

May 2019 VOL 61 NO. 11

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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





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# Both Shepherd and Lamb

Jesus was many mutually exclusive things that, humanly speaking, He couldn't be. He was the God of Sabaoth, and He was the Prince of Peace. He was Lord and Master, and He was the humble Servant. He was "true God, begotten of the Father from eternity," and He was a mortal man Whose life left Him on Calvary's cross.

## He was also both Shepherd and Lamb.

We get this, of course, but it is nonetheless remarkable when you actually take the time to consider it. That both are true is beyond dispute. Jesus once said this of Himself: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:11-15 ESV) Clearly then He is a shepherd. Yet John the Baptist, on two separate occasions, identified Jesus as "the Lamb of God." (John 1:29, 34)

Nor was either "job description" a temporary position. He was both and He is both. He wasn't just our Good Shepherd for a time; He still is. Even now He is also, according to what the Apostle John saw in the Revelation, the Lamb that reigns in heaven: "And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he



Jesus was, and is, both Lamb and Shepherd. He was and is, in other words, both a sheep and the One who protects the sheep.

had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.'" (Revelation 5:6-9 ESV)

John then went on to describe how Jesus remains both of those two seemingly mutually exclusive things for all eternity: "For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:17 ESV) Jesus was, and is, both Lamb and Shepherd. He was and is, in other words, both a sheep and the One who protects the sheep.

Both speak to His character. Both identify the perfect love that He had and has for every single one of His sheep. "Lamb" and "Shepherd" simply identify different facets or aspects of His love, as they also identify our need. We needed a perfect, divine sacrifice to pay our sin debt, as we also need a Good Shepherd to protect and provide for us, because we are just sheep. We are incapable of any sacrifice that would cancel our sin debt. Having been redeemed by the sacrifice of the Lamb, we are also incapable of caring and providing for ourselves. We would do well to remember this as we celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday. Our Good Shepherd was not just willing to give His life for the sheep, He did just that. The Shepherd was also the Lamb.



**Michael Roehl** is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Bismarck, North Dakota.

# Graduating with the Lord

**N**ear the end of my first grade year, I asked my mom how much longer I needed to go to school.

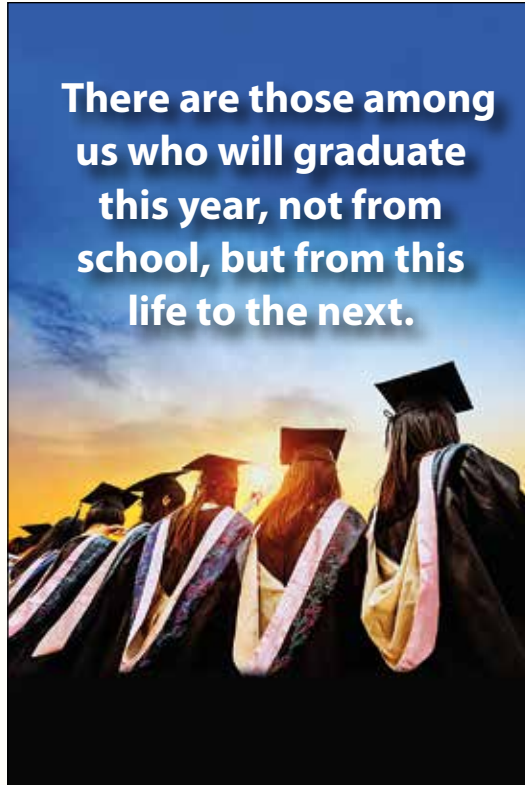
I enjoyed first grade as well as kindergarten the year before that, but I did wonder if there would be a day when I wouldn't have to go anymore. I had suspected that I would need to go at least until eighth grade, and my suspicions were confirmed. Then my mom surprised me with the news of eight more years of school, called "high school" and "college." For a young child squinting to see the end of school as upon a distant horizon, graduation seems like a fantasy which will never materialize. For those who are now arriving at their graduation day, the common question is, "Where did the time go?"

While graduation is the end goal for millions of young people around our nation, graduation day is not the end. The word itself implies a progression to something new. Just as the celebration of a sports championship is shortly followed by a new season, so each graduation brings on a new season of life. And how intimidating it can be to graduate into that unknown! Whether you are an eighth grader graduating into the intimidating halls of high school, or a high school senior progressing to the pressures of college, or a college senior stepping into your career, graduation is often accompanied by fear of what comes next.

Joshua must have been filled with a mixture of fear and apprehension as he graduated from being Moses' assistant to serving the Lord as leader of the Israelites. What dangers would they face in the Promised Land? Would the people listen to him as they had to Moses? In response to these unspoken fears, the Lord gave him this promise, "*The LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*" (Joshua 1:9 ESV) This is the same promise the Lord makes to each of our

graduates in 2019. But how often do we look on this promise in the same way a first grader looks at graduation—as some far-off possibility that really is only meant for someone else? Instead of clinging to this promise, we often embark upon the next steps with our confidence founded in ourselves or our own plans.

**There are those among us who will graduate this year, not from school, but from this life to the next.**



Nevertheless, God's promise remains true: "*If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.*" (2 Timothy 2:13 ESV) Christ proved His faithfulness by joining us here, to take upon His body the pains which we deserve. He suffered death and rose again to ensure our deliverance from hell. And now He promises that He "*will be with you always.*" (Matthew 28:20) And so God is still with us to guide and provide, strengthening us through Word and Sacrament.

There are those among us who will graduate this year, not from school, but from this life to the next. For billions around the world, this one graduation holds the most cause for fear. And yet through Christ's victory over death, we know that there is no uncertainty awaiting us. Rather, there we will find the perfect fulfillment of God's promise to Joshua. For after death, we will forever be with the Lord.

