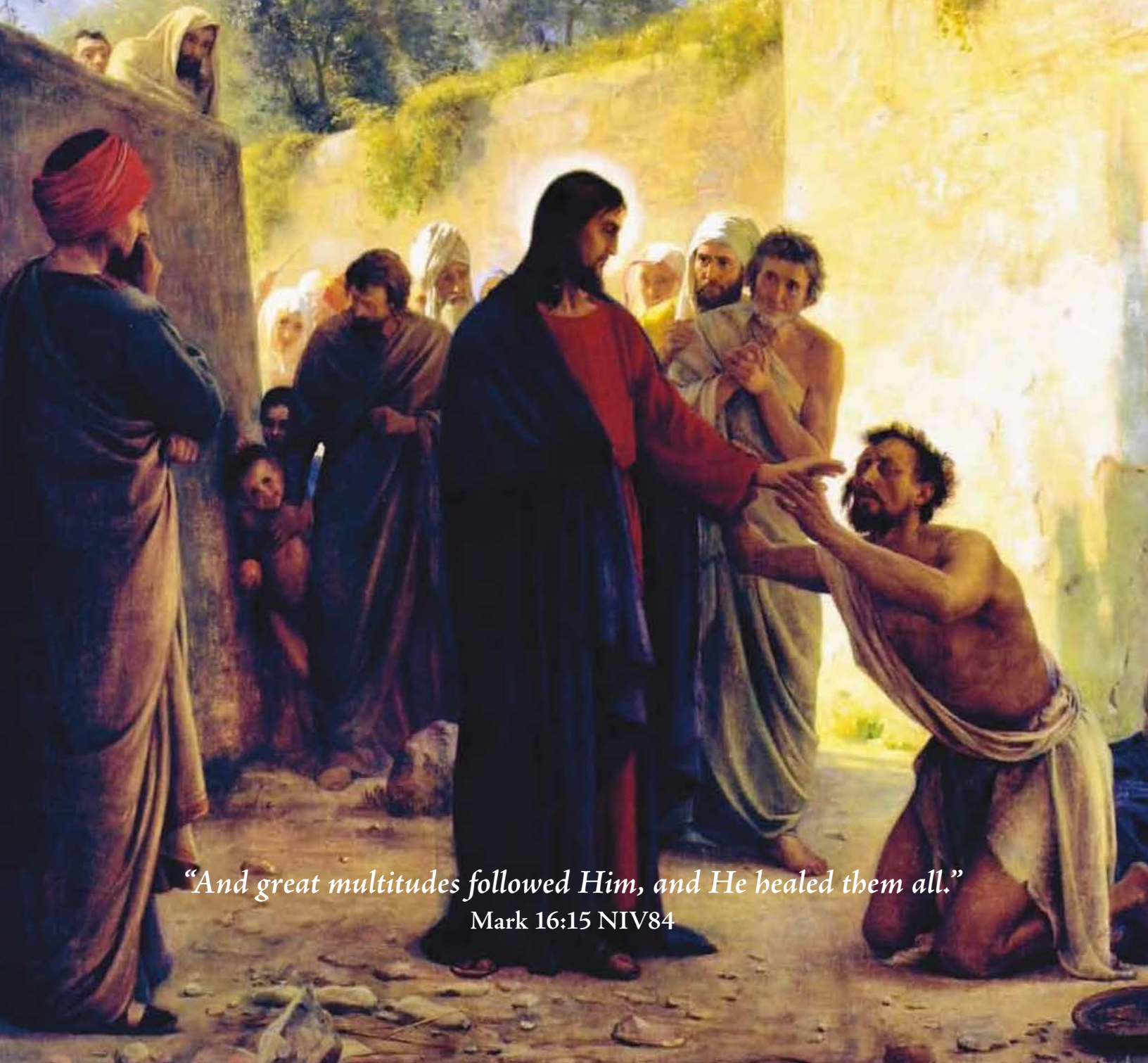


September 2020 VOL 63 NO. 3

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



"And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all."

Mark 16:15 NIV84



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Evangelism Is Sharing the News of Jesus' Perfect Cure

“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.’”

(Mark 16:15 NIV84)

The story is told of a doctor back in the day who moved from the East to a small Midwestern town. One of his first patients was a man who was afflicted with a vexing skin disease from which he had been suffering for a long time, for which no other doctor had been able to provide relief. The new doctor used the medical knowledge he had accumulated over decades of practice to diagnose the man's problem. He then prescribed a course of treatment for him that cleared it up in a matter of weeks. His patient, delighted to be relieved of the discomfort from which he had been suffering, couldn't wait to tell his friend. His friend spoke to his wife about it. She told the grocer. The grocer told a truck driver. The truck driver told the people at the warehouse. Before long the whole city was abuzz with news of “the talented doctor from the East” who could do amazing things for people. It didn't take long for his office to be crowded with patients seeking help for their own medical ailments.

During the past months the world has been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic health problem. Concerted efforts have been made to halt its spread. Scientists the world over have been working feverishly to develop a vaccine that will provide people with immunity. What a glorious day it will be for the world when it happens! The threat of COVID will at long last be removed. People won't need to practice the safeguard measures of donning face masks and social distancing any longer. Air travel will go on as before. Schools and churches will be opened fully. Life will be back to normal, or the “new normal,” as some like to say.

