

March 2020 VOL 62 NO. 9

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



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WERE YOU THERE?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
 Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?
 Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?
 Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?

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

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Will You Accept the Gift of Lent?

I've never found myself in a situation where I felt I needed to refuse a gift. Some obviously have. No honorable woman would ever, for example, accept a diamond ring while refusing a marriage proposal (as much as she might like to). Others may have found it necessary to refuse gifts that would obligate them to unacceptable terms or conditions.

Beginning February 26th, our God will again be offering to each of us the gift of Lent. The question that confronts all Christians each Lenten season is whether we will accept or refuse this divine present. How, why, would any Child of God refuse?

Time for introspection and contemplation

The gift that our God offers in connection with the season of Lent is a unique and invaluable time for introspection and contemplation, but it does not come without certain obligations. Human beings are, by nature, hedonistic, superficial, ungrateful, and lazy. We also have a natural sense of entitlement, imagining that we *deserve* whatever good things we want or receive. Christians know better, but our Adversary has learned from experience that if he can fill our existence with distractions and obligations, if he can create a world of perpetual preoccupation, he can tap into both our natural laziness and our sense of entitlement, and thereby convince us that the obligations of Lent outweigh the benefits.

Counting the cost

The point here is not that the obligations of Lent aren't real. They are. Begin therefore by counting the cost. If your plate is truly full, you can't add more without forcing something else off. "Carving out time" implies that something has to be cut off and discarded. Recognize also that the obligations of Lent involve more than just an hour or two for a half dozen Wednesday services (which can include cleaning off and bundling up little ones, a cold car

ride, and the disruption of the family routine). Receiving the whole gift also includes the dedication of private time and the investment of thought and prayer, including humble and honest introspection both in and out of the public worship service setting. In the end, all can be reduced to a question of relative value. Which is of greater value to me, what I must put in or what I will get out?

When we put it in those terms, the question answers itself. What eternal benefit is not worth temporal effort? Yet we do ourselves a disservice if we leave the "eternal benefit" vague and undefined. We can do better.

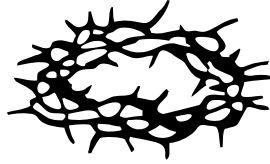
As with any living space that is used but never thoroughly cleaned, the human heart has innumerable dark corners that tend to get ignored. Bad things tend to accumulate there—things that fester and rot over time. God's gift of Lent includes opportunity to shine the light of His Word into those dark recesses, opportunity to identify and rid our lives of that which can cause incalculable spiritual harm. Lent also provides the time and opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with the magnitude and wickedness of our sin, and therefore also with the very real and appalling burden that our Savior carried to the cross. It is a time to come to terms with the fact that my Savior did not just suffer at the hands of others; it was *my* sin that tormented Him, *my* rebellion that caused Him to be forsaken by His Heavenly Father, *my* abandonment that caused Him to suffer alone on that terrible cross. It is the time to recognize that I was not an innocent spectator but a guilty participant in the events of Holy Week. My eternal fate, too, hung in the balance.

The full realization and personal application of all of these truths takes time. Lent is that time. Gratefully accept the gift, and the empty tomb will thrill and comfort you as God Himself intended.



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

“Were You There?”



Lent and Holy Week have some very powerful and moving hymns that cause us to pause and contemplate our Savior's passion. A few hymns that come to mind are, “Go to Dark Gethsemane,” “Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted,” “O Sacred Head Now Wounded,” and one that captured my imagination as a child, “There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood.”

A hymn for Good Friday that appears in some newer Lutheran hymnals is “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?” (*Christian Worship* #119 / *Lutheran Service Book* #456) A quick search online reveals that this hymn was sung by slaves on plantations in the pre-Civil War era.

The hymn asks us if we “were there” when Jesus was crucified, when He was nailed to the tree, when they laid Him in the tomb, and when God raised Him from the tomb. Each verse echoes with the refrain, “Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.”

Well, were you there?

If you were there on Good Friday, it makes the events of that day much more powerful and personal. Think of the Apostle John, who was on site when the soldier speared Jesus' corpse and saw the blood and water flow from His side. John writes, “*he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.*” (John 19:35)

Amazingly enough, the Bible tells us that we *were* there! Isaiah writes that “*the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*” (Isaiah 53:6b) As Jesus was being crucified, our sins were there as He was punished in our place.

We were there when Jesus was nailed to the cross. Paul

**Amazingly enough,
the Bible tells us
that we were there!**

writes to the Colossians that God “*wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, HAVING NAILED IT TO THE CROSS.*” (2:14)

Everything that was against us, all the commandments of God that we had broken, the tally marks of our sins, were

nailed to the cross with Jesus and died with Him there. And our slate was wiped clean by the blood of Jesus.

We were there when Jesus was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's new tomb on Good Friday. Speaking of how our baptism connects us with Christ, Paul tells us in Romans 6 that “*we were buried with Him through baptism into death.*” (Romans 6:4) His death and burial became the death and burial of our sin.

