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LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



**But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has
become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

— 1 Corinthians 15:20



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Put on Your Resurrection Glasses!

" . . . the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 1:18-20)

According to the Vision Council of America, seventy-five percent of American adults wear some kind of corrective lenses for their eyesight. Glasses or contact lenses are an indispensable aid for many to overcome nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism or other vision problems. A statistic that is even more startling is the one that Jesus relates in the Gospel of Luke: fully one hundred percent of the world's population sees through spiritual "lenses" of one kind or another: *"The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness."* (Luke 11:34)

There are many millions of people throughout the world whose natural eyes see reasonably well and who consider their minds to be enlightened, but their hearts are actually dark. The worshipers of Allah or Vishnu, the followers of Buddha, and your neighbor who is "spiritual but not religious" all have this in common: they hope to improve themselves enough so that the afterlife will be better than this one. And many of these people of other faiths—or no faith at all—are brilliant in their own ways. Yet they're wearing the wrong glasses, and they don't even know it. Paul describes them as those *"whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."* (2 Corinthians 4:4)

It is only when the Holy Spirit fits us with the "resurrection glasses" of faith in the risen Savior that true spiritual light floods our hearts. Knowing with confidence that Jesus willingly went forward to His self-sacrificial death, claimed the power to rise in triumph from the grave, and DID it—this is the God-given lens through which everything becomes crystal clear. We see, as Paul writes in Ephesians 1 above, *"the hope of His calling . . . the riches of the glory of His*

inheritance in the saints," and *"what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe."*

Just how powerful are these enlightening lenses? They show us that faith itself is a mighty miracle of God, the same as *"the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead."* With our powerful resurrection glasses we now see everything differently:

- ✦ We see ourselves differently, as wretched sinners who have been fully forgiven in Christ.
- ✦ We see others around us differently, as those who are also redeemed and in need of God's truth.
- ✦ We see our life's purpose differently: not to achieve our own goals but those of our loving God.
- ✦ We see our final destination differently: not the grave, but the eternal mansion our Lord has gone to prepare for us.

"Blessed are your eyes, for they see," Jesus said in Matthew 13:16. Don't forget, though, that God wants the light He has shown in you to shine through you, as well! Be sure to share the light that brings into clear focus the great need that everyone has for a Savior, the great love of our crucified Lord, and the promise that we will rise to life eternal as He did. In that way God's Word will come true in your life: *"The path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day."* (Proverbs 4:18)



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

Following the Risen Lord with Confidence

The story was told by one of my former teachers of a time when the lower grade classroom of Messiah Lutheran School in Hales Corners was working on an art project. I was in second grade at the time, and my classmate, Gretchen, already having finished her project, walked up to my desk and asked if I wanted help finishing mine. Apparently, my response was, “Let me see yours first.” Isn’t that a typical response? Even from childhood, most of us just don’t like getting ourselves into commitments before we know exactly what we can expect.

That wasn’t the response of another young Samuel, however. When the great prophet was still just a child serving in the tabernacle, the Lord called out to him by night. “Samuel!” Three times he ran to Eli the priest and responded, “Here I am!” (1 Samuel 3:1-10 ESV) Finally, he recognized the Lord’s voice and answered Him, “Speak, for your servant hears.” Notice the readiness in all of Samuel’s replies. “Here I am . . . Speak, for your servant hears.” With the confident trust of a child, it’s as if he’s saying, “I don’t know what is coming or what you will require of me; but whatever it is, I will listen to and follow you.”

As New Testament Christians living in the joy of Christ’s resurrection, we ought to have that same confident readiness in every station of life. Wherever God leads us, we ought to joyfully go. This would be in keeping with our Savior’s exhortation, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23 ESV)

But can we really claim that kind of “Lord, wherever you lead, I will follow” readiness? Don’t we often respond to God in the same way that I responded to my classmate? We don’t want to get into any commitments without first knowing what to expect. So rather than “Speak, for your

servant hears,” we’re often telling God, “Listen, for your servant is speaking.” Instead of trusting the Lord in His wisdom to care for us, we make demands of Him; we hope to wrestle His control away and determine our own life’s course.

With the confident trust of a child, it’s as if he’s saying, “I don’t know what is coming or what you will require of me; but whatever it is, I will listen to and follow you.”

