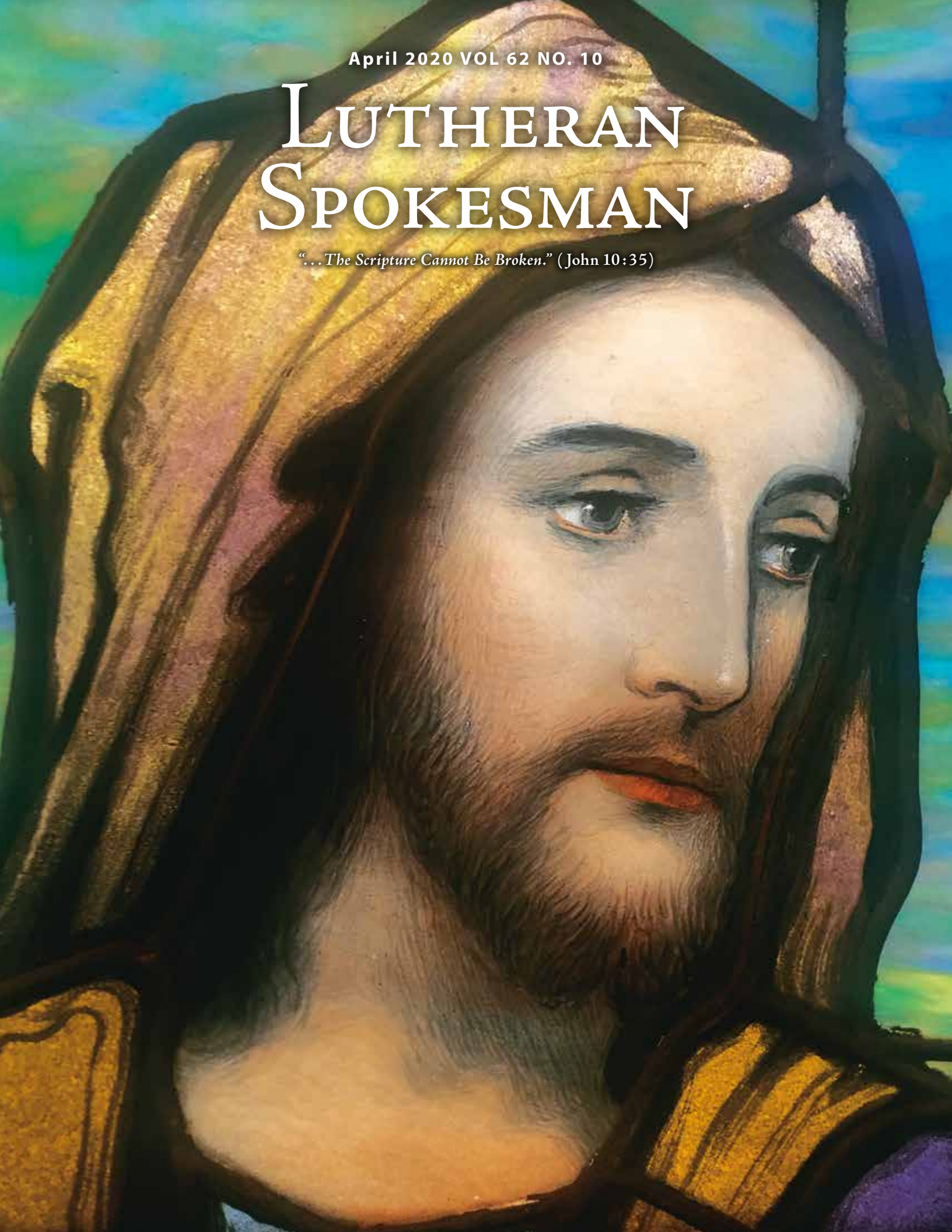


April 2020 VOL 62 NO. 10

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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





India Update, see page 13

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## Ride On, Ride On, in Majesty

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Hark! all the tribes hosanna cry;  
O Savior meek, pursue thy Road  
With palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die.  
O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin  
O'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
The angel armies of the sky  
Look down with sad and wond'ring eyes  
To see the approaching Sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;  
The Father on His sapphire throne  
Expects His own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die,  
Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,  
Then take, O Christ, Thy Power and reign.

TLH 162

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# Triumphant Humility

One of the fun parts about attending a professional basketball game is the home team player introductions. The lights dim, the pump-up music plays, spotlights pan around the crowd, and the stadium announcer stretches every syllable of the star player's name so the fans can cheer for longer. But sometimes the cheers turn to boos if the star's performance doesn't live up to expectations.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is an excellent demonstration of the contrast between Jesus' dual nature of true God and true Man. He was given the praise He deserves, yet demonstrated His perfect humility. *"And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: 'Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!"* (Matthew 21:8-9) The big event on Palm Sunday is often called the triumphal entry. The crowd hailed Him as the promised Son of David and laid their clothes before Him. He got such a star treatment that it bothered the Pharisees: *"And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.'"* (Luke 19:39-40) Jesus' response to them showed that His glory as true God would not be removed from Him. But Jesus' royal parade was also marked by the perfect humility that He demonstrated on earth. He did not come on a royal horse or with a company of angels. Rather, He humbly sat upon a borrowed donkey. These details together reveal the King of heaven, Who was willing to humble Himself to be like us.