Through your baptism you were also there on Easter when Jesus rose, as Paul continues, “*that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Romans 6:4) His death was the death of your sins. His resurrection meant new life for you—a new life lived not for yourself, but for Him who gave Himself for you! Through your baptism, you were there!

We were there on Good Friday, and it causes us to “tremble, tremble, tremble” with awe and reverence. We tremble as we see the extreme price that had to be paid for our debt of sin. Like the Good Friday earthquake itself, we tremble as we see the Lord of Life dead and buried. We tremble with joy and excitement on Easter as we see our Lord rising to life to secure our forgiveness and declaring us

right with God. Yes, praise God, *you were there!*

Nathan Pfeiffer is pastor of Berea Lutheran Church in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.



TLH 146, LSB 434

“Lamb of God, Pure and Holy”

In His instruction on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns against the use of “vain repetitions,” or “babbling.” That’s the way of those who don’t know the true God, He says. They think that their god will hear and answer them if only they keep on talking long enough (Matthew 6:7).

Bearing in mind Jesus’ warning, we will want to be on our guard against careless repetition of prayers that we know from memory and use often, such as the Lord’s Prayer and mealtime prayers. But this is not to say that we should stop using familiar prayers, for our God does not tire of hearing the prayers of His children when they are spoken from the heart.

Nor should we avoid the use of repetition in our worship. Such repetition is prescribed for us in Psalm 136 with its refrain in every verse of “*For His mercy endures forever.*” That the Holy Spirit inspired a psalm such as this for use in worship teaches us that there are words and phrases that we ought to repeat in our worship.

We often use threefold repetitions in our worship: triple hallelujahs and amens. They remind us that our God has made Himself known to us in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We find this pattern in the Bible, for example, in Isaiah’s vision of God in which angels were crying to one another, “*Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts.*” (Isaiah 6:3)

The hymn “Lamb of God, Pure and Holy” is an example of meaningful repetition in worship. In it we sing to Christ, three times addressing Him in praise and prayer as the Savior Who redeemed us from our sins by offering Himself for us on the cross.

We address Him as the Lamb of God, the title that John the Baptist used when he pointed out Jesus and identified Him as the promised Christ (John 1:29, 36). It is a name for Christ derived from a prophecy of the passion in Isaiah 53:7: “*He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.*” It is a name that teaches Christ as the obedient Son of God Who willingly endured the cross, “ever patient and lowly.” In only a few words, this hymn calls to our minds significant details from the passion history: Jesus willingly submitting to arrest in Gethsemane when He could have called for legions of angels to free Him, Jesus patiently submitting to false and blasphemous accusations and extreme physical abuse, Jesus enduring the very curse of God as the bearer of our sins in the darkness of Good Friday. All of this Jesus endured as the pure and holy One, the sinless Son of God offering His perfect and precious life as the sacrifice acceptable to God the Father as full payment for our sins.

Each stanza of this hymn expresses a great deal about Christ in only a few words, all of it Gospel, precious with comfort for the penitent sinner. Our sins are truly great, a crushing burden threatening to drive us to despair. But seeing Christ as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world lifts from our hearts that burden of guilt and fear.

We also address Christ in prayer in each stanza of the hymn, knowing that He Who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death is now exalted to God’s right hand with all authority in heaven and on earth. “Have mercy on us, O Jesus,” we cry, asking Him to help us through life in this still sin-corrupted world. “Thy peace be with us,” we pray, calling upon Him to comfort us with the peace of the forgiveness of sins.

Some things are worth repeating. It is good that we should sing these words that express the most profound theological truth, the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that God has made known to us to bless us and to save us.

John Klatt is a retired pastor. He and his wife live in Watertown, South Dakota.



The Lutheran Hymnal Hymn #146

Text: John 1:29

Author: Nikolaus Decius, 1531

Translated by: composite

Titled: “O Lamm Gottes”

Tune: “O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig”

First published in *Christliche Kirchen Ordnung*, Erfurt, 1542.

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 1:29

The Dwelling Place

“LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” (PSALM 90:1)

Moses likely wrote Psalm 90 near the end of his life. As an old man, Moses did what old men do: he reflected. He reflected on his own life. He reflected on the sad history of the Israelites. Ultimately, he reflected on the brevity and difficulty of human existence. He compared life to a brief nap, to grass which grows up in the morning and is cut down that same evening. He characterized life as days of affliction and years of evil. In other words, life is short; life is hard.

But this is also why Moses directed his readers to the one and only solution for the human condition; namely, the one and only true God. *“Lord,”* he said. *“You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”*

What is a dwelling place? A dwelling place is where we live, our home. Moses used this beautiful picture to remind us that when we mortal, finite beings dwell in the Eternal God by faith, we have true life of eternal proportions. True life. True shelter. True safety. True rest. True salvation. Opposed to the fleeting time and stark mortality of human existence, God is our eternal dwelling place; the place where we fully and eternally live.

