ.

Even in John 19, the use of hyssop to give the crucified Christ a drink may be as symbolical as it is practical. For after this drink, the Savior would speak the three words that changed our lives and proclaimed our salvation: “IT IS FINISHED.” His blood, the True Hyssop, cleansed us from our sins and washed away our guilt.



The Hyssop Plant
A Purifier



As John wrote: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

Mark Weis is pastor of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Lemmon, South Dakota.

¹ Exodus 12:22; Leviticus 14:4,6,49,51,52; Numbers 19:6,18; 1 Kings 4:33; Psalm 51:7; John 19:29; and Hebrews 9:19.

Let Us Have Grace

“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”

(Hebrews 12:25-29)

In last month’s text we saw the Hebrew Christians being presented with two options. They could go back to the old covenant surrounded by its fires and darkness, tempest and terrors; or they could remain in the new covenant into which they had been called by God’s grace through faith in Jesus. In the text before us, the apostle lays out his conclusion: let us have grace.

“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks.”

It seems so self-evident, doesn’t it? Jesus speaks; we listen. It appears so obviously simple, but is it really? Not when our sinful nature gravitates toward every other voice but the right One. Our sinful flesh challenges, “Why should I listen to this One Voice above all other voices? Why Jesus instead of some other voice?”

The answer is really simple.

It’s because every other voice preaches from Mt. Sinai with its terrors of threats and punishments. With the Law, there are only demands. With the Gospel, there are only gifts—gifts of grace, mercy, and forgiveness in Jesus. The Law says, “Do this, or die.” The Gospel says, “Jesus did and died; now you may live.” Therefore, to listen to any other voice, even the voice of the old covenant, is to refuse God’s free gift of life in His Son. In other words, to refuse Jesus is to choose death. That’s the alternative. For as our text reminds us, “our God is a consuming fire.” Therefore, let us have grace and live!

The author goes on to say that it’s by grace that we may serve God acceptably.

That means that anyone who seeks to serve God apart from grace serves Him unacceptably, which is to say he doesn’t really serve Him at all. Seeking to serve God through the Law is unacceptable because it disregards what God says about everything; what He says about the Law and its purpose, and what He says about His Son Jesus and His sacrifice. It would be like holding up a finger to God’s lips to shush Him, and then proceeding to tell God what He really wants instead.

By God’s grace, service to God is acceptable as He fills us with faith through His Word to trust in His unearned favor through Jesus’ death and righteousness and then to respond accordingly.

Through this text, God is pleading with His believers not to take His grace lightly. When God speaks His grace to you, “See that you do not refuse Him who speaks.” Though you did not earn or deserve it, God has nevertheless brought you into the unshakable kingdom of His grace through faith and freely gives to you every unshakable blessing found there. Therefore, let us have and hold onto

God’s grace, by which we may serve Him acceptably in reverence and godly fear. Amen!

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



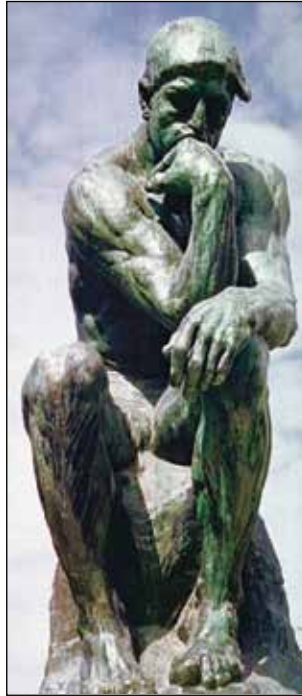
“Religion makes no sense”

No offense, but the fact that you are reading this article means that you are probably an “irrationalist.” That doesn’t mean that you’ve lost touch with reality or believe the earth is flat. Nor does it mean that you are opposed to science, logic, or deductive reasoning. It simply means that you are not a rationalist. Which is good.