Whether you are a first grader, or a high school graduate, or in your old age, cling to this promise from God. He is with you through whatever is coming next, and His focus ever remains on guiding you through to your final graduation. "*[The Lord] will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you.*" (Deuteronomy 31:8 ESV)



**Samuel Rodebaugh** is pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Winter Haven, Florida.

TLH 51

# “Now May He Who from the Dead”

**C**hrist’s final act before He ascended into heaven was to lift up His hands and bless His assembled disciples. And it was while He was blessing them that He was parted from them and taken up into heaven (Luke 24:50-51).

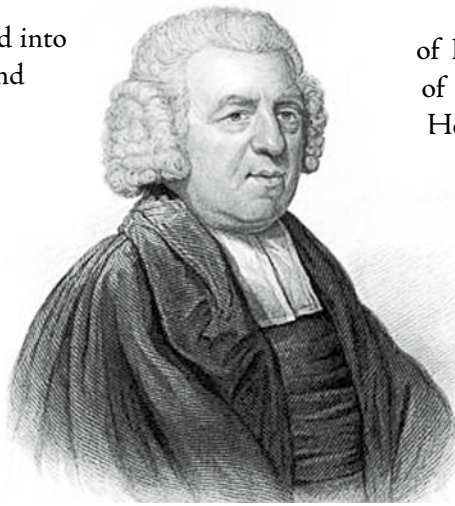
This parting picture of Jesus with His hands raised in blessing is most meaningful, a perpetual reminder that He continues to bless His Church on earth and will do so until He comes again. As Victor over sin and death seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, Jesus gives the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life to all who believe in Him.

Since God’s Word gives us this picture of Jesus with His hands raised in blessing, it is appropriate that we close our services with a benediction—a blessing. In this way we return to our daily lives assured of the Lord’s blessing, just as the disciples returned to Jerusalem with the memory of Jesus blessing them as He ascended.

We most often use the Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:22-27) or the Apostolic blessing (2 Corinthians 13:14) at the close of our services. But there are other blessings in the New Testament that we could use, including the one that closes the book of Hebrews: *“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”* (Hebrews 13:20-21)

And we do in fact make use of this magnificent blessing when we close a service with the hymn “Now May He Who from the Dead” by John Newton.

With its opening line, **“Now may He who from the dead / Bro’t the Shepherd of the sheep,”** this hymn paraphrase



John Newton

of Hebrews 13:20 expresses the confidence of blessing from God the Father because He raised Jesus Christ from the dead. It is because of Jesus’ resurrection on the third day after dying for our sins that we have the blessings of forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and eternal life. He is “the great Shepherd of the sheep,” the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. (John 10:11-15) Now He lives forever our **“King and Head”** who is able to **“All our souls in safety keep.”**

God, Who has cleansed us of all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, is able by His Spirit to **“teach us to fulfill/ What is pleasing in His sight, / Perfect us in all His will, / And preserve us day and night.”**

The great blessing from Hebrews ends with words of praise to Jesus Christ, *“To (Him) be glory forever and ever. Amen.”* This expression of praise Newton takes up in the final stanza: **“To that dear Redeemer’s praise, / Who the cov’nant sealed with blood, / Let our hearts and voices raise / Loud thanksgiving to our God.”** We praise Christ for offering His blood by which He established an everlasting covenant of salvation with us.

Whenever we hear the benediction spoken by the pastor or sing it as the closing hymn, we should understand that these words are no mere pious wish. They are the words of God that impart blessings to believing hearts. God Himself assures us that this is so. When He directed Aaron and his sons to bless the people He also promised, *“So shall they put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.”*



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



# How to Get a Good Night's Sleep

*"I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone,  
O LORD, make me dwell in safety."*

(Psalm 4:8)

*"I will both lie down in peace, and sleep."*

**O**ur first reaction to these words may be, "Well, of course David slept in peace. He was the king of Israel; powerful, popular, wealthy. He lived in a palace. People referred to him as David the Giant Killer. He had no real worries." However, when David wrote Psalm 4, he was not living in a palace or even in Jerusalem. Instead, he was fleeing for his life from his own son Absalom. Yet, amid such hardship and heartache, David was still able to sleep in peace. How? Psalm 4 provides the answer.

## David Prayed

David found the peace to sleep by giving his problems to the Lord in prayer. He knew that God would hear and answer, because God was the source of his eternal salvation and God had never failed him in the past. We, too, give our problems to the Lord. Unfortunately, we don't always leave them there. Instead, worrying that God won't hear, answer, or act, we snatch our problems back, struggling to carry what only God can. And still we wonder why we can't sleep!

When sleepless, our prayer should be similar to David's. "O Lord, in undeserved grace You saved me when I could not save myself. Looking back on my life, I can't name even one time when You failed me. And I know that You won't fail me in my current distress."

A millennium after David, the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The point is, if God loved you enough to give you His only Son, Jesus Christ, will He refuse to give you a loaf of bread, change of clothes, place to



shelter, or means to repair a troubled marriage?

No. Give your problems to God and leave them with God. You'll sleep in peace.

## David Weighed

David also found sleep by weighing his enemies against God's infinite love and power. In the privacy of his thoughts he called out the opposition and asked, "Who are you when compared to God?" When sleepless, we should weigh our opposition in the same way. "Financial trouble, who do you think you are? Sickness, who do you think you are? Loneliness, who do you

think you are? You are nothing compared to

the God who loves me, hears me when I call, and has set me apart as His very own."