When we dwell in God, we are dwelling in the right place. Our hopes for deliverance and salvation are in the right place. As Paul wrote in Romans 9:33, *“And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”* Can the same be said of anyone or anything else?

Sadly, many people turn to other “dwelling places” for safety, meaning, self-worth, and happiness. “Money will make me happy.” “Fame will make me happy.” “Addictions will make me happy.” “Revenge will make me happy.” “Infidelity will make me happy.” No, they won’t. They may

tease, tempt, numb, and eventually destroy; but they will never bring true, lasting happiness.

In Psalm 90:2 Moses describes God as the Creator of all things. *“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever*

You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”

Consequently, because God created us for Himself, we can find true meaning, peace, and happiness only when we dwell in

Him by faith. This is why Moses declared so emphatically, *“Lord, You have been our dwelling place.”* And again, *“You are God.”* There is no other God. There is no other solution for the human condition. There is no other eternal dwelling place.

It’s vital, then, that we continue to dwell in God. If you’ve ever read the fine print of a residential lease agreement, you may have noticed the term “dwelling place.” You may have also noticed that the legal definition of a dwelling place is generally a place where one lives and remains, not a place one merely visits, hangs clothes, and stores boxes.

The same is true of our eternal dwelling place, the Lord. We are not in Him to visit but to remain. Think of how careful we are when searching for an earthly dwelling place, an apartment or home. Just the right space. Just the right design. Just the right color, landscaping, and neighborhood. If we are this careful when searching for a temporary dwelling place, how great should our desire be to remain in our eternal dwelling place, the Eternal God?

And if dwelling in God through Christ is the only source of true life, true hope, true joy, true happiness, and true salvation, why would we want to dwell anyplace else?



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

Tempted by God?

“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.”

(James 1:12-16 ESV)

It was the English poet Alexander Pope who famously wrote in 1711, “To err is human; to forgive, divine.” But I think there would be a better, more accurate, way to say it when it comes to us: “To err is human; to blame someone else is even more human.” Casting blame is a common response to sin. Think of the excuses we come up with: “You didn’t tell me.” “He made me angry.” “I’m too busy.” “It’s his fault.”

We might even blame God. That is precisely what Adam did when he fell into sin. When confronted with his sin by God, Adam replied, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” (Genesis 3:12, ESV) Notice that Adam not only blames Eve, but he also implicitly blames God for giving him Eve in the first place. So, is Adam right? Is it God’s fault that Adam fell into sin? Was Eve used by God to tempt Adam to sin? Certainly not! James makes it clear in our text that God tempts no one, because He cannot be tempted with evil. No, Adam was responsible for his own sin, and we for ours. As James says, “Each person is tempted . . . by his own desire.”

The Lord may allow trials and testing to come into our lives, as the first few verses of James teach us, but He never tempts us to sin. He does, however, do something about the fact that we often fall into temptation.

Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus “in every respect has

been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (ESV) Think of Jesus as He was tempted in the wilderness. For forty days, Satan tempted Him in every way, and yet He never sinned.



Why did Jesus allow Himself to be tempted in this way? We certainly should follow Jesus’ example of using Scripture to combat temptation, but that’s not what Jesus’ temptation was all about. Jesus defeated temptation for us. We sin. We fall for all sorts of temptations. But because of Jesus’ perfect, sinless obedience to God even in the face of temptation, we get credit for what He did. And

then He took the blame for us. He suffered God’s wrath for all of our sins on the cross so that we might be forgiven and have eternal life.

Therefore, as James says, “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” (verse 12) Jesus wore the crown of thorns so that we might wear the crown of life. Rather than tempting us to sin, God is our source of strength when confronted by Satan’s lures, and He is the source of forgiveness when we fall. He is our only source of help and hope, and He is always present for us.



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

THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC

One aspect of the discussion surrounding the “Joint Statement,” which will again be before us at our 2020 convention, is how much importance to give to the events that took place around the period 1955-1961 that led to the formation of the CLC. In this seven-part series, Professor Emeritus David Lau provides a digest of these events, excerpted from his book, “Out of Necessity.” We urge all CLC members—and particularly convention delegates—to re-familiarize themselves with this important period in our fellowship’s history.