Rationalism is a movement that is often traced to the 18th century, but has really been around since the Fall. It sounds legitimate because we are logical, sane, rational creatures. Is rationalism all of those things? It claims to be built on hard science, but its postulations about the origin and purpose of life require devout faith in evolution’s gods of Time and Chance.

Is it rational to conclude that the things we see are products of a purposeless, designerless Darwinism? If you were digging in the backyard and uncovered an old pocket watch, what would be the most logical conclusion to draw? A. It had been built by a watchmaker and was misplaced or discarded by its owner, or B. It assembled itself and has been there for billions of years.

Every day God’s creation testifies to its Creator. *“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.”* (Psalm 19:1-2) The closer we examine it, the more amazed we are, and the more untenable Darwin’s position becomes. On the Last Day, no one will be able to honestly say, “I had no idea that there was a God.” *“For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”* (Romans 1:20) “An atheist



Rationalism is a movement that is often traced to the 18th century, but has really been around since the Fall.

can’t find God,” the saying has it, “the way a thief can’t find a policeman.”

Logic and the Christian faith are not enemies, as long as logic is a servant and not the master. We have the same evidence that rationalists have, but draw different conclusions because our convictions are anchored in Scripture. Rationalism dethrones the Creator and enthrones human reason, all the while missing one crucial point: human reason is corrupted and its conclusions are often flawed.

What can you tell the rationalist who says that “religion makes no sense”? Actually, most religions make perfect sense. They are about doing enough good to compensate for doing evil and to merit divine favor. Logical? Yes. Christian? No. The Bible says, *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* (1 Corinthians 2:9) God Himself came to live our life and die our death so that we would be saved. No human being would come up with a plan like that, but it is exactly what Jesus has done for us.

When Paul dealt with rationalists in ancient Greece, he didn’t rely on his ability to win arguments in order to bring them to faith.

“My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:4) The message of God’s grace makes no sense to natural man, but it contains within it the power to change an unbeliever into a believer.

The most important thing to tell a rationalist or anyone else is what God has done for them in Christ.

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 have presented a brief survey of the life of Martin Luther. The series concludes with this installment.

Life of Luther — The Final Years

Luther's life was very busy, and he was often in the center of much activity. In the final years, his life fell into a somewhat quieter routine, but he remained active to the very end.

His main activities continued to be preaching, teaching, and writing. He mounted the pulpit in Wittenberg until the end, and when he traveled, he was frequently asked to guest preach. But this tired him more, and it would happen from time to time that he cut himself short because of dizziness or other illness.

The classroom lectures on Genesis, begun in 1535, were reaching their end. He worried whether he would have time or energy to complete this extensive work, and indeed he barely did. He finished his last lecture only two months before his death. He gladly laid the pen aside and made no plans to continue with a new lecture series.

His writing slowed; he was not so quick to respond to every attack upon the Gospel. After all, how could he make his position clearer? But when he did write, it was often with a sharp and venomous quill. His deep disappointment that the Gospel was not being embraced more widely showed through in his strong language. And when the Gospel was attacked, he fired back. Duke Heinrich of Braunschweig was an active opponent of Lutheranism and was even accused of causing church-burnings in Lutheran territories. Luther scorched him. After the Pope yet again postponed convening a general council, Luther attacked him in the strongest terms. When it was rumored that Jews were seeking to convert Christians, he penned virulent attacks against them.

His last years also brought discouragement. Persistent reports of students and townspeople in Wittenberg acting immorally in life and deceitfully in business, rather than with Christian sobriety and integrity, troubled him. On one occasion, while gone from Wittenberg, he wrote and told Katie to prepare to move out since he was minded not to come back to Wittenberg. Melancthon was sent to talk him down and bring him back.



Perhaps his deteriorating health—kidney stones, headaches, shortness of breath, dizziness, bouts of depression, and general fatigue—played a role in this discouragement and impatience. Luther also recognized that he was struggling with anger, that it was a force that drove him forward and gave him strength, but that it was also a weakness to be combated.