In Romans 8:31 the apostle Paul invited this same comparison. He asked, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" So, what's your answer? If your answer is "no one and nothing can be against me," then turn out the light and go to sleep.

## David Laid His Problems to Rest

Through prayer, through weighing his problems, through staying his mind and heart on the Scriptures, David was able to lay his problems to rest and his head on the pillow. While others were saying, "Who will show us any good?" David expected only the best from God. With words reminiscent of the Aaronic benediction, he wrote, "Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us." (Psalm 4:6)

And dear friend, if you go to bed each night thinking, knowing, always expecting the very best from God, how can you not sleep?



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

# Stability Control

*“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”*

(Hebrews 13:8)

**E**lectronic stability control, or ESC, is an advanced form of automotive technology that assists the driver in keeping or regaining control over the vehicle by automatically braking individual wheels. Some estimates suggest that this safety technology reduces fatal accidents by as much as fifty-six percent.

As wonderfully helpful as such technology is, it is not foolproof. I discovered this truth as one of the ESC sensors on our van malfunctioned and began automatically and repeatedly braking while I was driving down the road. Thankfully, this happened as I was already on the way to the mechanic’s shop and driving only on the 30-mph roads in town, and not while I was driving 65 mph on the interstate with my family earlier that day.

There is a different and much better type of stability control that is 100% effective and fail safe. When all the challenges and changes of this life would threaten to wreck us, God’s Word reminds us that Jesus never changes. In this Gospel truth, we find life’s stability control.

Everything about Jesus is unchanging. The power of His might is unchanging. His knowledge and wisdom are unchanging. His stamina to care for His people is unchanging. And dear sinner, His love for lost souls is also unchanging.

How foreign such things are to us sinners for whom so many things change. Our bodies grow old and quit working properly. Marriage relationships become strained, or even break down in divorce. Cherished loved ones die and are with us no more.

Yes, sad to say, mankind’s sin has brought many bad changes into this world, but because of Jesus, not all change in life is bad. Without the change in us of the Holy Spirit using the Gospel in Word and sacrament to create saving faith, every one of us would be skidding out of control headlong into the depths of hell.

How unstable we all are in the course of our day-to-day living. Our lives are highlighted with constant and repeated failures. We tell ourselves that we’re going to be more disciplined and do better next time—at our job, with

our parenting, in our prayer life. We try to make the change, only to fail yet again. As we repeat this cycle of failure and guilt, we’re left wondering, “What’s wrong with me? Why can’t I do better?” The problem is that we’re sinners.

Unlike us, Jesus didn’t have to change, because He was, is, and always will be holy and sinless. Jesus experienced all of your temptations, but remained without sin. You receive all of His perfect, changeless righteousness through faith. Jesus paid all

the debt for your sins, and because He is unchanging, so too is your redemption.

Just as Jesus, the Word made flesh, is unchanging, so too is His inspired, inerrant Word in the Bible. In contrast, we sinners change our words all the time. Our stories change as we try to cover up sins. Our promises are broken. But in the Word of Jesus there is an eternally unchanging “Yes” and “Amen.” By the grace of God the forgiveness which your unchanging Savior won for you also never changes!

In the midst of all of life’s changes, what a blessed comfort to know that Jesus your Savior never changes, and neither does His love for you.

*Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day;  
Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see.  
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!*

(TLH 552:2)



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

## UNDERSTANDING THE CULTS

*In this twelve-part series we are taking a brief look at some of the major cults, past and present, that have found adherents in the United States. Your pastor can help you if you'd like a more in-depth study of a particular group.*

# The Way International

*“My name is Todd Davis.*

*This is my Social Security number: . . . ”*

**R**emember that? Davis is the founder of LifeLock, a company that protects against identity theft. He was so confident of his ability to protect sensitive information that he published his actual Social Security number on television, billboards, and the company website. Was he asking for trouble? Yes. Of course. As of 2010, he'd already had his identity hacked thirteen times.

What's worse than having your personal information stolen? How about having your Christian faith conned from you in broad daylight? That's what cults do. Those who are deceived by them are usually also blinded to what has happened.

### **The Way International checks all the boxes of a non-Christian cult.**

It was started by a charismatic leader, Victor Paul Wierwille of New Knoxville, Ohio. He claimed divine revelation, saying that God had spoken with him directly in 1942: he was told that he would interpret the Bible in a new, more accurate way, and would teach it according to the principles of the early church. In 1957, he resigned from his pastorate in the United Church of Christ and started a fulltime radio ministry.

Wierwille did appeal to Scripture for his teachings, but he claimed that he alone could properly understand Scripture. He taught, for example, that Jesus was crucified with four men and not two, as is commonly held. Since Luke called them “malefactors,” and Matthew called them “robbers,” he taught that they were two different groups. He blamed the established church for shoddy interpretation practices and for imposing its will on the text. It's a clever trick: convince your followers that you, alone, understand the Bible correctly.

The Way International is miles apart from Christianity. It rejects the Trinity, arguing that it is a man-made doctrine invented by church leaders. It openly denies that Jesus is God (God's son? Yes. True God? No.). It teaches that only the Epistles apply to the New Testament Church, because the Gospels are really part of the Old Testament. Of the church festivals—Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost—the last is of greatest importance because tongue-speaking is standard practice. Oddly, its members are not opposed to abortion because they claim that a fetus does not become a “living soul” until it draws its first physical breath.

Why would anyone be attracted to The Way? In their own words, “The Way International is a nondenominational Christian ministry dedicated to reaching people worldwide with the accuracy of God's Word so that they can experience a more abundant life. We believe that God makes it available for His people to live life above the negatives of the world, to walk with spiritual power, and to get positive results by way of His Son, Jesus Christ. However, because His will has been misunderstood or misrepresented over time, many suffer from a lack of knowledge regarding God's heart for their lives.”