The Unscriptural “Solution”

In the months that followed the 1957 convention of the Wisconsin Synod, other pastors and congregations withdrew from the church body. The Northwestern Lutheran of March 30, 1958, reported that Robert Dommer, Ivan Zarling, Leonard Bernthal, and Waldemar Karnitz, together with their congregations in the Spokane area, had withdrawn from the Wisconsin Synod and thus were in agreement with Trinity Lutheran Church and its pastor, M. J. Witt. They were later joined by Gilbert Sydow of Ellensburg, Washington, in February of 1959 to form a group of six. . . . In Red Wing, Minnesota, Pastor George Barthels and Teachers Walmar Voigt and Alvin Sieg withdrew from the Wisconsin Synod together with a portion of the membership of St. John’s congregation. . . . Professor Winfred Schaller, Sr. of Winnebago Lutheran Academy in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, terminated his membership in the Wisconsin Synod “because of our continued fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod” (reported in *The Northwestern Lutheran* of September 28, 1958). A few months later Winfred Schaller, Sr. died (May 25, 1959). . . . In the months leading up to the 1959 Wisconsin Synod convention in Saginaw, Michigan, more withdrawals were reported in *The Northwestern Lutheran*.

It is possible, even likely, that if the Wisconsin Synod in its 1959 convention had separated from the Missouri Synod, the pastors and congregations that had withdrawn might have seen fit to return. But Professor Carl Lawrenz, who had replaced Edmund Reim as president of the



THE ORIGIN OF THE CLC

Thiensville seminary, introduced a new understanding of Wisconsin Synod actions in the years from 1955 to 1959 and also a new criterion for suspending fellowship with erring church bodies in a letter he addressed to the Protest Committee of the

Wisconsin Synod on June 16, 1958.

The 1955 convention of the Wisconsin Synod had unanimously passed a statement that declared the Missouri Synod to be guilty of causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Scripture. But then the convention had postponed the action called for by Romans 16:17-18, the action of avoiding those guilty of causing divisions and offenses. Carl Lawrenz now gave the novel interpretation that by not taking the action of avoiding, the convention had also negated the conclusion that the Missouri Synod was guilty of causing divisions and offenses.

His interpretation, however, did not agree with the official report of the convention. . . . In fact, the Protest Committee had to admit “that it, as well as many others, ‘did not understand it that way at the time’ (page 3)” (quoted in Edmund Reim: “An Open Letter to the Protest Committee,” Section I).

Yet there was something even more dangerous in Lawrenz’s letter. Up to that time the Wisconsin Synod had operated with the conviction that the criterion for separation from another church body was the continuation of divisions and offenses contrary to Scriptural doctrine, as commanded in Romans 16: 17-18. Carl Lawrenz, however, introduced a new procedure that justified the postponement of action on the part of the Wisconsin Synod in 1955, 1956, and 1957.

*The new criterion for separation proposed by Lawrenz:
“Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the
conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother
or church body demands recognition for their error.”*

Lawrenz wrote: “Is there not an area of human judgment involved before a Christian comes to the conviction concerning a brother who has fallen into error that he can no longer treat him as a weak brother, to whom he owes further patient admonition, but that he must now be treated as a persistent errorist, from whom the Lord bids him to withdraw all further fellowship? . . . The fact that an individual or a church body has fallen into an error of doctrine or practice, or even the fact that the individual or the church body still defends that error of doctrine or practice, is not yet in itself a reason for terminating church fellowship. . . . Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother or church body demands recognition for their error” (Carl Lawrenz: “A Report to the Protest Committee,” pp. 3-4).

The explanation of Lawrenz was accepted by the Protest Committee of the Wisconsin Synod, by its Church Union Committee, and eventually by the Wisconsin Synod itself at its 1959 convention. It also convinced many of the protesters. . . . But a number of the protesters recognized the new criterion for separation proposed by Lawrenz as false teaching and vigorously opposed it.

At the thirty-fifth convention of the Wisconsin Synod in 1959, held again in Saginaw, Michigan, the Church Union Committee reported that unionistic offenses on the part of the Missouri Synod were continuing. . . . Nevertheless, the floor committee did not call for separation from the Missouri Synod at this time. . . . Only one committee member, Oscar Siegler, expressed dissent: “Our Synod would seem to have no choice but to mark The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as persisting in divisions and offenses, and any further discussions with the view of admonishing The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod ought not be continued on a fellowship basis” (Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Convention, p. 177).

Again there were many memorials calling for separation from the Missouri Synod. One such memorial came from the Nebraska District Pastoral Conference. Another memorial calling for separation and indicating disagreement with Lawrenz’s letter was signed by thirty men. . . . Otto J. Eckert of Saginaw joined two other men in calling for separation from the Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16:17-18 and stating their opposition to all the arguments that had been used for postponing action.

Nine pastors in the Dakota-Montana District had drawn up a memorial for presentation to the convention. . . . Two pastors and congregations in the Austin, Minnesota, area presented memorials calling for separation.

One other memorial calling for separation is of note. Given with the name “A Call for Decision,” it was signed by thirty men. . . . This memorial addressed the new interpretation of previous synodical action proposed by Carl Lawrenz and stated: “In its historical presentation, the Report distorts plain, documented facts relative to the action of the Saginaw Convention of 1955.” The memorial goes on to say: “We consider this distortion of historical facts to be a lesser offense, however, than the abuse of Scripture upon which it is based.” By “abuse of Scripture” they meant the new criterion for separation proposed by Lawrenz: “Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother or church body demands recognition for their error.” Pertaining to this statement the memorial said: “We hold that it is false and unscriptural, and that the argument based upon it is rationalistic and untenable. We ask the Synod to disavow it” (Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Convention, pp. 209-211).