Luther's personal life centered upon his family and friends. He deeply loved and respected his wife, Katie. In his will, he left all his possessions directly to her and not, as was customary, to his children under the guidance of a male trustee. He trusted her to know what was best.

His children were a joy to him. When one died in infancy, he was crushed; when teenager Magdalena died of a sudden fever, he fled to his room utterly disconsolate.

Luther's death came about in this way. Mansfeld was ruled by four brothers, who were counts. Luther volunteered to mediate an ongoing dispute among them; this was his hometown, after all, and his own family was being hurt by the discord. A first visit was unsuccessful. A second was arranged for January, 1546. The frigid trip took several days and weakened Luther. The negotiations resulted in agreement among the brothers but taxed Luther's strength. On leaving Mansfeld, he had traveled but a short distance, to Eisleben, his birthplace, when he was taken with a sudden chill and confined to bed. On February 18, 1546, witnessed by his friend and fellow theologian Justus Jonas and Michael Coelius, the court preacher in Mansfeld, he confessed the faith he had long fought to defend. At about 3:00 a.m., he died.

On his person was found a note, which concluded, "We are beggars. This is true." He was returned to Wittenberg and there buried in the Castle Church. The beggar had received his eternal reward.



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

Bethel Lutheran Church Morris, Minnesota

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)

Every Christian traces his roots back to Jesus Christ Himself and to when Jesus commissioned all Christians to spread His good news of forgiveness to the ends of the earth. Visible churches spring up when God’s Word is preached and His sacraments are rightly administered, thereby providing the means through which the Holy Spirit works faith in people’s hearts. Once Christian churches are established, it is their duty to continue “teaching all things” that Christ has commanded through His Word (Matthew 28:20). In the late 1950’s, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) had stopped “teaching all things” according to God’s Word. This is the reason Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church began fifty-eight years ago.

In 1955, Pastor Elton Hallauer accepted a call to serve as pastor of St. John’s Lutheran Church, a WELS congregation in Hancock, Minnesota. Soon after accepting this call, Pastor Hallauer began to grow concerned that the WELS was following a new and incorrect teaching about fellowship. By April of 1960, he informed St. John’s that he had withdrawn his membership from the WELS and urged his congregation to follow him in obedience to God’s Word. The congregation, however, voted to remain with the WELS and terminated

his call on June 5, 1960. But there were four families who were moved by reasons of conscience to sever fellowship with St. John’s and the WELS. On that same day, these families began to form a new church.

“It wasn’t difficult at all. The Lord provided a place of worship. Jesus was born in a stable, so why should it be so hard for us to worship in a garage?”

- Bethel Member

The first worship service was held on June 12, 1960 in a two-car garage owned by one of the members. Makeshift, backless pews described by Pastor Hallauer as “blocks and planks” were used. This worship service and ones that followed in the next weeks saw between twenty-five and thirty-five in attendance. Despite the less-than-ideal conditions, those who attended were very positive about the experience. One member said, “It wasn’t difficult at all. The Lord provided a place of worship. Jesus was born in a stable, so why should it be so hard for us to worship in a garage?”

In July of 1960, the future members of Bethel were able to improve their worship situation when they rented a large home southeast of Morris, Minnesota, that served as a parsonage and chapel until June of the following year. In October of 1960, they obtained a rural school building which would be remodeled into a house of worship.

Seven men met on January 9, 1961, for the purpose of officially organizing the congregation. The official date on



Top: Bethel sanctuary. Above: charter members of the congregation.

the congregation's certificate of incorporation is January 11, 1961.

As time went on, Bethel continued to improve its worship facilities. On June 19, 1961, the renovation of the rural school building was completed. The renovated facility seated seventy-six people and included pews, church furniture, and an antique reed organ. On August 24, 1961, Bethel was accepted as a charter member of the CLC. On September 3, 1961, the renovated worship facility was dedicated. St. John's former pastor, Rev. H. C. Duehlmeier, preached the sermon and formally installed Pastor Hallauer.