It's a deadly scam. If yours is not the abundant life that God wants you to have, the problem is simply your failure to understand the Bible correctly. And, if you want to understand the Bible correctly . . .

Cults, such as The Way International, are the dark web of the religious world. They promise everything, but all that they deliver is unbelief and a rejection of Christ.

It is not clear how large this group is today. It once claimed a membership of 100,000, but experts feel that the number is inflated. Even one member is too many. Pray that the

Lord will work repentance and faith in the hearts of all who have been deceived by this dangerous organization.

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





## “THIS WE BELIEVE”

In ongoing observation of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, we are presenting a brief overview of those confessional documents that make up the *Book of Concord*.

# The Large Catechism

**I**magine for a moment—people are looking to you to establish order in all the churches of your entire state and those in three or four nearby states also! Where would you even start? How would you begin?

Luther found himself in that very situation as the Reformation started to take hold. It is almost impossible to understand the tremendous amount of work that confronted Martin Luther. He started by addressing the worst abuses first: abuses surrounding the sacraments and public worship. Then he translated the Bible, so people could more easily learn and grow in faith.

Soon he conducted a visitation program to determine more exactly what needed to be improved in the parishes. Luther was shocked to find wide-spread ignorance of even the most basic elements of Christian knowledge. The teachers themselves were largely ignorant; what hope was there for the illiterate masses?

The answer, Luther knew, was basic instruction in the fundamentals of the faith. Of course, he had been doing this all along. Even before posting the Ninety-Five Theses, he had preached a sermon series on the Ten Commandments, and shortly afterwards he published “A Brief Exposition of the Lord’s Prayer” which was widely praised. From far-away Venice, a literary critic had these glowing words of praise: “Blessed are the hands which wrote this; blessed the eyes that shall see it; blessed the hearts that believe the book and cry to God accordingly.”

Later, when he published his “German Mass and Order of Service,” Luther urged that Monday and Tuesday mornings be devoted to catechetical sermons. In 1528 he picked up the pace and preached no fewer than three series on the catechism. He was clearly “field testing” the language and

approach he would use in his planned catechism. It was becoming clear that in this project, too, he would have to take the lead. For although about thirty attempts at a catechism had been published, none were impressive enough to convince Luther that he should abandon plans to publish his own.

At last preparations were completed, and—having himself recently taken part in the visitation mentioned earlier—Luther decided he could delay no longer. Putting quill to paper, and building upon those earlier sermons, he wrote the *German Catechism*. There was as yet no need to call it the *Large Catechism* because the *Small Catechism* had not been printed in booklet form. But it was a large catechism, too large to easily be used for children in the home. It was meant rather for adult Christians, for the often poorly-trained village pastor, for those who were trying to teach others, and even to be used in place of sermons in the public worship.

Luther warned against thinking lightly of this catechism, as though it could be read once and tossed aside. “I entreat all Christians, especially pastors and preachers, not to become doctors too soon and to fancy they know all. . . . Let them continue to read and to teach, to learn and to meditate and to ponder.”

But in our day this *Large Catechism* is, I think, rarely used. This is a shame. True, it covers the same ground as the *Small Catechism*, which we have memorized; but it is also true that it covers this ground more thoroughly, while still remaining easy to read, and as profitable for study. And finally, it is a confession of our churches. What use is a confession that is not read?

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





## A SLICE OF LIFE IN THE CLC

*Snapshots of congregations from around the Church of the Lutheran Confession.*

# Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church Coloma, Michigan

**F**aith Evangelical Lutheran Church of Coloma, Michigan, came into existence when forces of religious liberalism challenged the truth of God's eternal Word. By God's grace, about eighty communicants and their pastor, Ralph Schaller, chose to remain faithful to God's Word and separated from their former congregation. Armed with the Sword of the Spirit and faith in the Lord's promise, the group gathered in the pastor's home on Mother's Day, May 10, 1959, for their first service. In the following weeks the group gathered around Word and sacraments at the Coloma Township Hall. The following year, the Lord provided encouragement through Faith's affiliation with like-minded believers in forming the new Church of the Lutheran Confession.