Yet as marvelous as it will be to have a vaccine available for COVID with life back to normal, far more wonderful is the “vaccine” Jesus has already provided for our souls, and by which He has supplied us with immunity against the sin-virus and enabled us to enjoy a normal (close and loving)

relationship with our holy God. By offering His sin-free life on the cross as a ransom, Jesus has supplied us with the perfect antidote for our sin-disease. With the eyes of our faith fixed on Him, our souls have been restored to peak condition. We need not distance ourselves from our God in fear or hide our faces from Him in shame. As we travel life's road, we need not harbor worries about what lies around the corner, for the Savior promises to guide our steps, guard us from dangers, and make everything work for our good. Even when we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, our hearts may be at peace because, dressed in Jesus' righteousness, we know that a blessed future awaits us when we shall be free from all that now causes pain and distress (including health problems).

This is the good news Jesus has given us to pass along to others—to those nearby in our circle of acquaintance, and to those far away through our church's mission programs. We may well think of ourselves as cured patients who are now privileged to tell those still afflicted with the sin-virus about their Heavenly Physician Who possesses the ability and the loving desire to make them well, too.

*Oh, may He soon to ev'ry nation
Find entrance where He is unknown,
With life and light and free salvation,
That Satan's pow'r be overthrown
And healing to the hearts may come
In heathen land and Christian home!
(Christian Worship 32:5)*



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

Go into All the World and Proclaim the Gospel, Starting Next Door

The beginning of our title should sound familiar, as they are the words of Jesus recorded for us in Mark 16:15. The second half of the title is also an encouragement from our Lord, but more on that later.

I wonder how many of our readers have traveled in foreign lands? And of those who have, how many for the purpose of mission work? I am in no way criticizing anyone for vacationing abroad. I'm simply pointing out the reality that very few of us Christians will actually step on foreign soil for the purpose of bringing the Gospel. This does not, however, let us off the hook for doing foreign mission work. After all, Jesus spoke the Great Commission to all of us. We can give of our treasures to support the work of the church overseas. We can search for and fulfill the needs of Project Kinship and the MEF (Mission Extension Fund). And easiest, but perhaps most important, we can keep our foreign missions and missionaries in our daily prayers. But where does the "rubber meet the road" in your mission life?

Jesus also spoke these words to his disciples: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8 ESV) Notice the beginning point? Your hometown, Jesus says, is where you start witnessing. In fact, for some, mission work may be as close as a spouse or other family member. Does your next-door neighbor know about your relationship with Christ? Do your co-workers think of you as "churchy" and judgmental, or do they recognize your wise and moral counsel as Scripture-based? What others have stated is very true: mission work does begin at home.

While our congregations have the blessing of supporting the spread of the Gospel around the world, it would be missing the point if our own neighborhoods didn't know what we stood for. Do you know what your church's reputation is in your area? Are you known as the friendly church, the picky church, the forgiving church, or the stuffy church? What could change or improve your

church's reputation in your community? Most likely, the same thing that brings most new members into a congregation—word of mouth. Practice talking up your church and your pastor. Know the issues of the day and the Bible's stance on such so you can show your church's compliance with Scriptures. Get in the habit of inviting people to "come and see" that Jesus is present, taught, and worshiped in our services, and that the sacraments are administered correctly.

Besides these individual efforts in your community, take the time to really get to know your own congregation.

Does your church have an outreach or missions committee for local endeavors? Is your congregation actively getting its name and the Gospel message out to the community? Have you found ways in which you can help or support your church's undertakings?

The best way to share the Gospel is to talk. The best way to share how to share the Gospel is also to talk. Get together with your fellow Christians and discuss ways to get the word out. Is your church able to man a booth at local fairs or festivals? Perhaps you could have a family project building a float to enter into a local parade. More common ideas should not be overlooked either, such as TV, radio, and internet ads. Consider also using social media, posters, lunch menus, or place mats. And do not attempt to reinvent the wheel! This is an area where most Christians encourage plagiarism! Share and borrow ideas freely. A great place to start would be on our CLC Domestic Missions website (us.lutheranmissions.org)

If the Lord gives you opportunity, by all means go into all the world, just don't miss the opportunities right outside your door!



David W. Bernthal is a retired teacher. He is a member of Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

*Your hometown,
Jesus says,
is where you start
witnessing.*

TLH 53, LSB 919

“Abide, O Dearest Jesus”

One of the blessings that we enjoy as members of a congregation of like-minded Christians is the opportunity for joint prayer. Though the Lord assures us that our individual prayers are both heard and answered, He also encourages us to join our hearts in prayer when we are gathered for worship. He promises that if as few as two of us agree in what we ask, it will be done for us by our Father in heaven (Matthew 18:19, 20).

With this encouragement from our Lord, we ought to value highly the prayers that we say together when we are gathered for worship. These include not only the collects, general prayers, the Lord’s Prayer, and special intercessions for fellow believers, but also the prayers in the hymns that we sing together.

“Abide, O Dearest Jesus” is one such prayer, usually sung at the close of a service. It recalls a simple request spoken by two disciples of Jesus on the day of His resurrection. They were on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus when Jesus joined them, though they didn’t recognize Him until later. They were troubled by the crucifixion and death of Jesus, wondering how those things could possibly fit with their conviction that He was the promised Savior. Jesus cleared everything up for them by identifying and explaining many Old Testament prophecies of the Christ. They were so thrilled at what He was telling them that when they reached their destination, they asked Him to stay with them, which He was pleased to do.

At the close of a service we are in a place quite different from that of those disciples, for we know that it is Jesus Who has been present with us. Still, His willingness to stay at the request of only two should encourage us to pray the six stanzas of this hymn. In each of them we ask Jesus to abide with us and to give us one of the blessings of His presence that He promises in the Word.