The country schoolhouse served the congregation's needs for fourteen years. In 1974, Bethel congregation decided to relocate to the city of Morris. A tract of land on Brook Street and Eleanor Avenue was acquired, and a new church building was erected. The building was dedicated on June 15, 1975 and has served the congregation ever since.

Pastor Hallauer also served several families in the area of Parkers Prairie, Minnesota, who left the Missouri Synod

in 1961 for reasons of conscience. This group organized as Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church and continued to hold services in Parkers Prairie until 2010. Upon the closing of Peace congregation, the remaining nine members transferred their membership to Bethel.

Bethel's membership in 1961 was forty-two souls. In 1982, the congregation's membership reached a high of sixty-nine souls. Since then, membership has declined, and the current membership is forty souls. Many of the current members live an hour or more from Morris but still faithfully attend services on a weekly basis.

Bethel has been served by three full-time pastors. Pastor Hallauer served Bethel faithfully for fifty-two years until he announced his retirement from the public ministry in 2012. The congregation then called for a seminary graduate. The Call Committee on Graduates assigned the call to Mark Tiefel, who served the congregation from September of 2012 until April of 2015. Bethel then called for another graduate, and that call was assigned to Robert Sauers, who served Bethel from June of 2015 until August of 2018.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the congregation in 2010, Mary Hallauer, daughter of Pastor Hallauer, recalled God's blessings upon the congregation:

Most of all, I remember the love and generosity continuously shown our family throughout all the lean years to the present time. Together we've witnessed births, graduations, weddings and funerals; over time our bond of Christian love and friendship has been strengthened. God has been so good to our congregation over these fifty years.

God has, indeed, been good to the members of Bethel. Through the years, by God's grace, this small group of faithful Christians has continued "teaching all things" as Christ has commanded through His Word. We pray that God's Spirit will continue to guide them into all truth (John 16:13), that they may continue to proclaim the truth of God's Word in west-central Minnesota.



Robert Sauers is pastor of Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions.

CLC Bible Correspondence Course

[The following is a report from Pastor Jyothi Benjamin on the adult instruction course that is widely used in the Church of the Lutheran Confession in India (CLCI). The report is in Pastor Benjamin's own words, lightly edited for clarity]

Long, long ago, King David asked God one question:

"What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalms 8:4)

Why is the Lord mindful of human beings rather than animals? What is the difference between the human beings and animals? People have many things in common with animals. They breathe the same air. They eat similar food. They have many of the same needs. But people are different from animals. The Apostle Paul answered this question: *"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Thessalonians 5:23) Through the CLCI Bible correspondence course, many of the non-Christians have been learning more about who they are, where they came from, why they are here, where they are going, and, finally, knowing that Jesus is their only Savior. As we read from 2 Timothy 3:15, the Bible says that the Word of God will make a person wise about salvation.

As you know, there has been lot of opposition to the public Gospel proclamation in India. We should not be discouraged about the situation. A good study of God's Word is the most profitable study in a person's life. The more we study, the more we want to study. We are thrilled and excited to inform you that many have received Jesus by taking God's word through our CLCI Bible Correspondence

Course. Over 25 years, through the blessings of our Lord, our CLCI Bible Correspondence Course has been moving very well. As you know, now we have an advantage of the fast-increasing literacy rate in India. We are happy to inform you that this correspondence course is another wonderful way of spreading the Word of God to build up our CLCI Church without having any outside pressure from the opponents. Of course, this correspondence course requires intensive study on the part of the learner. Matthew 4:4 says we live spiritually by the Word of God. We don't have anyone else to go to for life when we turn from God. (John 6:66-68). Correspondence courses will require self-discipline on the student's part. Printed copies of the correspondence course are used to provide instruction to students via mail. Distance learning allows the student the flexibility of working at his own pace, therefore, the amount of time it takes to complete the course will depend largely on the time and determination of the student.