This is also an excellent demonstration of the joy brought

**The popular opinion of the Jewish population had swung to the Messiah's favor, but Jesus knew that it would not last.**

by Christ's victory over death contrasted with the sorrow that God has over those who reject Him. *"Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He*

*had done this sign."* (John 12:17-18) The people of Bethany who had seen Jesus call Lazarus from his tomb had been waiting for an opportunity to praise the One with power over death. Their cheering was infectious. The Pharisees felt helpless against such public approval: *"The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, 'You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!'"* (John 12:19) The Holy Spirit was at work! The popular opinion

of the Jewish population had swung to the Messiah's favor, but Jesus knew that it would not last. *"Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.'"* (Luke 19:41-42) As Jesus wept over the city, we, too, see the tragedy of the situation. The euphoric mob that cheered Jesus would soon shout for his death. So many of those who personally witnessed His miracles would reject His message of forgiveness of sins.

As the basketball player's performance doesn't always match the crowd's expectations, so also Jesus' work as the Savior from sin didn't match the Jews' hope for a military messiah. Little did they know how much greater Jesus' work was than delivering them from the Romans. Praise Jesus, true God and true Man, for His glorious and humble work as our Savior!



**Ross Kok** is a teacher at Holy Cross Lutheran School in Phoenix, Arizona.

# The Longest Name

We each bear a name that tells a lengthy story.

**T**he longest name in recorded history belonged to a man who went by “Hubert B. Wolfe + 988 Sr.” This was merely a shortening of his full name which included twenty-six ordinary names followed by a 988-letter surname. I would guess that most of us go by three names, although perhaps some have four; certainly, none come near to the length of Hubert’s name. But, in a way, we can all claim to have a name that is much longer than even his. In the book *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* by J.R.R. Tolkien, a tree-like creature says about his name, “I am not going to tell you my name, not yet at any rate. . . . For one thing, it would take a long while: my name is growing all the time, and I’ve lived a very long, long time; so my name is like a story.” Similarly, we each bear a name that tells a lengthy story. It’s the name *Christian*.

For some, the name *Christian* is simply a trite way to describe a nice person. For others, the name indicates a stodgy, self-righteous individual. But, in truth, the name *Christian* isn’t simply a name. It is a shortened form of the history of God’s relationship with sinful mankind; though only nine letters, this is a name as long as time itself. This name tells the story of God, Who would not allow Adam and Eve to die mired in their sin and so graciously provided a ray of hope. It tells the story of God providing salvation for His people through the flood, keeping alive the promise of the Savior. It tells the story of God remembering His children in Egypt, guiding them safely through various waters, and strengthening them through their wilderness wanderings on the way to a homeland.

But if the story ended there, then the name *Christian*

would best be used to describe only the truly pathetic. As Paul writes, “*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*” (1 Corinthians 15:19-20) Christ continued the story by walking in His people’s shoes. He came up from Egypt. He stood in the waters of the Jordan. He wandered in the wilderness. He “*was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*” (Hebrews 4:15) He wrote the next chapter in His own blood, carrying sin to the cross and death. And then came His masterful twist—He rose. The grave could not contain God.

And now it cannot contain you either, because the story that the name *Christian* tells continues down to you. For God saved you also in a flood, providing salvation through the waters of your Baptism. Paul connects this washing with Christ’s Easter victory: “*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, 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) Through this sacrament, God transports you back to the events of that first Easter weekend—to the cross of Calvary and the empty tomb. And God makes it all yours. He says to you, dear Christian, that your sin and eventual death will not separate you from Him. For you see, the name *Christian* means “belonging to Christ.” You belong to the One who tailored human history for the purpose of freeing you from your sin and guilt, and now you will live free of death’s chains forever. Blessed are you, fellow Christian!



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

TLH 162

# Ride On, Ride On, in Majesty

**P**aradox and perspective are two elements which, along with the lofty melody of “Winchester New” (<http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/012.mp3>), stand out in Henry H. Milman’s Palm Sunday hymn, “Ride On, Ride On, in Majesty.”

## Paradox

A paradox is a statement that seems self-contradictory but which may, in fact, express a profound truth. The Spirit-inspired writers of the Bible often used paradoxical statements to express divine truth in a memorable way (see Matthew 5:4 and 10:39, and 2 Corinthians 12:10 for just three of many possible examples). So also, in verse 2 of this hymn, Milman uses the paradoxical term *lowly pomp* to perfectly characterize the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week. **“Ride on, ride on, in majesty! / In lowly pomp ride on to die. / O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin / O’er captive death and conquered sin.”** (v. 2)

*Pomp* signifies splendor or magnificence, or an ostentatious display of dignity. It especially pertains to a procession or pageant. *Lowly*, on the other hand, is quite the opposite. It describes something that is humble and unassuming. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was, indeed, an example of “lowly pomp.” He rode on a donkey, not in a gold-embellished chariot drawn by a pair of prancing Arabian stallions and preceded by blaring trumpets. Nonetheless, no earthly king ever rode in a procession of equal magnificence because this was, in fact, God Himself in a procession that would lead to another paradox—that of the crucifixion; a paradox which C.S. Lewis characterized as “the best, as well as the worst, of all historical events.” The “lowly pomp” of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem led to the tragic magnificence of His atoning death and the resurrection that followed.

## Perspective

How one evaluates an event or an issue often depends largely on perspective. For example, the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973 was met with rejoicing by those who

wanted abortions to be readily available, but with grief and dismay by those who believed the Bible’s teaching about the sanctity of life beginning with conception. Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week was also an event viewed from opposite perspectives: the crowds shouted “Hosanna” and spread palm fronds and garments along His way (v. 1), but—at least in the poetic license of this hymn—the angels were saddened. **“Ride on, ride on, in majesty! / The angel armies of the sky / Look down with sad and wond’ring eyes / To see th’ approaching Sacrifice.”** (v. 3)

*Hosanna* was a cry of adoration and acclamation, an expression of great joy at some event. In Jesus’ time, that’s how it was used, and that is how the Jews lining the road witnessing Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem meant it; but the word is actually a Greek transliteration of a Hebrew word which, in its *original* meaning, was a cry for help. There is irony in the fact that the crowd’s expression of joy would have been more appropriate—from the angels’ perspective—in its original meaning of crying for help; for Jesus came to Jerusalem at this time not to accomplish what those cheering Him on hoped, but rather to provide the “one thing needful”: salvation from sin.