Nevertheless, the Lord calls us to crucify the illusion of our control and simply to follow Him. It would be foolish to do so with anyone else, but with the Lord we have good reason. For as we consider

our responses that often lack that “here I am” readiness, let’s also consider when the opposite was said of God. That was that Sunday morning in the spring many years ago, when the women went to the tomb to embalm the body of their Lord. Finding the tomb empty, they encountered the angels, who announced, “He is not here, but has risen.” (Luke 24:6 ESV) This is all the assurance we need to confidently follow Christ, not knowing what will come next, perhaps, but trusting Him to lead us all the same. After all, the Apostle Paul wrote in his epistle, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.” (1 Corinthians 15:17 ESV) If Christ had not been raised, we would be fools to respond to God’s call as Samuel did.

Thanks be to God that Christ has been raised. The resurrection proves the Lord’s will for each of us. Christ has assured us, “Because I live, you will live also.” (John 14:19 ESV) Whatever God has in store for us next in this life, we know that it will work together for our good, namely, for our salvation (Romans 8:28). We may not know every detail of our futures here, but we know that our eternal future is secure in Him. Therefore, we can follow with every confidence, saying, “Lord, here I am . . . Speak, for Your servant hears.”

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



TLH HYMN 188

“Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!”

<http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/188.mp3>

Do you remember the last time you felt elated? If you're an avid Tampa Bay Buccaneers fan, it was probably this past February 7th, when “your” team won Superbowl LV. Maybe it was when you caught your largest-ever walleye or bagged a whitetail buck with Boone and Crockett record book antlers. Perhaps you felt elated simply if the Thanksgiving turkey you roasted turned out juicy instead of dry.

How odd it is that we feel exuberant over such relatively unimportant events, and yet may at times fail to feel even greater jubilation in connection with an event which is of infinite importance and eternal consequence for each us—the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter morning! It may be that we simply don't clearly see and *personally apprehend* the significance of that Easter event to our own lives.

If you're a Buccaneers fan, at the end of the game you might have exclaimed, “We won! We won!”—even though your own part in that “we” didn't really contribute anything to the victory. In like manner, we are victors in Christ's resurrection, and can rejoice jubilantly in it, even though we actually played no part in winning that victory. It is as C.F.W. Walther wrote in an Easter sermon based on Mark 16:1-8: “We are the ones for whom Christ went into battle, and therefore we are the ones who in Him have won the victory. We were the ones whose bonds He took upon Himself, and therefore we are the ones who in Him are now free. We were the ones whose disgrace He took upon Himself, and therefore we are the ones who in Him have now obtained glory.”

The hymn “Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!” expresses the exuberant joy befitting Christians in connection with Christ's resurrection. “Jesus lives! Let all rejoice! / Praise

Him, ransomed ones of earth / . . . Praise the Victor-King whose sway / Sin and death and hell obey.” (Verse 2)

If you are a Buccaneers fan, maybe you won some sort of “bragging rights” over your Chiefs fan brother-in-law when “your” team won the Super Bowl. But consider the prize you have won because of your Savior's resurrection: “Jesus lives! And thus, my soul, / Life eternal waits for thee; / Joined to Him, thy living Head, / Where He is, thou, too, shalt be; / With Himself, at His right hand, / Victor over death shalt stand.” (Verse 4)

The resurrection of Jesus on Easter morning is your guarantee that you, too, shall rise from death to eternal life in heaven. “Hallelujah! Jesus lives! / He is now the Living One; / From the gloomy house of death / Forth the Conqueror has gone, / Bright Forerunner to the skies / Of His people, yet to rise.” (Verse 1)

If “your” team lost the big game, if you got skunked instead of catching that lunker walleye, if your venison harvest was only a spike buck, or even if your Thanksgiving turkey turned out dry, you still have abundant reason for rejoicing: “Jesus lives! To Him my heart / Draws with ever new delight. / Earthly vanities, depart, / Hinder not my heavenward flight. / Let this spirit ever rise / To its Magnet in the skies.” (Verse 5)

For all Christians, Easter is the guarantee of what my friend Don Bishop wrote at the back of his Bible: “We win!” Rejoice, Christian, in your Savior's victory for you.