“Abide, O dearest Jesus, Among us with Thy grace.” It



is in Jesus that we have God’s grace and favor, for He has taken away our sins and restored us to fellowship with God. With the blessing of forgiveness, Satan can’t touch us.

“Abide, O dearest Jesus, Among us with Thy Word.” It is in His Word that Christ dwells with us. The Gospel of forgiveness of sins and eternal life is available to us

throughout the week in our daily devotions.

“Abide with heavenly brightness Among us, precious Light.” It is in Christ that we have light in the knowledge of the true God and are delivered from the darkness of idolatry. It is in Christ that we have the Gospel of salvation by grace and are delivered from the error of work-righteousness.

“Abide with richest blessings Among us bounteous Lord.” The abiding Savior gives many blessings, the greatest of which is spiritual growth in grace and wisdom.

“Abide with Thy protection Among us, Lord, our Strength.” We have no power of our own to overcome the temptations of the world and Satan. We need Christ’s protection from these deadly enemies; we need His strength to overcome them.

“Abide, O faithful Savior, Among us with Thy love.” In His Word we have Christ’s faithful, unchanging love. He gives us steadfastness so that we persevere in faith to the end of our days and inherit everlasting life.

Just as Jesus was pleased with the urgent prayer of the two disciples on that first evening after His resurrection, so also He is pleased when we, together with our fellow believers, ask Him to go with us as we close our hour of worship and return to our daily routine.



We cannot overvalue the simple prayers that we offer together in our hymns.

John Klatt is a retired pastor. He lives in Watertown, South Dakota.

Beautiful . . . Feet?

“How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”

(Isaiah 52:7)

In the hierarchy of human body parts, feet don’t get a lot of love. Gallons of poetic ink have been spilled in praise of eyes. Stacks of sonnets have been written about the comeliness of lips, hair, form and figure. Hands can be graceful. Ears can at least be “shell-like.” But when it comes to feet, few favorable adjectives suggest themselves. Especially with advancing age, one is more likely to associate feet with corns, callouses, swelling, and fungus. All things considered, feet would seem to be the human appendages that have the least going for them.

Yet feet are important, as you’ll quickly discover if you’re ever laid up with a foot or ankle injury. Feet are the unsung heroes that allow us to get around, accomplish our tasks, deliver the goods. And nowhere is this more important, says the prophet Isaiah, than when the message you’re delivering is the Gospel. *“How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news!”*

The Hebrew word for *beautiful* in this passage is rare; one of the few other times it occurs is in the description of the bride in Song of Solomon 1:10, *“Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels.”* (NIV) It’s easy to imagine the face of a bride as beautiful. But beautiful feet?

Certainly! Isaiah predicted the joy that would be felt in Jerusalem when the messengers of the returning exiles crested the surrounding mountains on their way to the holy city. “God has kept His promise!” the heralds would proclaim. “The remnant are returning! Zion is restored!” The message would be so heartening that even the feet of the messengers—the part for the whole—would be considered beautiful.

What is the joyful content of the message borne upon these beautiful feet? “Peace,” “glad tidings of good things,” and “salvation.” You will probably not be surprised to learn that the Hebrew term for salvation is nearly identical to the name of Jesus. For the prophecy of Isaiah finds its ultimate fulfillment in the preaching of the Gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim *that* Good News! Every Christian, of course, has such beautiful feet, insofar as he fulfills his commission to proclaim the one way of salvation. But in Romans Chapter 10 the Apostle Paul quotes this verse and applies it specifically to the public ministry: *“How shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’”* (v. 15)

This is why we prepare, train, and call our young men into the preaching ministry. For what job could be more vital? Is President of the United States more important than a preacher of the Gospel? Could any vocation be more beautiful, any calling more to be desired than that of the public ministry? Flawed and fragile vessels of clay our pastors may be (II Corinthians 4:7), yet theirs is the joyful task (as Isaiah put it in an earlier chapter) of speaking “comfort to Jerusalem,” of crying out to her that “*her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned.*” The Apostle John puts it even more simply; Christian pastors get to spend their lives telling people that “*the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*” (1 John 1:7)

How beautiful are their feet!



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

Picking Winners and Losers

“Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”

(James 2:5-9)

James here addresses Christians who were “playing favorites.” By showing such partiality, they were suggesting that the rich had something to offer to the congregation while the poor did not. In other words, they were picking the “winner” over the “loser.” The apostle explains the great foolishness of this sin of partiality.

James points out that to consider the poor negatively and not worthy of our mission efforts is to set ourselves at odds with God Himself! If God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith, who are we to despise them and consider them unworthy of our time and efforts?

The sin of showing partiality against the poor continues in the church today. Consider our own sinful tendencies with visitors at church. When a visitor comes in well-dressed in their Sunday best, we tend to excitedly think, “This could be a prospective member!” But when one comes in off the streets smelling funny and shabbily clothed, we’re tempted to think, “What handout will be asked for this time?”

James then demonstrates the foolishness of favoring the rich when these were the very ones dragging Christians into court and blaspheming the name of Christ. Again, things have not changed. Those who are wealthiest and mightiest in fame and power are often the very ones that blaspheme the faith and give Christians a hard time.