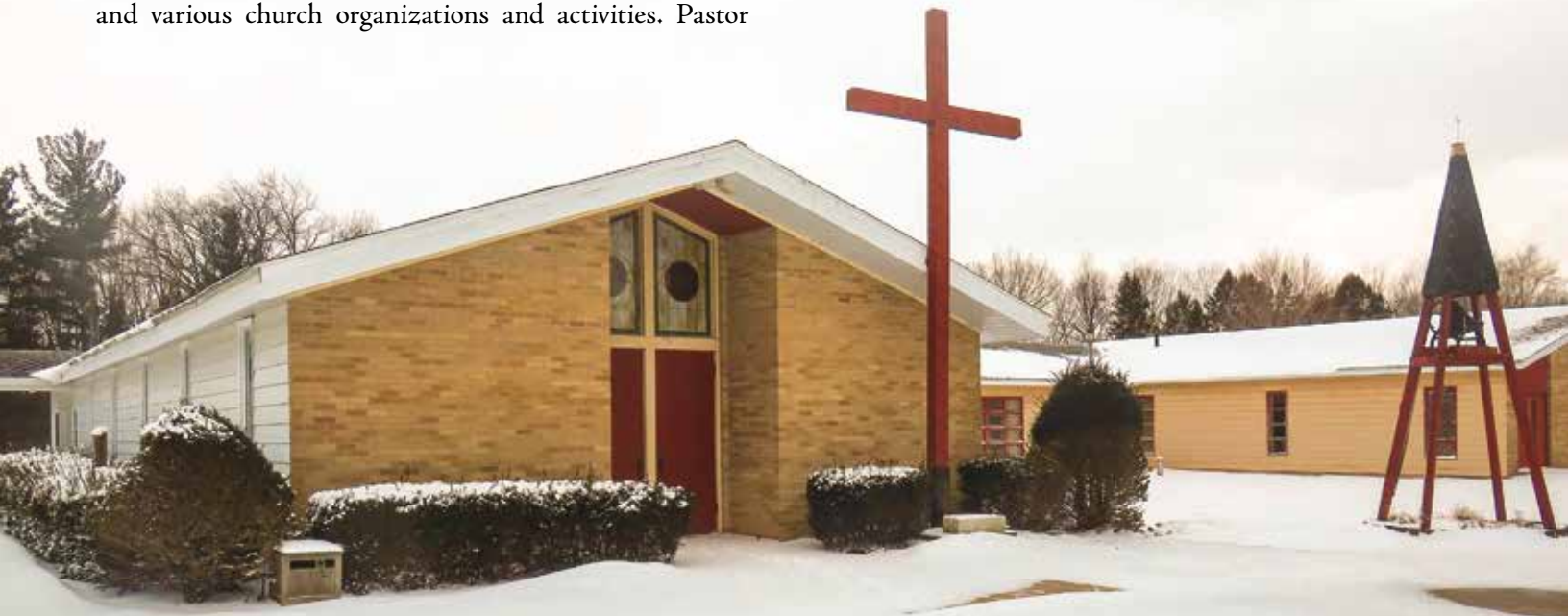
In 1960 the congregation obtained a parsonage with nearly ten acres of land. On March 19, 1961, Faith dedicated its house of worship—constructed and furnished in four and a half months almost entirely by the congregation. In 1966 a wing was added to accommodate a growing Sunday school and various church organizations and activities. Pastor

Schaller served the congregation faithfully for twenty years, until he was called to serve CLC groups in New Mexico. Faith was then served by Pastor James Sandeen, who was installed in 1976. He was followed by Pastors Matthew Gurath, Thomas Schuetze, and (from 2014 to present) Pastor Jay Hartmann.

**Faith remains steadfast to its purpose: to proclaim, preserve, and share the saving Gospel of Christ crucified for the sins of the world.**

In 1974 the Lord enabled Faith to start a Christian day school with one teacher, Shirley Wendland, and seven students in grades K-3. The school experienced the Lord's blessing as the enrollment eventually grew to sixty-six in the 1981-1982 school year. The school was given faithful servants over the years, including Tim Koch, Susan Lueck, Jan Stockman, Barbara Mueller, Ted Quade, Carol Sandeen, Alvin Sieg, Susan Pelzl, Renee

Sieg, Grace Meyer, Pam Schulz, Collette Sieg, David Bernthal, Wendy Greve, and James Arndt. Eventually, the school had to close its doors because of low enrollment and smaller membership, but we still hope the Lord will provide a way for the school to open again. The Lord's will be done.





Faith remains steadfast to its purpose: to proclaim, preserve, and share the saving Gospel of Christ crucified for the sins of the world. Faith has numerous outreach efforts in the community and surrounding area and has recently been blessed with growth in its membership. It's truly amazing to see "the power of God to salvation" (Romans 1:16) working in the hearts of those He has called.



way to part the waters. When Moses raised his hands, the large crowd could see the waters parting and enjoy a cool spray on a hot day. Common interests among members and the community have provided new ways for us to share the Gospel. The Lord has blessed the willingness of members to "go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." (Luke 14:23).

The people at Faith are committed to reaching out with the Gospel. The congregation has tried some unique ways of meeting and witnessing to others. One that has been of particular interest to the community is our Harvest Festival, held on the second Saturday in October each year. Along with many activities for all ages (hay rides, kids' games, grilling, a bonfire—all at no cost to our guests), Faith has added an annual hotrod and classic car show. Oddly enough, it has proven to be a very effective way of meeting people in the community, acquainting them with our church, inviting them to our service, and sharing with them the Gospel. Around Easter, Faith has had an Easter Tomb Hunt. The children of the community are invited and roam around the nearly 10 acres looking for plastic containers. Inside each container is a small tomb to point them to their Savior and the reason for Easter. We have been very surprised to see how many children have no understanding of what Easter truly is. Faith also continues its tradition of entering a religiously themed float in the local parades. Last year the float's theme was *The Parting of the Red Sea*. Members worked successfully to design a

Through the years the people of Faith have been strengthened and preserved in the Christian faith through the means of grace. While there are always trials in life, they have experienced firsthand the faithful care of the Lord. They are certain of the Lord's continued presence and strength. This year Faith will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary. Ponder what a miracle of God's grace that truly is! Over those sixty years, religious liberalism—which first led the members of Faith to separate from their former congregation—has crept into and taken over whole church bodies. Praise God for His grace in preserving His Word in its truth and purity here at Faith, and in our synod! What greater blessing could we ask for? "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." (Romans 10:17 NIV) At Faith we eagerly look forward to the future, rejoicing in our Lord's



continued presence and blessing, "surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20 NIV)

**Jay Hartmann** is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Coloma, Michigan.



# Robotics

For the past 13 years now, there has been a small but influential group working out of the basement of the Ingram mansion on the campus of Immanuel Lutheran High School. This group is the Eau Claire Robotics Club, otherwise known as Team TOBOR. We started out in the computer lab of Reim Hall in 2007. In 2009 we were given the basement room in Ingram for our more permanent home. We have since filled this space with both materials and tools to help the team create a quality robot and give the students a quality experience.