There has been lot of opposition to the public Gospel proclamation in India. We should not be discouraged about the situation.

We have been instructing hundreds of people in the basics of the Christian faith in conjunction with this CLCI Bible Correspondence Course. The reading and writing assignments are designed to help the learner expand his knowledge base in theological studies as well as to help the learner continue on a path of spiritual growth. In this CLCI Bible Correspondence course, we have been using the wonderful lessons in *Learn from Me*, prepared by honorable beloved brother Rev. Bertram Justus Naumann, CLC, USA. We are grateful to Rev. Bert Naumann, now with the Lord, for his inspiring and wonderful contribution in preparing these valuable lessons.

In conjunction with the CLCI Seminary main course, the seminary also has been offering this free Bible Correspondence course. We have been sending this

CLCI correspondence course since 1993 to the inquirers. For this, we place advertisements in newspapers, annual calendars, telephone directories, yellow pages, and so forth. This CLCI Bible Correspondence Course is totally free of cost. Since 1993, during these twenty-five long years, many hundreds of Indian students have taken this CLCI Bible Correspondence Course and completed the course successfully and received certificates. We have been receiving good response from other churches also and are welcoming brothers and sisters from those churches also to join in these free courses. We send the lessons and questions through mail, they go through and answer the papers, we correct the answers to all these lessons, finally give them the certificate of completion and a free gift of Bible bag and a small cash gift. During the year 2017-18, a total of fifteen students have taken this CLCI Bible Correspondence course, and out of these, ten students have graduated and been blessed by receiving their certificates of completion, through the hands of our beloved missionary Rev. Peter Evensen. Now this year, fourteen students have joined so far.

We are happy that many of our Hindu and Muslim friends are also taking this Bible correspondence course from us. We will not give out any information about them to anyone.



A student is awarded a certificate upon completion of the CLCI Bible Correspondence Course.

Since 1993, during these twenty-five long years, many hundreds of Indian students have taken this CLCI Bible Correspondence Course.

for them to take this course. If one person from a family is converted, he could guide the entire family in his own manner. In this way this Bible Correspondence Course is prompting souls to trust Christ. Through the Word of God, the Holy Spirit has been working in them through this “invisible way.”

It is our sincere hope and prayer that through this CLCI Bible Correspondence Course, the CLCI will continue to grow in the future. We are praying our Almighty living God Christ Jesus for His grace to grant us courage and strength to carry on His blessed work. With the continued prayers from all of you through our Lord’s blessings, we the Church of the Lutheran Confession of India hope to achieve greater success in our attempt to bring about all-around improvement to the CLCI Mission work through this correspondence course mission. May the Lord bless this Bible Correspondence study of His Word.



Pastor Jyothi Benjamin is the Chairman of the CLCI. His home is in Nidubrolu, Andhra Pradesh State, India.

Everything will be held strictly confidential. No information provided will be made available to anyone else. These people are silently receiving Christ as their Savior. We are praying that through them, someday their entire families could come to Christ. There won’t be any outside pressure