Also, the rich sometimes have the sinful tendency of trying to buy influence in the church. It’s even worse when we let them. For example, it may be that the congregation’s voters are considering an important decision, and the opinion of the wealthy member, who puts more in the offering plate,

is given greater consideration than that of a poor member. Such a scenario helps illustrate the truth of what James says: “if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”

Instead, James says we do well to fulfill the royal law: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (v. 8) It’s as though he were saying, “You want to be impressed by wealth, prestige, and royalty? Here’s the royal law from God’s Word. Let this be that royal thing that impresses you and is impressed upon you. It’s not a matter of pandering to the rich and ignoring the poor, rather it’s loving all neighbors equally, without picking favorites.” God does not call us to pick winners or losers. He calls us to preach the Gospel to every creature.

God reveals in His Word that because of sin all people are losers, but because of Jesus all people are winners. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:23-24) Every person, no matter how rich, is utterly and completely poor before God. And all people, no matter how poor, have been redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Through God’s Word, may the Holy Spirit keep us poor in sin and unbelief, but rich in grace and faith. And may He enable us to preach the Gospel to every creature without exception and without partiality. Amen!



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

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 Most Personally Profitable



My daughter works in a health and fitness center as an exercise coach and dietician. During every work shift she engages in exercise along with her clients. She is required to study nutrition science and to help people with meal planning—knowledge she can use in her own life as well. It must be nice to have a job that by its very nature provides ongoing physical benefits for the employee. In a way, being a called church worker is like that, only better!

The very work of a called servant comes with a host of spiritual benefits for the employee.

Perhaps the biggest benefit to being a called worker is hearing God's Word regularly at our job. *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD.'" (Psalm 122:1)* Since a called worker's job is in the house of the Lord, we can experience that gladness every day at work. Unfortunately, not even Christians always have such a positive attitude. Our old Adam chafes at the repetition and routine of daily devotions and Bible study. How many times have you had to drag yourself to church or force yourself to read a devotion, only to find that the message was just what you needed? As called workers, we are expected to avail ourselves of opportunities to be in the Word. That is a blessing, because God is feeding our souls through it.

Another way called workers regularly hear God's Word is through their fellow Christians. Congregational members and co-workers empathize with you in facing the challenges that go with the work. Through timely Christian counsel from colleagues and parents of students, a burden is often lifted or shared. Many prove to be like Timothy, a *"brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your*

faith." (1 Thessalonians 3:2)

As a teacher, I am frequently inspired by the students in my care. Countless times they have provided me with the words and examples of people who reflect the love of their Savior in their lives. Education is symbiotic; the teacher is learning from the student as well. What a blessing!

Another benefit of being a called worker is having to prepare in order to teach the Word of God to others. Perhaps you have heard it expressed that the best way to master something is to have to teach it. As with other jobs, digging into God's Word also takes time and effort. The personal reward, however, is much greater than that found in most jobs. The nature of your job draws you into Scripture. It is there where the treasure is! We have God's promise, *"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."* (Isaiah 55:11)

Some time ago, early in my church calling, a sage pastor of many years shared a caution with me. He said, "Don't forget to apply the message of the Gospel to yourself as you share it with others." Sometimes we squander the blessings of our work by getting too caught up in the work itself. By slowing down, taking a deep breath, and allowing the Gospel to wash over us in our meditation, we will be renewed and invigorated in our calling and better able to serve others.

These personal spiritual benefits of being a called worker contribute to it being the BEST JOB EVER!



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

ERROR'S ECHO

In this new series we take a look back at some of the most notorious errors and heresies that have threatened the church over the centuries, as well as the subtle (and not so subtle) ways in which those false teachings continue to haunt 21st century thought and theology.

Marcionism

When Marcion arrived in Rome in the year 140 A.D. he must have made quite an impression. He had already made himself a comfortable fortune as an armorer and as the owner of a ship. He arrived from Sinope, a city in Pontus, situated on the north shore of modern Turkey. Whether he was a young man of thirty or a well-seasoned man in his fifties seems uncertain. He was the son of the bishop of Sinope, an educated Christian, and he appeared eager to become active in the Roman congregations. He generously gave 200,000 sesterces to the churches in Rome for their charities. That's one hundred years of a working man's salary! But all did not remain well.

He began asking questions, such as, "What did Jesus mean when He spoke of new wine and old wineskins?" "What did He mean when He spoke of good and evil trees and their fruit?" He wasn't satisfied with the answers he received, and a serious rift developed. His generous donation was returned and he was excommunicated in A.D. 144. He formed a rival church which grew rapidly in the heart of Rome and spread widely.

What did he teach? With carefully cherry-picked passages, he sought to show that the Creator-God (the Just-God) of the Old Testament was utterly inferior to the Good-God of the New Testament. This Creator ruled a purely material kingdom, ruled by force and law, and was often arbitrary and angry and cruel. The realm of Marcion's Good-God was the invisible world of spirit, and was ruled by free grace. In it was no punishment, but only the persuasion of love. Thus, he compared Jesus, Who stretched forth His hands and saved the world, to Moses, whose hands were held up until the enemy was destroyed. Elijah brought fire from heaven upon the soldiers, while Jesus forbade His disciples to do the same. Moses commanded "an eye for an eye," while Jesus tells us to "turn the other cheek." By their fruit you will know them. He rejected the "bad fruit" of the Just-God.

In this way, he rejected the entire Old Testament, and all

the apostles too, except for Saint Paul. Only Paul rejected the Just-God and his laws. In Marcion's canon, only ten of Paul's letters and most of the Gospel of Luke were left of the Bible. Even the Christmas story was removed since, in Marcion's view, Jesus only seemed to be physical and was not really born!

According to Marcion, Jesus saved us by showing He was stronger than the Just-God, who in retaliation caused His crucifixion. This crucifixion had no atoning power to save, however. We are saved merely by believing in the Good-God.