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



In the Meekness of Wisdom

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”

(James 3:13-16)

At the beginning of chapter 3, James began to address those who wanted to become teachers. Here in our text, James exhorts them to be on guard concerning *why* they wanted to be teachers. Some, out of bitter envy and self-seeking, chase after the office of teacher because they want to be considered wise by their fellowmen and be followed by them. They think, “Why shouldn’t I be in charge?” This is similar to how Miriam and Aaron challenged Moses’ authority, saying, “*Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?*” (Numbers 12:1-2), or how the Pharisees were constantly filled with bitter envy toward Jesus because they sought the rule over the people for themselves.

While James may have been particularly addressing those would-be teachers, what he says regarding bitter envy and self-seeking really is true for any sinner. Yes, there is in each one of us that envious, self-seeking rebel who wants to do things “my way” rather than God’s way. James says that this desire is “*earthly, sensual, demonic.*”

Those who believe that the only way to succeed in the world is to become just as selfish and brutal as worldly people are—grabbing, clawing, and stepping on others in order to advance themselves—are practicing earthly wisdom, which is always and only focused on worldly considerations.

Those who are determined to obtain whatever brings pleasure to their flesh no matter what anybody does, no matter what anybody says, and—here’s the scary part—no matter what God’s Word says and commands, are practicing sensual wisdom, which follows after the unbridled passions of the sinful flesh.

Lastly, James teaches that those who are acting out of their own bitter envy and self-seeking are actually thinking the devil’s thoughts. They are pursuing the very same condemnation the devil has earned in hell.

Those who practice such earthly, sensual, demonic wisdom typically think themselves to be wise, but James warns that “*confusion and every evil thing are there*” instead of their imagined wisdom. After all, is it really wise to focus on and fight for earthly things only? Is it really wise to feed every impulse of our sinful flesh? Is it really wise to follow in the footsteps of demons? Is it wise to fight against God? To struggle and contend against His Word and will?

No! James says we are to conduct ourselves in the meekness of wisdom because it’s in the meekness of wisdom that we see the foolishness of our pride. It’s in the meekness of wisdom that we understand the foolishness of self-seeking goals, and it’s in the meekness of wisdom that we are able to see the deep, deep darkness that is our own sin.

Just as Jesus healed many who were demon-possessed, so too He provides the cure when we find ourselves chasing after the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, demonic. For as the Holy Spirit brings us to a meekness of wisdom through His Word, then Jesus comes along to lift up our chins and fix our eyes upon His cross and empty tomb—our help, our strength, our salvation!



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TRUTH

אָמֵן

“**W**hat is truth?” So spoke Pontius Pilate. He was responding to Jesus’ declaration: “For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” (John 18:37) On the one hand, we have the solid declaration of the Son of God. On the other, we have the typical response of man. However, the response of Jesus’ followers is atypical: “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” Believers are “of the truth.” Their lives and hopes are built around the truth. For this reason, they listen to the voice of Jesus; He is their source of absolute, objective truth.

There is nothing new under the sun. The world still treats truth as an amorphous concept, without form, constantly shifting and reshaping. Likewise, believers still trust that enduring, unchanging truth comes from Jesus. Because of this difference, believers are regularly besieged by unbelievers who attempt to convince us that one cannot actually determine what truth is. “My truth is my truth and your truth is your truth.” So, what is truth? Is it some cloudy vapor that dissipates as soon as you try to take hold of it?

For many people, the year 2020 was charged with uncertainty and fear. What will our spiritual vision be for the future? Did 2020 give us 20-20 vision concerning the truth? We need to look back 2020 years and beyond to correct our myopia and clear away the cataracts that fog our spiritual eyesight.

The Old Testament has a wonderful word for “truth”: *EMETH*. At the root of this word is the concept of *certainty* or *firmness*. *EMETH* refers to something solid and unchangeable. Even the English word *truth* has been traced back to a Germanic root, *deru*, meaning, “be firm, solid, steadfast.”

We regularly use a Hebrew word that is tied to *EMETH*. That is the word *AMEN*. Martin Luther explained what this word means: “Amen, Amen, that means, Yes, Yes, it shall be so.” With that word, we declare our firm conviction that our God will assuredly respond to our prayers in His

own way and time and that His response will be for our good.

Jesus repeatedly used this Hebrew word. “*Amen*, [verily, truly, assuredly] *I say unto you*.” At times, He made it even more emphatic by repeating the word. “*Verily, verily. . .*” In so doing, the Son of God affirmed that the words coming from His mouth were rock solid, certain, and unchangeable.