David Lau is a retired pastor and professor. He and his wife live in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Sleepy Eye, Minnesota

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”
(Ephesians 1:7)

Sleepy Eye is a town of 3,600 people in a rural farming community where there are more tractors than Toyotas. The small town boasts eight churches, three of which are Lutheran. It is a community known for division. Years ago, when someone was looking to move to town, the realtor’s first question would be, “Are you Catholic or Protestant?” This would determine which houses to show since Catholics lived on the north side of the tracks and Protestants lived on the south.

Grace Lutheran was intimately involved in the formation of the CLC. It was formed in 1959 and officially organized in 1960 after leaving its former fellowship. The young congregation hosted many of the first meetings of the fledgling Interim Conference, which later formed the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Initially it rented a worship space from another congregation, but was able to purchase and move into its own church building within three months. Less than a year later the congregation purchased a whole city block, which would become the site for the current parsonage (1964), church (1970) and fellowship hall (1985).



From its very beginning, Grace has been invested in its greater fellowship by financially supporting the CLC’s first foreign mission in Japan, as well as CLC mission congregations and Immanuel Lutheran College through its offerings to the CLC budget. This Christ-centered congregational mindset has had a hand in producing a number of pastors and teachers who have served our synod, and a number of members and pastors of Grace who have served as synodical officers and on various CLC boards over the years.

In 2002, Grace became a joint parish with Faith Lutheran in New Ulm, and has continued in that relationship since. The two congregations still operate independently but join together for special services, Vacation Bible School, seminars, and other projects.

For many years the desire to bring up the next generation in the knowledge and fear of the Lord spurred discussion of starting a Christian Day School. During this time, a number of

families made use of Immanuel Lutheran School and High School in Mankato for the training of their children, as well as Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Finally, in 2017, the congregation





members (one of the driving reasons for starting the school). In addition to daily religious instruction in the Christian day school, we also provide catechism instruction from fifth through eighth grade twice a week, an after-school Bible study once a week for children in Grades 1-4, and a yearly youth trip during the summer. The congregation has also been active in various educational outreach efforts, including a summer Vacation Bible School program and yearly seminars on various topics. Seminars have included topics like Family Devotions, Islam, Lutheranism, the Bible, and more.

Current culture has an attitude toward Christianity that is apathetic at best and hostile at worst. This can wear on the individual believer and on a Christian congregation. But the Lord encourages us not to become frustrated or to fear the world. The Savior's words to His disciples two thousand years ago are needed also today: *"But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* (Luke 12:31-32) We should not become discouraged by the world's refusal to hear and heed the Lord's Word of truth, but simply, *"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."* (2 Timothy 4:2).



Nathanael Mayhew is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions.

began its own Christian Day School. In August 2017, the congregation installed two teachers and opened Grace Lutheran School and Lambs of Grace Preschool with eight students. It has been wonderful and rewarding to see these young people grow daily in their knowledge of the one and only Savior! Lord willing, this year will see the first student graduate from eighth grade and go on to ILHS for high school.

In its early years, Grace was a congregation of more than three hundred members, but now has a membership of about one hundred fifty. It is made up of members in every age group, including one who is over one hundred, and another who is younger than one year old. Grace currently has a large group of more than thirty pre-communicant

Photos, clockwise from lower left: day school children; children of the Sunday school; the sanctuary of the 1960 church; exterior of the current church; VBS children.

BEST. JOB. EVER!

Are you a young person pondering a career? Have you considered becoming a pastor or a Christian day school teacher? This twelve-part series is meant to coincide with the work of the President's Committee on Partners in the Public Ministry (CPPM). Its aim is to help you think more deeply about the great importance—and many blessings—of the public teaching and preaching ministry.

The Greatest Need

I read the newspaper every day. The stories that have dominated the news recently have included the President's impeachment, government corruption, teachers on strike, rising health care costs, illegal immigration, the opioid epidemic, drunken driving, homelessness, and spousal abuse. It can be a bit depressing. The problems facing society seem insurmountable.

There are many well-intentioned people who spend their lives trying to address the needs of society and trying to do what they can to help. I have had the privilege of getting to know many people in the medical field, teachers, counselors, government workers, mentors, and volunteers. They work very hard to make life better for those around them. They are often blessings to those in need. But often, because of limitations placed on them in their jobs, their help is limited as well: temporary and temporal in nature. It is for this reason that serving under a call in a Christian church or school is the BEST JOB EVER!