Followers of Marcion continued to exist for several centuries before slowly dying out.

But the echoes still resonate.

For example, the view that the God of the Old Testament is totally different from Jesus and the God of the New Testament is still very much alive in Mormonism.

The desire for a kinder, gentler God, one who does not justly punish sin, who is never angry, and who loves the sinner just as he follows Marcion.

So-called "Red Letter Christianity," with its stress on the words of Christ, easily leads to a devaluing of the Old Testament and flirts with Marcionism.

Gospel reductionism is a theology that teaches that only part of the Bible is God's Word—the part which directly communicates the Gospel. The rest is a creation of man. This imitates Marcion.

Those who deny the existence of hell, or who deny that the Christian has any need of the Law of God, are following in the footsteps of Marcion.

We were not surprised to find that there is even a web-site proudly promoting modern Marcionism. It would seem that Marcionism is still very much alive among us!



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

Living Hope Lutheran Church, Appleton, Wisconsin

“Hody, Hody, Hody!” I could hear it all the way up front (not that it’s really all that far in our cozy congregation). One of our younger members was joyfully joining in with the liturgy. Another time I blessed the congregation in the name of the Lord and received in return the same sign of the cross from a smiling and somewhat mischievous two year old. If you walked into Living Hope in Appleton, Wisconsin, on a Sunday morning, this is what you would find: God’s people—old, not so old, and very young—receiving God’s gifts! Our congregation currently has a total membership of fifty-three. Twenty-four of those are fifth grade and younger. It can get loud. It can be a challenge. And what a joyful privilege it is!

This is the main way that God has caused our congregation to grow in its short history. For a number of years it was a preaching station. Then Pastor Michael Schierenbeck served the



Above: sanctuary of Living Hope Lutheran Church; below: members Joe and Naomi Oster, with daughter Rowyn and son Simeon, after Simeon’s baptism.



group part-time as they met on Sunday afternoons in a rented sanctuary. My first Sunday here was the last Sunday there, as the following week we moved into a rented office space. We met there for almost two years until we moved into a nice church building which we purchased with a loan from the CLC Church Extension Fund (CEF).

Our members enjoy a close-knit fellowship both in and out of our church building. Sunday Bible class and Sunday school, Wednesday night vespers, and children’s Bible history and catechism classes continually fill God’s house with God’s Word and promise. Then we often get together for game nights, volleyball, church picnics, and family camping outings. Many of these things have been put on hold because of the coronavirus situation, but we have recently begun holding in-person services again, and



we look forward to being able to resume all our fellowship activities when the Lord wills.

It's been a pleasure serving the Lord's people here these past six years. The appreciation for the Gospel and joy in the fellowship is obvious. The Lord has blessed us with grateful hearts to give for His work and an easy joy in joining together for His glory. We've seen a number of new contacts and adult instruction classes recently as well.

In the past year we've had six Baptisms! A number of those families in adult instruction classes have children whom they have brought to the Lord in the sacrament. This influx of children, alongside the many we already had, has us considering our future needs and the hope of one day having a school. Lord willing, at some point you might hear of us moving into a bigger space! Watch out for a team from Living Hope at the CLC grade school basketball

tournament in a few years too!

We've been able to host VBS each summer, and for the past few years we've held a once-a-month Friday-night Bible school and babysitting night for the community through which we've had the opportunity to share the Word with many non-member children. Every month some volunteers help out with this gladly, then likely go home and directly to sleep. It's tiring! And it's a joy!

Naomi Oster, one of our members, was kind enough to offer her thoughts about life here at Living Hope:

"We love our church family. It's a blessing for our kids to have so many other children to learn God's Word with. Our children have many opportunities to hear God's Word with Friday night Bible School once a month, VBS in the summer, and Sunday School each Sunday after the church service. Obviously, we haven't had any of these during the pandemic, but we look forward to when we can start them up again! We are truly blessed to have a church centered on Christ that focuses so much on the importance of teaching our young ones about their Savior."

That really gets to the heart of it. Life in our congregation is the life of the Spirit which comes only from the wounded side of Jesus Christ. His cross stands at the front of our sanctuary because by His grace we stand in His wounds and live by His life-giving Word. What a joy to partake of this grace together!



David Ude is pastor of Living Hope Lutheran Church in Appleton, Wisconsin.



Top: Some members of Living Hope; above: VBS children.

Visit to India Transforms Lives

[The following is a report from Pastor Jyothi Benjamin, in his own words, about the recent visit of Pastor David Reim to India. The report is lightly edited for clarity.]

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Acts 16:9-10)

500,000 villages and communities in India have never heard the Gospel. But when you introduce a village to Jesus, amazing things happen. When you bring Jesus to them, Jesus transforms their lives and brings hope and change to places steeped in spiritual bondage.

CLC Visiting Missionary Rev. David Reim's visit to India: It was a great blessing for the CLCI to work with Rev. David Reim from 27th January to 5th February 2020.

It is really challenging to bring the Gospel to illiterate Indian slums and tribal people because they come from the extreme faiths of ethnic Indian religious backgrounds. With the grace of our Lord, in the last year the CLCI has successfully established a few new congregations last in the slums, tribal areas, and fishing villages of Andhra Pradesh state. It is a great blessing for these newly established CLCI congregations to meet our dearly beloved CLC visiting missionary, Rev. David Reim, through whose outreach many lives were transformed by the Gospel.