As to perspective, consider the perspective of God the Father as He watched His Son riding on to be tortured and crucified. **“Ride on, ride on, in majesty! / Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh; / The Father on His sapphire throne (Ezekiel 1:26, 10:1, compare to Exodus 24:10) / Expects His own anointed Son.”** (v. 4) Here the Father views His beloved Son intentionally going to a torturous death, all in submission to the Father’s love for fallen mankind. We cannot understand such a thing; we can only marvel and give thanks. So we also cry “*Hosanna* [in both senses of the word] *to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!’*” (Matthew 21:9)



**Craig Owings** is a retired teacher and serves as assistant editor of the Lutheran Spokesman. He lives in Cape Coral, Florida.

# SHAMÁYIM



## “Heavens”

**W**hat comes to mind when you hear the word *heaven*? Are there thoughts of glory, of joy, of intimate fellowship with Jesus? Indeed, we should have such thoughts, because we are told that God “sits in the heavens” (Psalm 2:4) and that the heavens have received Jesus (Acts 3:21) and that where He is, there we will be (John 14:3).

However, what if we make this word into a plural: *heavens*? The Hebrew word for “heaven” (SHAMÁYIM) is plural. Indeed, as we search the scriptures, we find that there is more than one “heaven” (Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 148:4).

1. There is the heaven in which the birds fly (Deuteronomy 4:17—NKJV: “air”) and from which the rain comes down (Isaiah 55:10). This is the atmosphere, inner space.
2. There is the heaven in which the sun, moon, and stars are found (Genesis 1:14), or outer space.
3. There is the heaven in which God is enthroned in the presence of all His holy angels (Psalm 2:4; Matthew 18:10; 22:30; Isaiah 6). This is the highest heaven (Deuteronomy 10:14), the “third heaven,” which the apostle Paul equates with “paradise.” (2 Corinthians 12:2-4)

What a marvelous creation these heavens are. By them, the Creator contains the atmosphere, so that we can breathe and live. By them, the Creator contains the sun, moon, and stars, so that these can serve their functions, providing light for life and serving “for signs and seasons, and for days and years.” (Genesis 1:14) By them, the Creator makes His presence known to the whole world: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through

all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” (Psalm 19:1-4) In them, the Creator sets His throne and rules over all of creation.

As marvelous as the heavens are, they will not last forever. Because of the vile rebellion of man, all of creation has been subjected to rot and ruin and death. “For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Romans 8:22-23)

Yes, the day will come when the creation will be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. That is the day when “you will see the Son of Man . . . coming with the clouds of heaven.” (Mark 14:62) Then, “all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll.” (Isaiah 34:4) “Like a cloak [the LORD] will change them, and they will be changed.” (Psalm 102:26) They “will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” (2 Peter 3:10)

It is sad that the marvelous creation of God must be melted down, but only in this way will our Lord fashion a “. . . new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (2 Peter 3:13) We stare up into the heavens and find peace and joy in the gently drifting, fluffy clouds and the melodious songs of the birds. We marvel at the countless stars in the heavens. However, as we gaze into the new heavens, we will find infinitely greater peace and joy. Then, the sins which cloud our view in this world will be gone forever, having been washed away in the blood of the Creator of the heavens. Only righteousness will be found there, and we will see clearly all the wonders of God’s loving

goodness, for we will be in the Paradise of God (Revelation 2:7). Hallelujah!



**John Pfeiffer** is retired from the pastoral and teaching ministry. He is a former president of Immanuel Lutheran College.

# Our Response to God's Gifts

*“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”*

(James 1:17-21)

**T**he giving and receiving of gifts is a long-held human tradition. We are accustomed to gift giving on special occasions like a birthday, Christmas, or anniversary. Of course, besides these noteworthy events, there are many and various reasons for gifts to be given.

When such gestures have a proper motivation, they display a good and generous spirit. And as recipients in turn appreciate the gifts bestowed on them, they show their gratitude.

Of all the gift givers, none compares to our heavenly Father. James writes of Him, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” Every single day our Father in heaven showers upon us countless gifts without fail, both physical and spiritual. And all these many good things are absolutely flawless.

The Holy Spirit caused James to identify God's blessings as gifts, impressing upon us that all these mercies are undeserved. They are pure grace. While we may hear people say that we deserved this or that windfall, we know this is not the case. Our sinfulness merits only God's wrath and condemnation (see Genesis 32:10).

## The Gift of Faith

Of all the gifts God so graciously grants us, the most important is Christian faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Through faith in Christ we receive all the many spiritual and eternal blessings that our Savior purchased and won for us through His life, death, and resurrection (Ephesians 1:3-14).

**Much as we might like to speak, we need to hold our tongues and be more ready to listen to what God has to say.**

Having been so richly blessed, what is our response to God? James writes of this in verse 18, “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” In the Old Testament at harvest

time, believers responded to God's bounty by bringing their firstfruits to Him. Being sanctified by the Gospel, we are firstfruits who are to dedicate all our thoughts, words, and actions to God out of gratitude for His redeeming love.

Would that this were always the case. Sadly, all of us must confess that on countless occasions we have failed to do this. Instead of our hearts being chambers of consecrated love, very often

wrathful emotions which do not make for righteous speech and behavior are kindled within us. The godless world that surrounds us can pollute our lives with all manner of filthiness and wickedness.