There are two reasons for this. The first is that we can call a sin a sin. It is hard to address the ills of society without exposing the root cause. The sinful human tendency is to deflect and excuse behavior. It is easier to blame our leaders, our upbringing, or our genetics for the things we do wrong. Society would even have us question the nature of "wrong." Some would have us clarify our own values, decide for ourselves what is "right" for us, and do what feels good in the moment and makes us happy. By making everything gray, what is there to feel guilty about?

As called workers in a Christian church, we are free to address the real problem. We can avoid the wishy-washy politically correct mumbo-jumbo that can tie the hands of those in other jobs. We can openly share the guidebook



**It is this message of
undeserved love for all
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those in pews and at desks.**

that can help people navigate the spiritual minefield of life. The truth is scary, dark, and uncomfortable at times; but oh, so necessary.

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Luke 5:31-32)

The second reason you have probably guessed. It is the more joyous and fulfilling part of our work, that which should dominate our teaching—the proclamation of the Gospel. Even as society is loath to acknowledge their sin, they are also opposed to hearing the Gospel. *"The carnal mind is enmity against God."* (Romans 8:7) Humans are prideful.

They believe if there is a problem to be dealt with, they can deal with it on their own. All man-made religions feed that notion by making salvation, at least in part, dependent upon humans contributing to it. But true Christianity is different. The Gospel of the Bible teaches that grace alone saves. *"And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace."* (Romans 11:6)

It is this message of undeserved love for all sinners that we get to freely share on a daily basis with those in pews and at desks. The message of our sin and our Savior is the most necessary thing in the world to hear.

One Lenten season, when I was teaching grade school, we had a bulletin board which covered most of a wall. On the wall was a large cross. Every school day during Lent the children could bring pictures they had drawn or had cut out that depicted some sin or consequence of it in the world.

They would "nail" those sins to that cross. Sin and grace—Law and Gospel—will continue to be the world's greatest need, in this age or any other.

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



IN THE PIPELINE

This series profiles the men and women who are in their final year of preparation for the public teaching or preaching ministry at our Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Mikkela Janay Hammond

Age: 21

Program: Education

Year in School: Senior

Where were you born?

Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Eau Claire and then in Bloomer, a small town about thirty miles north of Eau Claire. I've never lived outside of that relatively small radius!

Married? Unmarried? Tell us about your family.

I'm not married. I have a younger brother, Jacob, and a younger sister, Megan. I'm very close with both of them, and with my parents.

What hobbies, sports or extracurriculars interest you?

I'm a very avid reader. I also enjoy knitting, karate, and playing Dungeons and Dragons.

Tell us one thing about yourself that most people don't know.

I once spent almost a whole year learning Klingon, though I don't remember much of it now.

Which academic subjects especially interest you?

I enjoy history and reading/English. I wasn't much of a fan of math as a student, but in the course of my student teaching I've found that I enjoy teaching math.

How did you first come to consider the public teaching or preaching ministry as a career?

It sounds a little cheesy, but I've pretty much always wanted to become a teacher. Even as a kid, my main question was just what kind of teacher I'd like to be. Art teacher? Music teacher? Elementary school teacher? High school teacher? About the only kind of teacher I never specifically considered being was a P.E. teacher! In my junior and senior years of high school, I finally determined that I would go to ILC and become a Christian grade school teacher in the CLC. The further I've gotten in this major, the more confident I've become that this is the path God is calling me down. I really can't wait to get out there and teach!

What have you appreciated most about your time at ILC?

I really have enjoyed the atmosphere of ILC. That

Christ is the center of everything is a huge part of that. It's wonderful to have daily chapels and talk about God in every class, and I really feel like being here strengthened my faith. I also have always loved Tour Choir. I've

been on Tour for most of my years at ILC and I always had an absolute blast. I love singing and being a part of the choir and most of my traveling has been done via Tour.

What qualities do you think will most be needed by the future leaders of the church?

Perseverance. As individuals and as a church body we face all sorts of challenges from all directions—from within ourselves and from the world around us. At times it can be easy to be overwhelmed, but God is by our side. He has given us the strength we need to persevere and even overcome any amount of trials. Exodus 15:2 *"The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him."*