Chairing the JAPC 2020: We praise God for the visit of Rev. David Reim to India in the months of January and February 2020. Rev. David Reim participated in the Joint Asia Pastoral conference among called workers of the CLCI, BELC, HCLCN, NCLCN and ZLCM. It is a great joy to inform you all about all the blessings we have enjoyed through this Joint Asia Pastoral conference under the valuable chairmanship of Rev. David Reim. We praise God for his valuable input, his edifying essays, and his morning and evening devotions.

Pastor Reim also encouraged us with greetings from the honorable president of the CLC, Rev. Michael Eichstadt, Chairman of the Board of Missions Joel Krafft, and from our beloved Missionaries Rev. Todd Ohlmann and Rev.



Above: Pastor Reim preaches as Pastor Benjamin translates; below: distributing Bibles to poor members.

Peter Evensen. It was a great privilege for all the delegates to hear these wonderful greetings messages from our honorable CLC leaders. With these greetings Pastor Reim reminded us of the hard work of our missionaries and humble beginnings of our missions. *"This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvelous in our eyes!"* (Psalm 118:23)

Pastoral Conferences and Seminary Classes: After participating in the three-day Joint Asia Pastoral Conference, Rev Reim visited the CLCI from 30th January to 4th February to participate in a couple of pastoral conferences and to teach seminary classes in both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states. Pastoral conferences were conducted at Modumodi, Nidubrou, and Hyderabad. Hundreds of our CLCI pastors benefited from Rev. Reim's





Upper left: Pastor Reim with a CLCI pastor and his family; lower left: praying for the sick; above: VBS children in Nidubrolu.



mission was accomplished with great success.

Rev. David Reim opened a new CLCI Prayer shed at the Shanthi Nagar slum area. Tribal people are often treated as untouchables in Indian society, because many tribal people work as scavengers or raise pigs. Some of them catch rats in the paddy fields for a living and even use rats as their food. Nobody dares to touch them, or mingle and join with them. But the love of our Lord changed that. He laid his hands on their heads and prayed for them. Reverend David visited almost all our slum congregations and prayed for many hundreds of sick people there.

Children's Program: Reverend David participated in a couple of children's programs, one at the Mission House in Nidubrou and the other at Dandamudi village. The children gathered together with great joy to celebrate his visit with a special program of songs and children's dances and action songs. Reverend Reim presented hundreds of New Testaments and gifts to the children, as well as to some of the adults, and shook hands with them.

Conclusion: Praise the Lord for this heart-touching outreach from this wonderful missionary! I am sure that this outreach transformed the lives of many people in the slums and tribal areas. There were many converts to Christianity. Many hundreds of our CLCI members, as well, heard the inspiring good news of the Gospel, and the Lord greatly strengthened their faith through His Word. The glory of God was there in all those nighttime services!

Surely the CLCI was blessed by this wonderful visit from our honorable CLC visiting missionary Rev. David Reim. Thank you Pastor Reim, and we love you, brother! Also we humbly thank the honorable CLC mission board for sending this missionary to us. We give God all glory for this great mission effort!



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

lessons. Our Seminary students, especially, enjoyed his lessons on "Tabernacle" and "The Servant of the Lord." The Lord has used Rev. David Reim in a great manner in this outreach. Reverend David taught our pastors and students important lessons using PowerPoint presentations, which helped his message reach our pastors' hearts more effectively.

Visiting slum, tribal, and fisherman area CLCI congregations: Also we thank Reverend Reim for participating in public Gospel prayer meetings in various CLCI congregations located in slum areas. Everybody was thrilled to hear Reverend Reim's uplifting sermons. I am sure that the Gospel transformed their lives in a great way.

From the bottom of our hearts we appreciate Pastor Reim's zeal to reach these poor people for Christ. It is really amazing that the honorable CLC visiting missionary came forward with great courage to visit these backward areas in the midst of many critical and difficult situations. The members and pastors of these congregations welcomed the missionary with beautiful garlands and flowers. In the midst of great opposition, the Lord has used Rev. David Reim greatly to strengthen the faith of these illiterate members through his inspiring sermons and individual prayers. I have noticed much satisfaction in the faces of our pastors and members. Sometimes the nights were extremely long in doing many individual prayers for sick people, and we were a little bit exhausted when we returned to the hotel, but the