In spite of this, God in His infinite love and mercy counsels us how to counter our sinful response. The Spirit of God reveals that as much as we might like to speak, we need to hold our tongues and be more ready to listen to what God has to say to us in Holy Scripture. And when God makes known to us His teachings, we are to receive them with a humble spirit and a receptive mind.



Working through His Word that saves us, God instills in us a penitent spirit and believing heart that responds to His gifts with gratitude and sanctified living.

**Mark Gullerud** is retired from the pastoral ministry. He lives in Sunnyvale, California.

## 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 1959 Conventions of the WELS and ELS



The (1959 WELS) convention reacted to the “A Call for Decision” memorial by resolving “that the Synod disavow the serious and repeated charges made in ‘A Call for Decision’” and by resolving “that the Synod also disavow the charge ‘distortion of historical facts’” (Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Convention, pp. 211-212). With regard to relations with the Missouri Synod, the synod resolved “that we instruct our Church Union Committee to continue its efforts in the Joint Union Committees until agreement on doctrine and practice has been reached, or until an impasse is reached and no such agreement can be brought about.” At the same time the convention stated: “Many of the offenses of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod . . . have not been removed and have been aggravated by The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod’s reaffirmation of their position on Scouting” (Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Convention, p. 195). Notice that the direction of Romans 16:17-18 was being ignored, for even though the offenses were continuing, there was no separation. Meanwhile, the procedure proposed by Lawrenz was being followed: fellowship was to continue until an impasse was reached or, in other words, it was determined that admonition was of no further avail. It was not long thereafter that The Northwestern Lutheran reported more withdrawals (from the Wisconsin Synod).

Pastors and congregations in the Wisconsin Synod were not the only ones taking a stand against the disobedience

to God’s Word going on in their church body. The Norwegian Synod, soon to be known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, had already suspended fellowship relations with

the Missouri Synod in its 1955 convention. But the Norwegian Synod had not suspended fellowship with the Synodical Conference, of which the Missouri Synod was by far the most dominant member. This inconsistent situation continued through the years that followed and became the focus of many protests and memorials from within the Norwegian Synod. In fact, the record indicates that some leaders in the Norwegian Synod were beginning to doubt whether their synod had done the right thing in 1955.

In the early months of 1959 Loren Borgwardt, a member of Ascension Lutheran Church of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, sent to all pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod a lengthy document. . . . The basic problem, as Mr. Borgwardt saw it, was that the 1955 resolution to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod “was only partial and incomplete” and that it “resulted only in untold confusion and possible weakening of our Synod’s position.” The problem was that “our Synod did not withdraw from the Synodical Conference, well knowing that the Synodical Conference was controlled by the Missouri Synod. . . . We refused to withdraw from the Synodical Conference in 1955, 1956, 1957, and in 1958. Our Synod’s obedience to God’s command in the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17 was incomplete! . . . Romans 16:17 does not say ‘avoid them at this level and fellowship with them at that level.’



## *Romans 16:17-18 was being ignored*

It just clearly and simply states ‘avoid them!’ There are no exceptions—there are no qualifications! . . . We ourselves are now guilty of unionistic practices at the Synodical Conference level. . . . By continuing our membership in the Synodical Conference our Synod is presenting to the whole wide world a lie because such membership automatically implies that we are walking hand in hand with the Missouri Synod in true unity of spirit and purpose, preaching the unconditioned Gospel. This lie is causing untold confusion within our Synod, within the other Synods, and throughout the Lutheran Church as a whole.”

Therefore, just as the Wisconsin Synod was faced at its 1959 convention with “A Call for Decision” over against the Missouri Synod, so the ELS was faced with a decision in 1959 with reference to its continued membership in the Synodical Conference. . . . The Union Committee, however, recommended that the ELS continue to take part in discussions with the other Synodical Conference members on the same basis as before. . . . The convention . . . ended up . . . approving a report that followed the recommendations of the Union Committee.

Between the 1959 and 1960 ELS conventions Norman Madson, Sr., dean of the seminary, resigned from the seminary faculty at Bethany. . . . In his letter of withdrawal, dated June 30, 1959, C. M. Gullerud stated: “The Synod has continued in the fellowship of the Synodical Conference and has thereby been involved in joint prayer and worship (in committee meetings and at Synodical Conference Conventions) and in joint support of mission work together with a church body which has caused divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned. God’s Word teaches that we are to avoid such church bodies which means that we are to carry on no worship or church work with them. To do so is to act in disobedience to the clear Bible passage—Romans 16:17.

The reports of withdrawals continued in 1960 and 1961 (from both the WELS and the ELS). . . . They believed that obedience to the Word of God left them no choice; for them it was a matter of conscience. For some pastors their withdrawal meant a loss of income, since their congregations did not follow them in their withdrawal from the church body. They had to find other employment. Some were even

forcibly removed from their parsonages and churches. For other pastors their separation . . . led to divisions within the congregations they had served, division between those who favored the pastor’s stand and those who opposed it. In some instances these divisions led to bitter conflicts and even court cases.

It was not the pastors only who suffered the consequences of taking a stand. Many of the lay members who felt conscience-bound to separate from the Wisconsin Synod and from the Norwegian Synod (ELS) had to endure the hostility or ignorance of their relatives, former friends, and associates. Some lost income because of the hostility of the community in which they worked. Sad to say, words were spoken and actions were taken on both sides of the struggle that were not in agreement with the will of God. Confessional Lutherans who want to follow the Word of God in their lives learn from experience that they also have a sinful flesh leading them at times to wrong attitudes, bitter feelings, sinful pride, selfish ambitions, and every other kind of sin.