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS NOVEMBER 2018

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

Date	Verse	Reading	Comments
Nov 1	TLH 383; LSB 671	Ecclesiastes 3:1-14	Human effort will ultimately come to nothing, but whatever God does will endure.
Nov 2	TLH 57	Zephaniah 3:14-20	The Lord would bring judgment on Judah, but He would restore them by sending the Messiah.
Nov 3	TLH 129; LSB 949	Acts 11:1-18	Peter learned that salvation in Christ was for all who believed, not just for a particular people
Nov 5	TLH 417	James 4:1-10	What causes arguments and quarrels? Very simply, they are clashes of wills. Learn to put your own desires away and do the Lord's will.
Nov 6	TLH 35	Deuteronomy 3:1-11	As Moses recounted Israel's history, he reminded them how God had even given Og, the king of Bashan, into their hands—giant that he was!
Nov 7	TLH 22	2 Chronicles 33:10-17	After being captured by the Assyrians, Manasseh finally humbled himself before the Lord. Often we must be brought low to be brought back to God.
Nov 8	TLH 18	Psalms 129	The unbelieving wicked may afflict us, but the Lord will put them to shame and the blessing of the Lord will rest upon His people.
Nov 9	WS 771	Ecclesiastes 5:1-7	Do not despise God and His Word or you will be despising your own salvation. Let God speak to you—and listen to Him.
Nov 10	WS 703	Haggai 2:1-9	The new temple would not be as outwardly glorious as Solomon's, but Christ's presence would give it greater glory. It is Jesus who makes our churches glorious too.
Nov 12	TLH 513	Acts 14:19-23	Living under the gracious rule of Christ means also enduring a certain degree of earthly trouble. There's no reason to deny Jesus just because of hardship.
Nov 13	TLH 514	1 Peter 4:12-19	Do you find yourself suffering on account of Christ? Or facing difficult situations because you are a Christian? Don't be ashamed, but glorify God that you're His child.
Nov 14	TLH 655	Deuteronomy 8:1-10	When you face trials, endure them as discipline (training) from the Lord. Don't worry, the Lord will one day bring you into a good land too—as He did the Israelites.
Nov 15	TLH 438	Ezra 4:1-6; 5:1-2	The temple builders gave up too easily when they encountered resistance. Do we ever give up on the Lord's direction too soon? May the Lord guide us back when we do.
Nov 16	TLH 100	Psalms 132	In Christ Jesus the Lord comes and dwells with His people. Jesus is our brother Who lives with us forever! He lives to guide me, guard me, etc.
Nov 17	TLH 430	Ecclesiastes 8:10-13	Do you ever feel like the unbelieving wicked always have the upper hand over the people of God? Read this and understand that it is not so.
Nov 19	WS 725; LSB 530	Zechariah 6:9-14	The term “the Branch” is a reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, Who would be both King and Priest. Joshua's crown was to serve as a reminder of Christ's kingship.
Nov 20	WS 770	Acts 15:12-21	The Lord Jesus is there for all who seek Him, and many from every nation are called to Him.
Nov 21	TLH 266	2 Peter 1:16-21	The Bible is the Word of God, not the word of human authors.
Nov 22	WS 744; LSB 789	Psalms 136	O give thanks unto the Lord!
Nov 23	TLH 548; LSB 894	Ecclesiastes 9:11-18	Wisdom is better than strength, and in our Savior Jesus Christ we have the highest wisdom.
Nov 24	TLH 268	Zechariah 13:7-9	The Lord of Hosts would strike down the Good Shepherd, His own Son Jesus Christ, by the cross. This would test the Shepherd's disciples, but the Lord would see them through.
Nov 26	WS 774	Acts 18:5-11	The Word of God is not bound, but has free course!
Nov 27	TLH 357	1 John 2:1-6	Jesus Christ is our advocate with the Father when we sin, but we don't use Christ's atoning sacrifice as an excuse to ignore His will.
Nov 28	TLH 359	Nehemiah 2:9-18	It was God who made Nehemiah willing and eager to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (v. 12), just as He works in us to will and to do His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).
Nov 29	WS 728	Psalms 138	Though we walk in the midst of trouble, the Lord can accomplish what He wants both in and through us. Give thanks to His holy name!
Nov 30	TLH 63; LSB 517:1, 5, 3	Malachi 3:1-4	The last of the Old Testament prophets has the coming Savior fully in view, prophesying about John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for Christ's ministry.