## How does it work?

Team TOBOR is a *FIRST*® robotics team. *FIRST* is an acronym; it stands for “For the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.” It is a non-profit organization that creates and organizes our competition every year. There are four categories in which to compete: *FIRST* Lego League Jr, *FIRST* Lego League, *FIRST* Tech Challenge, and *FIRST* Robotics Competition. Each of these categories has its own age ranges. We participate in the *FIRST* Robotics Competition. For additional information on any of these programs visit [www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org).

Our competition does not really get started until January, so what do we do for the first part of each school year? Fundraising and training. We like to get students engaged in the team's effort as soon as possible. First, we do as much fundraising as possible, as Team TOBOR does not receive any funds from ILC. We send letters and visit businesses to gather funds for the team to operate. In a typical year we need at least \$8000 to break even. \$5000 of that pays

for our registration for the competition. You may think, “that sounds like a lot,” and you'd be right, but with that registration we receive over \$8000 worth of materials—computer programs, sensors, motors, and so forth. The other thing that we try to do in the fall is to get the students, especially the freshmen, familiar with our build space and tools. We also use this time to train students interested in the programming for the robot.

You will typically find us Wednesday evenings either in the build room or having a meeting in one of the classrooms.



In the past five years, Team TOBOR has expanded its tool capabilities by adding a Bridgeport milling machine and 3-D printers. One of my goals as lead mentor is to continue to expand our capabilities and tools. This will not only allow us to be more competitive, but also to expand the experience provided to the students.

In the next five years I would like to add a metal lathe and CNC milling capabilities to our tools.

Early January is when the real competition starts. The second weekend in January, *FIRST* sponsors a kickoff event at many major universities and schools around the country. The event is webcast as well. This is where we learn for the first time what our game will be for that year. We are also able to pick up our Kit of Parts at this event. From the moment the game is released we have roughly six weeks to design, build and program the robot. This is when things move into high gear. We go from meeting once a week to meeting six days a week. On a typical day during the build season, students and mentors will spend three to four hours designing and building the robot.

This year's game was called Destination Deep Space. Our playing field was about the size of a volleyball court. A cargo ship and two rockets were on the field. The game had three main aspects: Hatch Covers, Cargo, and the Had Zone. The Hatch Cover was a round piece of plastic with about a six-inch hole in the middle which can be placed on the cargo ship and rockets with velcro to hold the Cargo in. The Cargo was a thirteen-inch rubber ball. The Hab Zone was an area of the field that had three platform levels which were designed for the robots to climb on top of. Everything was given a point value. For a more detailed game description, search "FRC 2019" on YouTube.



Our competition weekend starts on a Thursday, which is a setup and practice day for the teams. This is when all the robots get inspected to be sure that they are safe and in compliance with the rules. This is also when teams can make any changes to their robot they were not able to complete during the build season. One of the most striking aspects of this competition is the gracious professionalism that is displayed. I like to explain it like this, "I want to beat you, but I want to make sure your robot is running at its best when I beat you." What does this mean in practical terms? When a team asks for a part or a tool, usually they will receive three to five of whatever they requested within five minutes!

The competition starts out on Friday with seeding matches where each team is randomly paired with two other teams to form what is called an Alliance. Each match is two minutes and thirty seconds long. For the first fifteen seconds of each match, the robot must either drive on its own or be controlled using only video input from cameras onboard the robot. The remainder of the match is controlled with full view of the robot. At the end of the match the Alliance with the most points wins and earns ranking points. At the end of the seeding matches the top 8 teams with the most ranking points can choose who they want to work with for the Finals. The Finals is a best two out of three single elimination tournament.

Besides the competition on the field, there is a lot that goes on in the pit area. Teams of judges go around to all the pits to ask questions of the students. These questions range

from fundraising and outreach efforts to the design and build process. The judges are looking for teams that fit within about a dozen award categories.

Our team got a slow start as we had to reassemble part of the robot to get ready for inspection. Once that was done the inspection went smoothly. We encountered trouble in our first seeding match on Friday but performed well for the rest of our matches. We ended the seeding matches in twentieth place out of sixty teams. Unfortunately, that is where our competition ended. I am very happy with how the team performed in solving problems and making efficient repairs. I am already looking forward to next year's competition.

### **This year we competed at the Northstar Regional at the Mariucci Arena in Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

What does this do for the students? One of the benefits for the students is the scholarships which are available exclusively to FIRST robotics team members. This year there are over \$80 billion in scholarships available; most are STEM related, but many don't require a STEM-related field. FIRST has been described as the varsity sport of the mind. Besides the usual sportsmanship, fair play, and teamwork that your major sports teach, robotics also teaches students critical thinking, creative solutions, completing a project, and the list goes on. These are skills that the students can carry into any field they choose.

### **Team TOBOR has become a major part of many students' lives at ILC.**

For some, this is their primary extracurricular activity. None if this would be possible if it were not for the dedicated team of mentors. Some of these mentors spend as much time as the students helping throughout the season. The only benefit the mentors receive is access to our tools and the satisfaction of seeing the students progress through the years.