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS SEPTEMBER 2020

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Sep 1	TLH 578	Acts 22:22-29	Paul’s Roman citizenship was a blessing to him and helped him advance the Gospel. Does God use your citizenship to do the same?
Sep 2	TLH 350	Hosea 1:1-2:1	Hosea’s wife was an illustration of the nation of Israel which committed “blatant acts of promiscuity by abandoning the Lord.” Yet God’s compassion had not departed entirely (v. 7).
Sep 3	TLH 277 (LSB 699)	Hosea 2:2-13	Forgetfulness was the way of Israel. She did not remember nor call to mind Who had blessed her in the past. The people only looked for the next “new” thing.
Sep 4	TLH 282	Hosea 2:14-23	Even though Israel was unfaithful to the Lord, He was always ready to love her, turn her from her sin, and take her as His own.
Sep 5	TLH 464 (LSB 649)	3 John 1:1-15	This brief letter from Paul to a friend teaches us to welcome and love our fellow believers and reminds us of the joy we have whenever we see them walking in the truth.
Sep 7	TLH 525	Hosea 3:1-5	Again using Hosea’s life as an illustration, God shows how He will remain faithful even though His people Israel will depart from Him. He will give them opportunity to return to Him.
Sep 8	TLH 486	Hosea 4:1-11	The people were wicked and unbelieving, but the priests had played a role in leading them into it. Pray for your pastors that they would guide you faithfully.
Sep 9	TLH 288 (LSB 865)	Hosea 4:12-5:4	The Lord did not want Israel’s waywardness to rub off on Judah. Watch yourselves carefully, too that your sin does not lead others away from Christ.
Sep 10	TLH 65; LSB 336	Revelation 1:1-8	Jesus has set us free from our sins by His death! Now He lives and will come again with glory!
Sep 11	WS 720 (LSB 413)	Revelation 1:9-20	John’s vision revealed Jesus as living and glorious— with dazzling purity, a powerful Word, and eyes that see all things.
Sep 12	TLH 321	Hosea 5:5-15	Israel and Judah would totter into both arrogance and unbelief, following after other gods. But the Lord would wait until their troubles drove them to seek Him and find hope in Him.
Sep 14	TLH 8	Hosea 6:1-7:2	“What am I going to do with you?” God said. He would heal sin-sick souls with His forgiveness, but for those who hardened their hearts, their wickedness would be revealed and judged.
Sep 15	TLH 607	Hosea 7:3-16	Israel burned with the heat of wickedness against God, but they were spiritually blind and too simple-minded to see their impending destruction. When they cried out, it was not to the One Who could help.
Sep 16	TLH 239 (LSB 905)	Revelation 2:1-7	In all the letters to the churches it is impossible to miss Jesus’ care and concern for them.
Sep 17	TLH 521 (LSB 760)	Revelation 2:8-11	Suffering, affliction, and poverty— these things are only for a time. Keep your eyes focused on the end where there is salvation, glory, and life forever with Jesus.
Sep 18	TLH 419	Hosea 8:1-14	The nation of Israel would be scattered on account of its idolatry. The Lord was willing to receive them back to Himself, but they continually ignored His calls and worshiped silver and gold.
Sep 19	TLH 332	Hosea 9:1-16	A sad end would come to the northern kingdom of Israel. This is what sin does. It destroys and ruins everything. Look to your Savior for safety and healing from sin; and turn away from evil!
Sep 21	TLH 571	Hosea 9:17-10:15	The more success Israel had as a nation, the more they relied on themselves and turned from God. It is no different today. Many turn from God when times are good, thinking they don’t need Him.
Sep 22	TLH 312 (LSB 625)	Revelation 2:12-17	The church in Pergamum had held to the Lord but was tempted by sexual immorality. Jesus urged them to repentance and held the Gospel before them: To those who conquer there awaits a heavenly feast.
Sep 23	TLH 447 (LSB 664)	Revelation 2:18-29	The church needed to separate itself from the false prophetess Jezebel, for those who followed her would come under certain and severe judgment. Repent and believe, for the believers will rule with Christ!
Sep 24	TLH 244 (LSB 506)	Hosea 11:1-11	Here we see God’s beautiful and loving heart, a heart that does not want any soul to be lost. It’s a window into the heart of Jesus too. “How can I give you up?” Christ says to you. Think of that.
Sep 25	TLH 435	Hosea 11:12-12:14	Jacob once wrestled for God’s blessings, but his descendants had lost the desire to cling to the Lord. Yet God still invited them to hold onto Him and put their hope in Him.
Sep 26	TLH 14 (LSB 791)	Hosea 13:1-16	It’s striking that in these chapters of warning and judgment against Israel the Gospel is still woven throughout. Here it’s in verses 4, 5, and 14. Always God provides promises capable of bringing back the erring and encouraging the faithful.
Sep 28	WS 754	Revelation 3:1-6	Here is a church that had become spiritually dead. They went through the motions, but did not give real evidence of their faith in their lives. They needed to wake up and be alert to the Gospel again.
Sep 29	WS 773	Revelation 3:7-13	Two encouraging promises here for a church that kept Jesus’ word: unbelievers would come to faith through their ministry and the Lord would bring them through tribulation.
Sep 30	TLH 362	Hosea 14:1-9	The book of Hosea ends with a rich Gospel message: repent and turn to the Lord for healing. There was still time for Israel to find forgiveness in Him and to rejoice in His mercy. There is still time for us too!

Detroit Area Congregation Reaches Out With Virtual VBS

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church in Madison Heights, Michigan has been on full mission status since 2005. Over the years, this congregation certainly has seen its ups and downs. Most recently, they endured a pastoral vacancy of more than a year before Pastor Thomas Naumann accepted a call there in April of 2017.

But the Lord has greatly blessed Mt. Zion, especially over the past year. Last September, they hosted the Great Lakes Pastoral Conference—quite an undertaking for a small congregation,

but the experience helped to bond the group together through their joint work and preparation. In this past year, they have been blessed with six adult confirmations, two adult baptisms, and one child baptism. Mt. Zion also supports outreach in the Cleveland area as Pastor Naumann holds monthly services at a family residence there. Attendance for these services is about ten.

Mt. Zion has an active outreach committee that meets on a monthly basis. In January, they began advertising on Google, believing a continued increase in online presence to be the most cost-effective way to target the unchurched in their community. And though the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered many of the traditional means of outreach (like evangelism seminars and traditional VBS), this has not stopped Mt. Zion from exploring alternative means of sharing the Gospel message. The congregation already had been posting sermons online, so it was an easy transition to begin providing live-streaming of worship services on their YouTube page.



Mt. Zion members Carl Ryan and Michelle VanderVoord help prepare a video lesson for virtual VBS.