“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS MARCH 2020

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Mar 2	TLH 411	Ruth 1	Ruth wasn't simply attached to her mother-in-law. She had come to faith in the God of Israel and was determined to remain among others who believed in Him.
Mar 3	TLH 281	Ruth 2	Boaz took notice of Ruth, and noticed too that she had come on account of the Lord, the God of Israel (v. 12).
Mar 4	WS 757	Psalm 47	God is the great King over all the earth. The good news is that He is our God!
Mar 5	TLH 421 (LSB 688)	Luke 9:18-27	God's Messiah wasn't what most people were expecting. He would be rejected and killed, and those who followed Him would also suffer much.
Mar 6	WS 719 (LSB 415)	Luke 9:28-62	While many did not see Jesus as the Messiah, He showed three of His disciples that He truly was from heaven—without a doubt.
Mar 7	TLH 507 (LSB 830)	Luke 10:1-24	When Jesus sent His disciples out, the power of the Lord's Word over His enemies became quickly evident.
Mar 9	TLH 540 (LSB 860)	Ruth 3	The Lord led Ruth to seek out Boaz for a husband.
Mar 10	WS 797 (LSB 936)	Ruth 4	Boaz and Ruth became ancestors of King David, and thereby ancestors of Jesus. God used Ruth's family and faith to bring His own Son into the world.
Mar 11	TLH 123 (LSB 733)	Psalm 48	God is our guide to the end, protecting us and making us secure forever—secure even from the accusations of Satan and from eternal death.
Mar 12	TLH 443 (LSB 786)	Luke 10:25-37	Let's use our gifts and abilities to help others in need whenever we are able.
Mar 13	TLH 625 (LSB 862)	Luke 10:38-42	A home where God's Word is given prominence is a happy home.
Mar 14	TLH 374 (LSB 738)	Luke 17:1-10	Don't count on yourself for a stronger faith, but rather ask the Lord for it.
Mar 16	TLH 454 (LSB 771)	1 Samuel 1	Notice how Hannah poured out her troubles to the Lord and then left them with Him. She departed from the Lord's house in good spirits! (v. 18)
Mar 17	TLH 26 (LSB 797)	1 Samuel 2:1-10	Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving is similar in ways to Mary's prayer (Luke 1:46-55). Both of them recognize that the Lord has shown favor to the lowly.
Mar 18	TLH 431 (LSB 709)	Psalm 49	People who have great wealth and many earthly things, but have no faith in Christ, really have nothing.
Mar 19	TLH 180-181 (LSB 447:1-6)	Luke 18:1-14	With these two parables Jesus teaches us two important attitudes in prayer: persistence and humility.
Mar 20	TLH 413 (LSB 716)	Matthew 19:1-12	Using the excuse, "Well, other people get divorces," didn't work with Jesus, and it shouldn't be used as a reason by us, either.
Mar 21	TLH 83 (LSB 572)	1 Samuel 2:11-36	Eli's sons were wicked priests, but the Lord promised to raise up a faithful priest (Zadok). Later still He would raise up the greatest Priest, Jesus Christ.
Mar 23	TLH 403 (LSB 773)	Psalm 50	God doesn't want just token gifts from us. He wants our hearts along with our gifts.
Mar 24	TLH 291	1 Samuel 3	Samuel pays attention to the Lord's Word and so does Eli. Even though God's judgment against him must have been difficult to hear, Eli did not argue with the Word of God.
Mar 25	WS 705	Luke 18:15-43	Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus! Only He can truly bless; only He can truly heal; only He can truly justify us.
Mar 26	TLH 357	Luke 19:1-9	Zacchaeus was on the lookout for Jesus, but more importantly, Jesus was on the lookout for Him!
Mar 27	TLH 141	Luke 19:11-27	Those who reject or misuse the forgiveness of Jesus will find themselves suffering for their sins (vv. 14, 26-27).
Mar 28	TLH 168 (LSB 455)	Luke 19:28-48	Ride on, ride on, in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die." (TLH 162)
Mar 30	TLH 301 (LSB 616)	Psalm 51	Having confessed our sins and heard God's comforting words of forgiveness in Christ, what then? We tell others how He forgave us, don't we?
Mar 31	TLH 319	1 Samuel 4	Dark days come for the people of God on account of their sin, but in the end He will not forsake His repentant children.

Immanuel's Resident Assistants

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

One of the less-well-known roles on the Immanuel campus is that of Resident Assistant (RA). They are typically college students who live in the dormitories and help the dorm parents and the dean of students care for the resident high school students.

This year, the four RAs are Greta Albrecht, Mark Brown-Kempenaar, Dannie Gamble, and Ben Hansen. Mark is in the pre-theology program, while the others are in the education program.

There aren't any specific qualifications that make for a good RA other than an enthusiasm for helping young men and women develop as God's children, a willingness to enforce and support the school's rules, and—most importantly—a humble and child-like faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Beyond that, the RAs all bring their own unique skills and abilities to the dorm.

The RAs are responsible for routine tasks such as making sure the dormitory is well-stocked with cleaning supplies and—when the dormitory supervisor is absent—taking care of any sick residents and checking to make sure the residents have done their jobs, cleaned their rooms, and returned to the dorm on time. As anyone who has been around teenagers for any period of time knows, caring for their physical needs is relatively easy. After all, teenagers are becoming more independent by this age and can do an adequate job of taking care of themselves when given a little guidance. The more difficult, but perhaps more rewarding, aspect of being involved in the lives of teenagers is helping



them grow emotionally and spiritually during these difficult years.