**Chris Stratton** is in charge of the robotics program at ILHS. He is a member of Messiah Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS MAY 2019

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
May 1	TLH 144 LSB 421	Exodus 17:1-7	We, too, are just as tempted to test the Lord saying, “Is He among us or not?”
May 2	TLH 363	Acts 3:1-19	Peter used the miracle to point the people to Jesus, which is what the miracles were for.
May 3	TLH 203	Acts 4:1-12	How do we know Jesus truly rose from the dead? Well, we find Him still doing miracles after Good Friday (v. 10)!
May 4	TLH 294 LSB 523	Proverbs 8:22-36	Solomon is describing wisdom in a picturesque way, but don’t these descriptions fit Jesus too—the Wisdom from on high?
May 6	TLH 366 LSB 536	Proverbs 9:1-10	A truly wise person puts the Lord first in his heart.
May 7	WS 736 LSB 633	Acts 7:1-22	Stephen is not just telling any story here, but the story of God’s love and mercy.
May 8	WS 723 LSB 543	Acts 7:23-38	God sent Moses to deliver His people from captivity in Egypt. Later He sent Christ to deliver His people from their captivity to eternal death.
May 9	WS 760 LSB 544	Acts 7:39-8:3	Sadly, the Jews accepted Moses as God’s prophet, but rejected His greater Prophet, Jesus.
May 10	WS 788	Exodus 23:14-19a	With joy we bring the best of what we have to the Lord, Who gave His best to us.
May 11	TLH 308 LSB 631	Exodus 24:1-8	The blood of this covenant (v. 8) reminds us also of the greater covenant which was sealed by the blood of Christ (cf. Mk 14:24).
May 13	TLH 503 LSB 829	Acts 9:1-19	If the Holy Spirit can convert a man like Saul to the Christian faith, He can convert anyone!
May 14	TLH 212 LSB 493	Acts 9:32-43	Death brings sadness, but Jesus gives us life and joy.
May 15	WS 772 LSB 835	Acts 10:9-23, 34-35	Peter’s vision encouraged him to preach the Gospel to every creature.
May 16	TLH 405 LSB 844	Proverbs 11:16-31	We are not to become proud of our kindness toward others, but our kindness is an expression of our love for God.
May 17	TLH 500 LSB 824	Acts 11:4-18	Peter explained his vision and his actions to the brethren, and they were glad (as we too are glad) that the Gentiles also had been redeemed.
May 18	TLH 420	Acts 12:1-11	Seeing how popular the execution of James had made him, Herod tried for Peter too, but God had more for Peter to do, and Herod could not stop it.
May 20	TLH 213 LSB 680	Acts 12:12-25	Now you know that the Lord’s enemies do not end up winners, even if it seems that way to you sometimes.
May 21	TLH 464 LSB 706	Proverbs 12:13-19	Our God loves truth, so let’s see to it that all our talk and testimony is full of truth.
May 22	TLH 194 LSB 489	Acts 13:26-39	We are justified through Jesus in connection with His resurrection from the dead.
May 23	TLH 373 LSB 566	Acts 14:1-7	The Word of God is powerful and active, stirring up opposition, but also turning great numbers to faith in Christ.
May 24	TLH 21	Acts 14:8-18	Paul and Barnabas did not seek the praise of men, and neither do we. Our aim is to share God’s message and give Him the glory.
May 25	TLH 404 LSB 848	Proverbs 13:10-14	None of us know everything. We need to pay attention also to the wise words of the godly people whom the Lord has put in our lives.
May 27	TLH 6 LSB 942	James 1:12-18	Make no mistake, our sin is our own fault. All that God is responsible for is every good and perfect gift, including our faith itself!
May 28	TLH 455 LSB 772	James 1:19-27	We often become angry because we fail to listen to what God (or someone else) is saying—and meaning. Listening is hard work, but it’s vital and worth the effort.
May 29	TLH 377 LSB 555	James 2:14-26	Righteous action does not save a person in and of itself, but it gives evidence that there is genuine faith in the heart, faith which does save a person.
May 30	WS 765 LSB 840	Exodus 32:1-6, 25-35	“But Lord, I’ve never bowed down to a gold calf!” Wait. Actually you have. What a blessing that Christ intercedes for us as Moses interceded for Israel!
May 31	TLH 242	Exodus 33:12-23	The Lord’s Presence would go with the people, for He had forgiven those who sinned against Him. His faithfulness and mercy is great.



## IN MEMORIAM

# Ronald L. Roehl

## — 1933-2019 —

### Revelation 20:6

*Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such, the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ.*

**R**onald Leo Roehl was born on October 20, 1933, God's gift to Ervin Roehl and his wife Leona, née Hornburg, Roehl. The Spirit of God gave Ron a part in the first resurrection, the rebirth of his soul from spiritual death through the gracious washing of Baptism. That faith was nourished by Christian education in his home life, along with his two older brothers, Bob and Larry. That education was also supplemented by his faithful attendance at church and Christian day school. He was confirmed in the Christian faith in 1947. Ron went on to Winnebago Academy for his high school years and then attended Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota, graduating in 1954 with a degree in teaching. Throughout his life Ron enjoyed all kinds of sports, including basketball, football, baseball and track. He was a junior college All-American in basketball and in 2008 was inducted into the Bethany Lutheran College Hall of Fame.

### Revelation 19:9

*Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

On July 6, 1957, the Lord Jesus united Ron in a Christ-centered marriage with Eunice, née Naumann. The two were lifelong companions traveling the path through life and toward heaven. They were blessed with one daughter and three sons.

Ron began his teaching career in the kingdom of God by starting a grade school in Granada Hills, California. He then was a teacher and coach at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton, Wisconsin.

### Revelation 14:13

*Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

Ron was among the founding members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. He served many roles in the new church body. He was a delegate to most of the synod's conventions. He acted as the convention moderator for twenty-two years. He was a member of various boards and

committees throughout his lifetime. He likewise served his present church, Messiah Lutheran, as a voter, as president, as a member of different boards, and as Sunday school superintendent.