Autumn at ILC

*“Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy.
He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing
seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with
rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him.”*

(Psalm 126:5-6)

There's something special about autumn. The heat and labor of summer is past, and the stark stillness of winter is not yet come. Autumn has its own joys. It is traditionally the time of reaping, a time when our more agrarian ancestors rejoiced in the harvest. For them, the months of October and November represented a time of “bringing in the sheaves”—sheaves that, for them, often represented the year's only payday. It was also a time for Christians to acknowledge the generous bounty bestowed on them by a gracious and provident God.

Needless to say, fall is a very special time here at Immanuel Lutheran College as well. Fall classes are once again in full swing. Fall sports are well underway. We enjoy cooler, more moderate temperatures now that the muggy heat of summer is behind us and the bitter cold of winter not yet here. Situated as we are in the deciduous forests of west-central Wisconsin, we are treated to an awesome display of God's creation as the autumn colors reach their deepest hue.

Psalm 126 speaks to the restoration of Israel to its homeland. After a long night of weeping in exile, the morning of joy greeted them upon their return to Jerusalem. Similarly, ILC students and faculty alike are reminded that their labors here at Immanuel, though arduous and



challenging at times, will, with the Lord's blessing, bear fruits later in their lives—indeed unto everlasting life. Even more broadly, Christians everywhere who labor for the Lord in circumstances difficult and fraught with tears are reminded that the joyful relief of an eternal harvest is coming. In Christ, we can look forward to a rest from our labor, to a departure from this vale of tears, and an everlasting “harvest home” with our Redeemer in heaven.



It is in this joyful spirit that we offer you these beautiful autumn photos of our campus, taken by CLC Pastor Joel Fleischer of Berea Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In addition to his clerical calling, Pastor Fleischer is also a licensed drone pilot.



Paul Naumann is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and editor of The Lutheran Spokesman.

West Bay Anniversary

St. Stephen Lutheran Church of Mountain View (West Bay) celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on Sunday, July 22nd, with a worship service at the church, as well as a fellowship meal and presentation at the nearby Historic Adobe Building in downtown Mountain View, California. The theme for the service and the day's celebration was "Fifty Years of Lifting High the Cross." Former St. Stephen pastors Rev. Bruce Naumann and Rev. Neal Radichel were the guest preachers. A fiftieth anniversary choir made up of current and former members of St. Stephen also sang in the worship service. We thank the Lord for such an enjoyable and edifying day of worship, fellowship, and celebration, and for His grace and blessings over the past fifty years!

Luke Bernthal is the pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the East Bay in Hayward, California, and St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the San Francisco Peninsula in Mountain View, California.



Back row, l-r: Pastors Bruce Naumann, Luke Bernthal and Neal Radichel; front row, Pastor Mark Gullerud and Pastor Em. Rollin Reim.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

60th Anniversary Observance

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church, Red Wing, Minnesota, observed its sixtieth anniversary with a special worship service on Sunday, August 12, 2018. The congregation's first worship service had been held on Sunday, July 27, 1958, under its first pastor, George Barthels.

The service revolved around the theme "Redeemed . . . With the Precious Blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). A son of the congregation, retired pastor James Sandeen, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was liturgist. Sermonettes on the above theme were delivered by the current pastor, David Baker, and by former pastors of Our Redeemer's: David Lau, Eau Claire, Wisconsin (1975-82)

and Norman Greve, Stambaugh, Michigan (1983-88).

Taking turns at the organ were Marie Meyer (current church organist), former organists Miriam Aymond, Elizabeth Greve, and Janelle Hein. The church choir, also directed by Marie Meyer, sang two hymns of praise, with Samantha Bengs (Red Wing) accompanying on trumpet.

About eighty-five people from near and far were in attendance (the one who came the farthest was from Arizona). A meal was served by the congregation's ladies group, the Bereans. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and the reminiscing that comes with an anniversary celebration.

—Paul Fleischer, Pastor Emeritus



Above: participants in Red Wing anniversary service (l-r): Pastor David Baker, Pastor Em. James Sandeen, Prof. David Lau, and Pastor Norman Greve.