That is where a good RA can really shine. The most important way that an RA can influence the life of one of Immanuel's students is just by being a Christian presence in that student's life each day. Because the RAs themselves are just a few years removed from high school,

many students find it easy to talk with them casually and comfortably. This comfortable relationship, and the trust that follows, can allow the RAs to reach students who wouldn't feel as comfortable talking with older adults. This can also be a large burden for the RAs, who are still growing emotionally and spiritually themselves, so please include our young resident assistants in your regular prayers. “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” (James 5:16) They play an important role at Immanuel.

Being an RA is not all about helping the high school students though. The experience they gain working day after day with teenagers will help them in their own lives, with their own families, and through their own careers—whether in the public ministry or not. I myself have learned a great deal about humility and the power of Christian prayer in the short time I've been a dorm parent and Dean of Students. I have no doubt that the RAs are learning their own valuable lessons too.

As Paul said, we all have been given a variety of talents to use for the profit of all. May the Lord continue to bless Immanuel with dedicated staff and volunteers who are helping raise another generation of Christians dedicated to a life of service and love in the name of our dear Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



Gus Falkenberg is Dean of Students and North Hall Supervisor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Left to right: RAs Ben Hansen, Mark Brown-Kempenaar, Greta Albrecht and Dannie Gamble.

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.

American Pastor Detained in India for Preaching the Christian Faith.

Rev. Bryan Nerren, pastor of the International House of Prayer in Shelbyville, Tennessee, was arrested on October 5, 2019, in Bagdogra, India, on suspicion of preaching the Christian faith and bringing funds into the country to support Christian evangelism. Bagdogra lies in the northeastern state of West Bengal, and is close to India's border with Nepal, where Nerren has worked in evangelism for seventeen years. Nerren, who was attending a conference of Nepali pastors, was jailed for six days before being released on bail. His passport was seized by the judge, making it impossible for him to return home. He has a court appearance scheduled for December 12. India is listed as the "tenth most dangerous" place



Left to right: Pastors Thomas Schuetze, Timothy Wheaton and Chad Seybt.

to do mission work by Open Doors USA. Nepal, where proselytizing has been illegal since 2017, is thirty-second on the list. Roach, David.

"US Pastor Still Detained in India, Awaiting December Trial." *International*. ChristianityToday.com, 11 Nov., 2019. Web. 3 Dec., 2019.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ILC Tour Choir 2020 Schedule

- Trinity, Millston, WI.**
Sunday, March 8; 10:00 A.M.
- St. Paul's, Austin, MN.**
Saturday, March 14; 1:00 P.M.
- Resurrection, Corpus Christi, TX.**
Monday, March 16; 7:00 P.M.
- Location TBD, Conroe, TX.**
Tuesday, March 17; 7:00 P.M.
- St. Matthew, Dallas, TX.**
Wednesday, March 18; 7:00 P.M.
- Berea, Sioux Falls, SD.**
Friday, March 20; 7:00 P.M.
- Grace, Sleepy Eye, MN.**
Saturday, March 21; 2:00 P.M.
- Immanuel, Mankato, MN.**
Saturday, March 21; 7:30 P.M.
- Grace, Fridley, MN.**
Sunday, March 22; 10:00 A.M.
- Our Redeemer's, Red Wing, MN.**
Sunday, March 22; 3:00 P.M.
- Messiah, Eau Claire, WI.**
Sunday, March 29, 6:30 P.M.

Installation: In accordance with our usage and order, Timothy Wheaton, who was called by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Loveland, Colorado, to be its pastor, was installed on January 12, 2020. Participating in the service was Pastor Chad Seybt. —Pastor Thomas Schuetze

Colloquy. Luke Willitz, formerly a pastor in the WELS, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the ministry of the CLC.

The CLC Board of Doctrine will meet with him for the first stage of the colloquy on April 20, 2020. Comments may be directed to Board of Doctrine chairman David Schierenbeck: 906 Hastings Ave. #625, St. Paul Park, MN 55071/ dmschierenbeck@gmail.com.
—Michael Eichstadt, CLC President

Traveling Vacation Bible School. The TVBS Committee is making plans for our summer TVBS program. If your congregation is looking for help in hosting Vacation Bible School in your congregation, please contact us as soon as possible with a proposed date for your session and we'll include that date in our summer plans. The deadline for requests is March 1st. Please let us know if you'd like a flyer team, teaching team, or both. If this is something you plan on speaking with your congregation about, a quick reply stating that you are "interested and looking into it" is very helpful for planning purposes as we begin seeking volunteers soon. The Committee is also looking for congregations willing to support the TVBS effort by either sponsoring or adopting a program in a sister congregation. Several congregations have helped in these ways and have found that both congregations benefit from this fellowship. The TVBS committee deeply appreciates the help we receive from congregations, ladies' groups, and individuals of the CLC who support the TVBS program with their prayers and their donations. You can find out more about the TVBS program and find contact information at www.clctvbs.org or by contacting Ryan Hammett at hammettr@gmail.com.