In 1960, Ron accepted the call to labor in the newly formed Immanuel Lutheran High School in Mankato, Minnesota. In 1963, he was part of the school's move to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. An effective and loving teacher, Ron labored for Immanuel (and Jesus, THE Immanuel) in a number of ways outside of the classroom. He spent many seasons as coach for basketball, baseball, and track; and served as Dean of Students for twenty years.

### Revelation 22:14

*Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city.*

On January 19 of this year, Ron's dear wife Eunice entered the gates of heaven. Few suspected that God's plan called for Ron to enter the same heavenly gates only forty-eight days later. In the last minutes of March 8, after a brief illness, Ron's earthly journey of eighty-five years, four months and sixteen days ended with the Savior's special gift of eternal life. In addition to his wife of sixty-one years and his daughter Laurie, Ron was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Bob and his wife Jeanette, and sister-in-law Charlotte Roehl. The members of Ron's family who are still in their time of God's grace are: his son Ross and his wife Lynette of Eau Claire and their two daughters; his son Mike and his wife Sandy of Bismarck, North Dakota and their two daughters and one son; his daughter's family, Dean Marzofka of Menomonie, Wisconsin, and their two daughters and one son; his son Dan and his wife Jennifer of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and their three daughters; his brother Larry of Campbellsport, Wisconsin; seven great-grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, and a host of former students and friends, especially in his church family, near and far.



# Lutheran Spokesman

501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701

## SEEN IN PASSING

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

### Worship of Work Replacing Worship of God?

In a recent article in *Atlantic Monthly*, writer Derek Thompson acknowledged the declining influence of religion in America, and had some startling suggestions about what is replacing it. One surprising trend is the way this devotional void is increasingly being filled by work—especially by upper-class, affluent men. The statistics are interesting: the richest 10% of married men have the longest average workweek. Between 1980 and 2005, the average leisure time of college-educated men shrank more than that of any other group. These modern-day workaholics toil much longer hours than do comparable men in other developed countries. Why? It could be just striving for a higher income and the luxury and status that brings. But Thompson has a different theory: “The best-educated and highest-earning Americans, who can have whatever they want, have chosen [to center their lives upon] the office for the same reason that devout Christians attend church on Sundays: It’s where they feel most themselves. . . . But our desks were never meant to be our altars. The modern labor force evolved to serve the needs of consumers and capitalists, not to satisfy tens of millions of people seeking transcendence at the office.” Thompson, Derek. “Workism Is Making Americans Miserable.” *Ideas*. theatlantic.com, 24 Feb. 2019. Web. 18 Mar. 2019.

### Fire Chief Wins Settlement From City that Fired Him for His Faith.

A year ago we reported on Kelvin Cochran, the Atlanta fire chief who was fired by the city for giving Bible class materials he had written to other Christian firefighters in the department. The materials reflected the historic Christian teaching that homosexuality is a perversion of God’s natural order. Cochran subsequently filed a wrongful termination lawsuit against the city, and late last fall the Atlanta city council—apparently not sanguine about their chances in a court of law—decided to settle with Cochran for \$1.2 million. N.a. “Atlanta agrees to \$1.2M settlement with former fire chief.” *Local*. Fox5Atlanta.com. 16 Oct. 2018. Web. 18 Mar. 2018.

### Long Lost Cuneiform Tablet Describes Worldwide Flood

In a new display at the British Museum in London, visitors can see a 4000-year-old cuneiform tablet that outlines a worldwide flood in terms that are strikingly similar to the description in Genesis 6-9. The tablet was acquired for the museum by Professor Irving Finkel. The scholar received it from Douglas Simmonds, whose father gave it to him in the late 1940s. The document details the construction of a massive ship made from

materials such as “quantities of palm-fibre rope, wooden ribs and bathfuls of hot bitumen to waterproof the finished vessel. . . .” The ark described in the document would have been about one-and-a-half football fields in length, approximately the length of the vessel described in the Genesis flood account. N.a. “Noah’s Ark ‘Blueprints’ Found: 4,000-Year-Old Details of Instructions.” *Epoch Newsroom*. TheEpochTimes.com. 24 Feb. 2019. Web. 18 Mar. 2018.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2019 West Central Delegate Conference

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota — May 21– 23, 2019.

#### Agenda:

- Identifying and Counteracting the Growing Obsession with Phones—Loveland delegate.
- Communicating to Our Congregations That They Are Part of a Larger Christian (Synodical) Fellowship—Bismarck delegate.
- In the World but Not of the World – Dealing with the Coarseness of Popular Culture—Mapleton delegate.
- Encouraging Laymen to Take a More Active Role in the Spiritual Leadership of Their Congregations—Mapleton delegate.
- False Teacher or Weak Brother? The False Question Underlying the WELS Doctrine of the Persistent Errorist—Pastor Timothy Daub.
- Shining the Gospel’s Light on the Deep Darkness in the Hearts of Those Feeling a Loved One’s Sudden Death—Pastor Aaron Ude.
- “Church Growth Movement”: What is it? How is it contrary to Scripture? How does it become manifest in a visible fellowship?—Pastor Chad Seybt.
- How Do We Show Humility and Love While Presenting the Law to Unbelievers? Does Our Attitude Hinder Others from Hearing the Word?—Pastor Delwyn Maas.
- Devotional Study from Minor Prophets—Pastor James Naumann.
- A Study of the Worth and God-Pleasing Ways to Actively and Regularly Engage the Youth in Worship Services—Pastor Paul Nolting.
- Communion Service Speaker—Pastor John Klatt.
- Chaplain—Pastor Mark Weis.
- Pastor Timothy Daub.