Another thing to remember about these withdrawals from the synods of the Synodical Conference is that the leaders in this effort were mature men, many of whom had served in influential positions in their respective former synods. They included district presidents, seminary professors, synodical officials, writers for official publications, and veteran pastors of large congregations. How difficult it was for persons in their fifties and sixties and older to make major changes in their lives! Yet leaders like Norman Madson, Sr., Winfred Schaller, Sr., Edmund Reim, Paul G. Albrecht, Gerhard Pieper, George Tiefel, C. M. Gullerud, M. J. Witt, Egbert Schaller, and Otto J. Eckert were convinced that they had to take the steps they did out of obedience to the Word of God. The present members of the CLC should never forget the difficulties these men and others with like convictions faced, and the sacrifices they made for the sake of obedience to God’s Word. Nor should we forget the efforts of the men and women in the congregations they served, efforts to support the cause of God’s truth regardless of cost.

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

# Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Valentine, Nebraska

Scenic Valentine, Nebraska is nestled between two valleys—one on the north created by the Minnechaduzza Creek and the other on the south created by the Niobrara River. It serves as the northeast gateway into the Nebraska Sandhills—a geographic area covering much of western Nebraska, which is situated directly over the Ogallala Aquifer, the largest aquifer in North America. This community of 2,800 serves as the county seat for Cherry County, the largest county by far in Nebraska. The Niobrara River has been identified as one of America's most scenic rivers as well as one of the ten best tubing/kayaking rivers in the United States, making Valentine a summer tourist destination. The locals proudly proclaim the Sandhills to be "God's own cow pasture." Statistically, Cherry County has more cows than any other county in the United States—166,000 as opposed to a human population of just over 5,800.

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, which will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary in January 2021, is located with its preschool and Christian day school on West Third Street near the edge of town. Grace was one of the founding congregations of our Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). It was



established under the leadership of Pastor Herbert Witt, when he and 135 other concerned Christians were compelled for reasons of conscience to leave Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church (WELS) in order to form a new congregation and so remain faithful to their Savior. The name "Grace" was chosen because of the Apostle Paul's use of that word in Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Grace congregation "was born out of love for, and in obedience to the clear word of God; born out of the conviction that God's Word is clear and that it speaks with authority; born in the prayerful hope that her testimony would be used by the Lord to show forth the preciousness of His Word; born that our God and Savior alone might be glorified" (Taken from *Twenty Years of Grace*, a publication celebrating Grace's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary).

Grace has been committed to Christian education from its founding. A Sunday school was, of course, begun immediately. A Saturday school was founded in its second year of existence, and a Christian day school followed in the fall of 1976. After thirty-two years, the Christian day school, unfortunately, was closed in 2008 as the number

Top: the sanctuary of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. Above: children of Grace Christian day school.

of potential students dwindled. In 2012, however, Grace recognized a community need for preschool and opened its Small Wonders Preschool under the leadership of Mrs. Dani Ohlmann. In 2015 Grace was able to reopen the Christian day school. They called Miss Candice Ohlmann and began with kindergarten. Each year an additional grade of Christian education has been added. Small Wonders, now under the direction of Mrs. Johanna Michalek, has a current enrollment of thirty-six, while the Christian day school, now kindergarten through third grade, has an enrollment of four. Over the years numerous young people from Grace have attended Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



In recent years Grace has availed itself of the CLC's Traveling Vacation Bible School program, hosting teaching teams each year which have enabled the congregation to reach out to many area children. This past summer eight young women from Immanuel-Mankato, Minnesota; and St. Paul's-White River, South Dakota, joined local volunteers to put on a four-day VBS entitled "God's Great Rescue." An average of forty-six children attended, only nine of whom were members of Grace. We considered how God rescued our souls, even as we in faith are able at times to rescue others.

Grace has always been very active synodically, especially in the area of missions. Some of its lay members have been elected to serve on the CLC Board of Missions, and others have been asked to serve on CLC subcommittees—Kinship and Domestic Fields. One of its sons, Pastor Todd Ohlmann, currently serves as one of our CLC's two foreign missionaries. Another son, Pastor Nathanael Mayhew, currently serves as Secretary of the CLC Board of Missions. As a congregation Grace sponsors a seminary student in India and has members who regularly contribute to the Mission Development Fund. For many years Grace also served as a Mission Clearing House to send clothing and books to our foreign affiliates. Locally, Grace produces a twenty-five-minute Sunday morning radio broadcast on Valentine's local 940 AM KVSH radio station. This "Words of Grace" radio program can be heard throughout northcentral Nebraska and southcentral South Dakota.

Efforts are also underway currently to reach out to the Native American population on the Rosebud Reservation located just north of Valentine.

Grace has an active fellowship group, which meets monthly for an evening meal. Good conversations are always part of the evening, while spiritual discussions, games and other activities, and brief business meetings, often follow the meal. Recently, a Friday morning men and boys' breakfast Bible study has begun, which allows our men to study God's Word while mentoring the next generation of congregational leaders.

Grace is not unique among CLC congregations with regard to members using their musical talents to enhance weekly worship services. However, Grace is unique in that one member, Mrs. Jeanie Hoffman, plays her harmonica each week during the offering.

Along with many committed members, Grace has been blessed with a series of faithful pastors and teachers throughout its history. The pastors have included Herbert Witt, John Pfeiffer, David Baker, Wayne Mielke, Steven Sippert, George Dummann, James Naumann, Luke Bernthal, and Paul D. Nolting. Teachers have included Robert Rehm, Daniel Gurgel, Dennis Ahrens, Louise Mayhew, Susan Carstensen, Mark Kranz, Wendy Greve, Kirsten Gullerud, Nick Stelter, Matthew Thurow, Anita Meyer, James Arndt, Dani Ohlmann, and currently, Johanna Michalek and Candice Ohlmann.