Recently Mt. Zion took their outreach a step further by producing a virtual vacation Bible school. The outreach committee and many volunteer members came together to produce a three-part series entitled “Jesus Has All

Power in Heaven and Earth.” The series is geared especially toward community outreach and basic Bible instruction. Each video is 10-15 minutes in length and contains a Bible story, a craft which can be done with common household items, and a memory verse.

The ultimate goal of our subsidized mission congregations is that they

will eventually become self-supporting. In recent years, Mt. Zion has been blessed with increased offerings and find themselves comfortably ahead of budget this year. This has allowed them to make some improvements to their church as they recently approved a plan to replace their air conditioning system.

In the church’s welcome video on their website, Pastor Naumann states, “Mt. Zion Lutheran Church has as its very first priority the preaching and teaching of Jesus Christ as the only Savior of all mankind.” By God’s grace, Mt. Zion has been enabled to carry out this mission. We pray that the Lord would continue to shower His blessings upon this group of faithful believers.



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

SEEN IN PASSING

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

Christian Colleges Cut Faculty.

In June, *Christianity Today* magazine surveyed Christian colleges around the U.S. and found an alarming trend—faculty members are being laid off. “While some officials cite COVID-19 as the reason for the cuts, most say the financial reckoning comes in response to the ongoing crisis of higher education and their efforts to prepare for the future.” For example, five schools they looked at, Bethel University (Minnesota), Southeastern University (Florida), Hardin-Simmons University (Texas), John Brown University (Arkansas), and Harding University (Arkansas), were cutting over 150 full-time faculty members between them. Other schools are attempting to avoid such permanent cuts by requiring mandatory faculty furloughs, reducing staff and services, and not filling faculty vacancies. “Small, evangelical colleges were already in a precarious position due to lower enrollment, relatively small endowments, and shrinking donor bases. COVID-19 only made it worse. . . . Some schools have completely closed: Nebraska Christian College and Concordia University-Portland shut their doors this spring. Declining enrollment is a major factor in the ongoing financial crisis.” Adams, Liam. “Dozens of Christian College Faculty Eliminated in Spring Budget Cuts.” *Gleanings*. ChristianityToday.com, 22 Jun. 2020. Web. 6 Jul. 2020.

California Governor Bans Singing in Church.

In a wide-ranging order issued July 1, California Governor Gavin Newsom clamped down on the practice of hymn singing in church. Though previous government orders had discouraged the practice, updated state COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Department of Public Health now forbid it outright, mandating that “places of worship must . . . discontinue singing and chanting activities.” It remained unclear how the government proposed

to enforce the new ban, or what penalties would be imposed for those who fail to comply. Kasler, Dale. “Houses of worship told to ‘discontinue singing’ under order from Newsom as pandemic worsens.” *Coronavirus*. The Sacramento Bee, 2 Jul. 2020. Web. 6 Jul. 2020.

Israeli Government Cancels Christian Channel.

In late June, Israel’s Council for Cable and Satellite Broadcasting suspended the license of Shelanu TV, a Hebrew language Christian channel that

has been accused of proselytizing (seeking converts to Christianity). Proselytizing is not strictly illegal in Israel, though the law prohibits proselytizing minors without their parents’ presence and consent. Council chairman Asher Biton argued that Shelanu TV was appealing to Jews as its target audience and not to Christians, contrary to Shelanu’s description in its original license request. Sharon, Jeremy. “Israel cancels God TV’s Evangelical Christian channel.” *Israel News*. Jerusalem Post, 28 Jun. 2020. Web. 6 Jul. 2020.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fall 2020 West Central Pastoral Conference

Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church,
Cheyenne, Wyoming
September 8-10

Agenda:

- Online Ministry and the Sanctity of the Call—
Pastor Delwyn Maas
 - The Downstream Effects of Liturgical Innovations—
Pastor Paul Krause
 - Reconciling “Prophetic Perspective” with the Single Intended Sense of Scripture—
Pastor Timothy Daub
 - Dealing with Congregational Issues: A Study of Paul’s Approach to the Church of Corinth—
Pastor Michael Roehl
 - The Pastor and Political Language and Speech—
Pastor James Naumann
 - Does the Act of Excommunication Make Someone an Unbeliever?—
Pastor Chad Seybt
 - I Cor. 12:28 – Is the Listing of Gifts Hierarchical? If So, in What Way?—
Pastor Thomas Schuetze
 - OTX (Essayist’s Choice)—
Pastor Paul Nolting
 - NTX (Romans Series)—
Pastor Aaron Ude
 - Chaplain: Pastor Timothy Wheaton
 - Speaker: TBD
- Submitted by Pastor Timothy Daub, Secretary



2020 Minnesota Pastoral Conference

Grace Lutheran Church, Sleepy Eye, Minnesota
October 6-7

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis: Habakkuk 3:8-19—
Professor Paul Naumann
- New Testament Exegesis: 1 Timothy 6:17-21—
Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
- Addressing the Mentality that Addictions are a Disease—
Pastor James Albrecht
- An Evaluation of Other Lutheran Catechetical Curricula—
Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
- 500th Anniversary of Luther’s Three Pivotal Treatises—
Pastor George Dummann
- Book Review: “Authentic Christianity” by Gene Veith—
Pastor Edward Starkey
—Nathanael Mayhew, Conference Secretary

Installation In accordance with our usage and order, **Mikkela Hammond**, who was called by St. Stephen Lutheran School of Mountain View, California, to be its second teacher, was installed on Friday, July 10th. St. Stephen’s Board of Education chairman Paul Pelzl participated in the laying on of hands during the installation.
—Pastor Luke Bernthal