In its early years Grace was a dual parish along with Immanuel of Thedford, Nebraska. As of 2002 Grace has been part of a tri-parish with Peace of Mission, South Dakota and St. Paul's of White River, South Dakota. As of January 1, 2020, Grace has 75 communicant members and 27 pre-communicant members, for a total membership of 102. We invite everyone to visit and worship with us! The scenic wonder and the message of God's grace combine to enrich our souls and invite our praise of our Savior God!

**Paul D. Nolting** is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Valentine, Nebraska, as well as St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in White River, South Dakota, and Peace Lutheran Church in Mission, South Dakota.



## 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.*

# A Product You Can Stand Behind

I used to work in the corporate world selling a product I didn't believe in.

It was a service most consider a waste of time, but I had to say it improved the quality of life. I ran numbers to get the most money out of customers we could. I trained employees to up-sell everything, even when our product didn't work. All of it official company policy but, in essence, lies.

I don't need to name the company. Whatever you sell, someone will be disappointed. Nothing made with human hands lasts forever. Farmers remark they don't need to play the lottery: "I gamble every day." Many join the medical profession to better lives, but in the end, all men die.

The Ten Commandments reveal that our temporal dealings with one another all fall short of God's command to love our neighbor with perfection. Whatever temporal good you offer, the conscience struggles: "*What has man for all his labor?*" (Ecclesiastes 2:22)

But there is one full-time profession unlike the rest.

Its policies aren't fabricated to drive company profits. Instead, every claim you make comes from Holy Scripture, "*given by inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be complete.*" (2 Timothy 3:16-17) You can have full confidence in the name you represent: "*There has not failed one word of all His good promise.*" (1 Kings 8:56) Every new project you're assigned comes with eternal backing: "*He who has begun a good work in you will complete it.*" (Philippians 1:6)

This is the honor, "*as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God,*" to preach and teach the good news of Jesus' name. (1 Corinthians 4:1)

When betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, the Son of God personally experienced how we sinners swindle one another. To human eye, it appeared the shadiest of business dealings, but from God's perspective, it was the great exchange of Jesus' righteous life for our sinful lives: "*You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold .*



*. . . but with the precious blood of Christ.*" (1 Peter 1:18-19)

This Gospel is a product you can stand by. One you can believe in—for eternal life. One you can offer others with a clear conscience.

In this sense, public ministers of Christ have the most to offer.

Because Jesus died for the sin of the world, a preacher can proclaim an objectively true justification of the sinner before God, regardless of who darkens the church door.

Because Jesus rose again in triumph, a teacher can open young minds to "*all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" found in Him (Colossians 2:3).

Gospel labor changes individual lives for eternity, but it also transforms every other station in life. The words which flow from a called servant's lips equip all believers to embrace their own unique roles in God's kingdom (Ephesians 4:12).

No job you've had in life has been outside His purview. If you've been disappointed in your line of work, you've been trusting in your product. Faith in the Gospel, though, embraces earthly labor as a personal calling to serve your neighbor so that, in this cruel world, your neighbor might come to know God's love through your love.

I have to marvel at the Spirit's work myself, when former corporate coworkers reach out still today, years later, curious to hear and learn the Word of God.

Don't let thoughts of the public ministry overwhelm you! If you find yourself intrigued by the idea of a profession with so much to offer, this is a noble desire indeed. Such curiosity is from God. Pursue it. Learn more. He promises to direct your steps.



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

## India Update

Our fellow Christians in India have been on the minds of many, especially over the past year and a half. It was at the beginning of 2019 that Missionary Peter Evensen's Indian visa was canceled, forcing the Board of Missions to reassign him to Togo. Another CLC pastor's visa application was denied in the summer of 2019. Most recently, Missionary Todd Ohlmann was denied entry into India this past January as he was attempting to enter the country to take part in the Joint Asia Pastoral Conference (JAPC).

In 2019, India was ranked as the tenth most hostile country to Christians in the world according to Open Doors International. Other Asian countries where we have sister church bodies also find themselves on the list (Myanmar is nineteenth, Nepal is thirty-second). Yet despite the persecution, the Word of the Lord continues to spread and grow among our Asian brothers and sisters. Pastor David Reim was able to attend the JAPC in January and spend some time in the CLCI, and he had many positive and encouraging things to report on his time there.

The JAPC is a three-day conference held biannually in India. This year, there were pastors from five sister church bodies. There were pastors from the CLCI (India), BELC (India), HCLCN (Nepal), ZCLM (Myanmar), and NCLCM (Myanmar). The conference also welcomed Pastor Monotosh Banarjee from the BLCM in Bangladesh.

Much of the time in the conference was spent hearing reports about the work being done in the various church bodies. Pastor Reim reports: "Truly the Lord is doing a great work in Asia. Christ is crashing through the gates of Hades and is plundering Satan's domain, opening the blind eyes and rescuing souls from the flames of hell. In our annual reports at home, we are happy if we can report two or three baptisms and conversions. Here report after report spoke of hundred-plus baptisms and conversions. And, for the most part, these are conversions from complete heathenism."

After the conference, Pastor Reim was able to spend some time in the CLCI. Many of the worship services were held late at night, some of them beginning at 10:00 P.M. and



Above: a Christian congregation in Bangladesh greets Pastor Reim, who visited that country as well as India.

going until 12:30 A.M. Despite the late hour, the people, including little children, greeted Pastor Reim with warm smiles and enthusiastically sang praises to God.

One reason the worship services were as long as they were was because of the number of prayer requests. Pastor Reim reports that one night he spent an hour and a half offering prayers for individuals. Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." The people were not afraid to ask. Pastor Reim reports: "It is encouraging to see them come to the Lord in their need, but at the same time, it is heart wrenching to see some of their needs." Some were seeking spiritual growth, others healing from physical maladies. Several women had been abandoned by their husbands because they became Christians. May we join them in their prayer that the Lord would provide for and take care of them.

Overall, Pastor Reim's time in India was a joyful experience. He was able to spend time with the orphans supported by CLC Project KINSHIP, whom he described as happy, healthy, and obviously well cared for and loved. He summarized his trip by saying that despite the persecution, the Lord is doing wonderful work in India. It is exciting to see how the Lord is blessing the work of the kingdom there. Please continue to keep our brothers and sisters in India in your prayers.



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

# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS APRIL 2020

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Apr 1	WS 725 (LSB 444)	Mark 11:1-11	Jesus was truly coming “in the name of the Lord.” He embodied the plan of the Lord our God to save us from our sins.
Apr 2	TLH 152; LSB 424	Mark 11:12-19	The people had not been using the temple court for the spiritual role it had been intended, so Jesus reminded them again of its purpose.
Apr 3	TLH 354 (LSB 427)	Mark 11:20-25	Our faith is what connects to us to God and to His blessings. Remember that the righteous will live by faith.
Apr 4	TLH 162 (LSB 441)	1 Samuel 7:2-13	Samuel interceded for the people before God and then He answered, accepting their confession of sins and faithfully helping them against the Philistines.
Apr 6	TLH 415; LSB 635	Matthew 22:1-14	There are many who have rejected God’s salvation in Christ (pictured here by the wedding banquet). Rejoice that you have been brought in to feast with God!
Apr 7	TLH 306 (LSB 622)	Mark 14:1-42	Jesus gives Himself to us— by His Holy Supper and His anguish in the Garden.
Apr 8	WS 762	Mark 14:43-72	O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken that such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?
Apr 9	TLH 305 (LSB 636)	Mark 15:1-20	Of what great crime hast Thou to make confession— what dark transgression?
Apr 10	TLH 172 (LSB 449)	Mark 15:21-41	What punishment so strange is suffered yonder! The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander.
Apr 11	TLH 179 (LSB 422)	Luke 23:50-56	The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him, who would not know Him.
Apr 13	TLH 199 (LSB 457)	Mark 16:1-14	He has risen!
Apr 14	WS 730	Psalm 54	By the resurrection of His Son our God has delivered us from all our troubles and given us victory over all our enemies.
Apr 15	TLH 353	Psalm 57	How faithful the Lord is in rescuing His people from disaster!
Apr 16	TLH 209; LSB 484	Psalm 65	Praise to God who has saved us from our sins by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!
Apr 17	TLH 198 (LSB 480)	Luke 24:1-12	The women were frightened at first, but the Gospel comforted them (v. 6-8) just as it comforts us in our fear.
Apr 18	TLH 197; LSB 476	Luke 24:13-35	The two disciples going to Emmaus were afraid that with the death of Jesus all Israel’s hopes had ended. Here again, the Gospel message took away fear.
Apr 20	TLH 206 (LSB 741)	Luke 24:36-49	Jesus brings peace to us by His resurrection from the dead—peace with God, peace of conscience, peace in all circumstances.
Apr 21	TLH 339 (LSB 549)	1 Samuel 12:12-25	Israel had sinned by demanding a king even though they had the Lord, yet because of who He is (rich in mercy) He forgave them and warned them to follow Him faithfully.
Apr 22	TLH 327	1 Samuel 15:10-23	When the Lord rejected Saul, his answer was, “But I did obey the Lord.” Saul tried to rationalize his sins of rebellion just like we sometimes try to rationalize ours.
Apr 23	TLH 483 (LSB 682)	1 Samuel 16:1-13	The Lord often chooses those whom we do not expect to be His servants. Think of Saul (Paul), Matthew (a tax collector), Peter (a fisherman)—and you.
Apr 24	TLH 341 (LSB 525)	Acts 1:1-11	Jesus gave many convincing proofs that He had risen from the dead, preparing His disciples to preach of His resurrection after He had ascended into heaven.
Apr 25	TLH 493	Acts 1:12-26	Through the eleven apostles, Jesus called Matthias to take up the ministry left vacant by Judas’ death.
Apr 27	TLH 502; LSB 834	Psalm 67	The apostles’ preaching and teaching would make God’s ways known on earth, and His salvation among all the nations.
Apr 28	TLH 50 (LSB 924)	1 Samuel 17:1-11, 32-37	David showed his faith in the Lord’s deliverance before he ever put his stone in the sling.
Apr 29	TLH 211	1 Samuel 17:38-50	Those who curse the Lord (such as Goliath did) will be judged by the Lord. Those who trust in the Lord will be safe.
Apr 30	TLH 504	Acts 2:1-13	Wind and fire— both appropriately remind us of the Spirit’s work: wind for the breath of spiritual life He gives us; fire for the Gospel zeal He imparts.

# One Sure Thing!

*“I don’t know, Pastor. I just don’t know.”*

I could count on hearing that concern on every visit to the home of an elderly shut-in. He had been a faithful congregation member for decades. At that time a widower in his 80s with health declining and his family’s lack of interest in spiritual matters a deep disappointment, he expressed his uncertainty about many things.

He is not alone. “Uncertainty” sums up the worldview of many. Health, employment, even the stability of our nation all seem tenuous. Decency and morals which once were assumed values have been abandoned. In our own personal lives we know how quickly things can change.

Trying to see what lies in store for our congregations is unquestionably an uncertain activity as well. Will there be an uptick in information classes and a growing membership, or will difficulties test our resolve to remain faithful to the Lord? How will our joint work as the CLC unfold? Will our missionaries have easy access to souls around the world, or will restrictive, anti-conversion laws be an obstacle? How will we minister to the flocks in our own land in light of the severe shortage of pastors and teachers? There is so much that we just don’t know. It would be extremely discouraging if not for one important thing we do know.

The Old Testament believer Job was well acquainted with uncertainty. With breathtaking suddenness he lost everything: family, possessions, and health. He didn’t know what would come next. He fully expected to die. Still, he did not give in to despair. He held onto one absolute truth, one thing he knew for sure: *“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”* (Job 19:25-27 NIV84)

Job knew this with absolute certainty because God does not lie. *“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man*

There is so much that we just don’t know. It would be extremely discouraging if not for one important thing we do know.

*that he should change his mind.”* (Numbers 23:19 NIV84) God had promised a Kinsman-redeemer to intervene on behalf of sinners, crush Satan’s head, overcome death, and win eternal life for all. Job knew the Redeemer would come in the fullness of time and do all these things, and He did. St. Paul writes, *“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”* (1 Corinthians 15:20 NIV84)

That one sure thing is the antidote to all our uncertainty. It gives us new confidence. It assures us of a solid foundation for our life and work. Like Job, we don’t know whether health or possessions will disappear tomorrow, but we do know that our Redeemer lives and rules over all things at the Father’s right hand. He bled and died for you. There is no way He is going to

leave you to fend for yourself. *“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you,”* He promises (Hebrews 13:5 NIV84).

Our Redeemer lives! We are not serving a dead hero, but a living Lord. Therefore, even the most daunting problems are opportunities for Him to put His love and power into action for our blessing and the ongoing work of preaching Christ to the world. By faith we know the tomb is empty, so we can confidently trust that Jesus already knows how He is going to provide messengers to serve His people with Word and Sacrament in the years ahead. He already knows how He will untangle all the knotted anxieties of our hearts with the peace of forgiveness. He knows how He will encourage and inspire us to let His light shine everywhere until we, too, with resurrected and glorified bodies, see Him with our own eyes and with our own voices sing His praises forever. This we know!



**Michael Eichstadt** is pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, and president of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

# 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.

### **Decline in Religion Hurts Children Most.**

In a widely read article in the Wall Street Journal, psychoanalyst Erica Komisar highlighted the correlation between the decline in religious observance in the United States and a marked rise in anxiety and depression among children and adolescents. A large 2018 study in the American Journal of Epidemiology found that children or teens who attended a religious service at least once per week scored significantly higher on psychological well-being measurements and had lower risks of mental illness. The problem is that, in the last twenty years, the U.S. has seen a 20% decrease in attendance at formal worship services. What comfort do atheist or agnostic parents have to offer a child who is anxious about death? Not much, if they're honest. So Komisar, who is Jewish, actually recommends that parents teach religious values to their children even if the parents themselves don't believe in them. "I am often asked by parents, 'How do I talk to my child about death if I don't believe in God or heaven?' My answer is always the same: 'Lie.' The idea that you simply die and turn to dust may work for some adults, but it doesn't help children. Belief in heaven helps them grapple with this tremendous and incomprehensible loss." In addition, says Komisar, religion provides both a sense of community and a reason to practice altruism: "Today the U.S. is a competitive, scary and stressful place that idealizes perfectionism, materialism, selfishness and virtual rather than real human connection. Religion is the best bulwark against that kind of society. Spiritual belief and practice reinforce collective kindness, empathy, gratitude and real connection. Whether children choose

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Retirement Gift:** Professor Paul Sullivan has announced his retirement effective the end of the current academic year. His faithful service to our church and our school will be acknowledged during the ILC Class Day/Graduation festivities on May 22-23, 2020. Our custom is to present a monetary gift to Prof. Sullivan as a token of our appreciation. CLC members are invited to contribute to a monetary gift which will be presented to him at Graduation (May 23). Please make your checks payable to Immanuel Lutheran College and indicate: "Prof. Sullivan Retirement." Send your gift to: Immanuel Lutheran College, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701.

—Pastor John Hein, Board of Regents Chairman

**Johnathan Schnose**, 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 process on April 21, 2020. Correspondence 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

**Nominations for ILC President:** The Board of Regents announces the following nominations for the office of President of Immanuel Lutheran College: Professors Paul Naumann, Daniel Schierenbeck, and John Ude. The term of this call is for two years, extending to the end of Academic Year 2022. All comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates are to be received by April 11, 2020 (postmarked by April 1), to: Mr. James Burkhardt; 217 Windy Lane; Rockwall, TX 75087; email: jeb6217@yahoo.com.

—Pastor John Hein, Board of Regents Chairman

### **Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference**

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Phoenix, Arizona  
April 28-30, 2020

Agenda:

- Encouraging Our Youth to Consider the Public Preaching and Teaching Ministry  
—Pastor Luke Bernthal
- Book Review (Essayist's Choice)—Pastor Michael Gurath
- Responding to Misunderstandings About the Divine Call—Pastor David Reim
- New Testament Exegesis (James - Part 1)—Pastor David Naumann
- Old Testament Exegesis (Essayist's Choice)—Pastor Benjamin Libby

Chaplain—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt

Speaker—Pastor Mark Tiefel

—Submitted by Pastor Mark Tiefel, Conference Secretary

to continue to practice as adults is something parents cannot control. But that spiritual or religious center will benefit them their entire

lives." Komisar, Erica. "Don't Believe in God? Lie to Your Children." *Houses of Worship*. WSJ.com, 5 Dec. 2019. Web. 10 Dec. 2019.