There is one more word occurring with *EMETH*, and that is the amazing word, *CHESED*, which means “steadfast love.” Together, these are characteristics of the Rock of our salvation. “*The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness [chesed, steadfast love] and truth*.” (Exodus 34:6) God’s love is steadfast, solid, and unshakeable (see Romans 8:38-39). Likewise, truth is solid and unchangeable.

How sad for the world that they have no solid rock on which to stand, but only shifting sand. If truth is not solid and eternal, it is not truth. Therefore, the world is left in a constant state of fearful uncertainty. Unbelievers continue to swing back and forth and round about in their futile attempt to find some truth, but find none, “*always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*.” (2 Timothy 3:7)

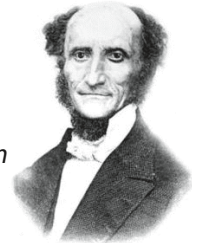
As for us, by the grace of God, we continue to stand on the “Rock of Ages” (see 1 Corinthians 10:4). Jesus is “*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*.” (John 14:6) His truth is rock solid. In fact, it is more solid than rock. “*For*,” the Lord declares, “*the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed*.” (Isaiah 54:10) Forgiveness, life, and salvation are most assuredly real and most assuredly ours. **Amen and Amen!**

“*The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted*.” (Psalm 18:46)



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

One of the hallmarks of the Lutheran Church is its proper understanding and application of the Bible's two main teachings—Law and Gospel. Dr. C.F.W. Walther's seminal work, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, is the basis for this two-year series. Note: page numbers given are accurate for the 1929 and 1986 editions of the book.



Binary Code

“Thesis IV—The true knowledge of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is not only a glorious light, affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, but without this knowledge Scripture is and remains a sealed book.”

Harvard's Intro to Computer Science is a fast-paced course with the assignment to produce a program in a new computer language each week. Who thought something based on binary code, a combination of 0's and 1's, could be so complicated? Most weeks, I'd end up with a flashing screen or a calculator which claimed 3 x 4 was 7. I submitted my code regardless, foolishly hoping the grad student grading my assignment couldn't do grade-school math.

I had all the zeal, pressure, and anxiety; but without the knowledge, all I could produce was programming that was as broken as my user error.

Spiritually speaking, Scripture teaches a total corruption of our deepest inner calculations: *“The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.”* (Genesis 8:21) This original sin is so ingrained that even plain Scriptural truth sent through the bare processor of the human mind can produce only incorrect output:

- That the Ten Commandments must be goals we can accomplish.
- That the Bible is a self-help user's manual to a more successful life.
- That figures like Noah, Abraham, and David are examples we should try to follow.

The Apostle teaches that such faulty conclusions arise from user error: *“They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge,”* based in the fundamental fallacy of *“seeking to establish their own righteousness.”* (Romans 10:2-3)

Yet our God, Who takes great responsibility for whatever He starts, addresses man's evil imagination by reformatting it: *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.”* (Ezekiel 36:26)

He does so through His Word: *“The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.”* (Psalm

119:130)

The power of this Word is founded on a binary structure, the 0's and 1's of Law and Gospel.

The Law shows us our sin. It reveals our inability to complete the assignment of righteousness we've been handed.

The Gospel shows us our Savior. It reveals the true completed project, the Savior Who fulfilled the Law we cannot, and offered His life on a cross as the passing grade in our place.

Through these two fundamentals, the Spirit realigns our hearts away from the fatal error that we can do it, to faith in everything Christ has done for us.

Without this proper work of God's Law and God's Gospel, we are left in the dark, but when the true light enters in, the Spirit reprograms our inner workings with repentance and faith. From this initial spark, the Scriptures as a whole come into focus:

- God presents Noah, Abraham, and David not as examples of personal righteousness, but of contrition and faith.
- No mere self-help guide, the Bible is the story of God doing everything to help us.
- The promise that God sent His Son to save us shines as the central theme throughout.

Knowing your Law from your Gospel is no Harvard course. God's Spirit alone grants this correct understanding of His Word, the binary structure which brings clarity to everything He has to say.

If you ever find yourself with nothing but wrong answers—when life doesn't seem to work—repeat it again, *“The Law shows me my sin . . . the Gospel shows me my Savior,”* and marvel how divine wisdom can be both so basic, yet at the same time, so advanced.



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

[To read Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* for free on-line, and to access related Bible class materials, go to www.ilc.edu/Walther]

ERROR'S ECHO

In this 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.

Pelagianism

If you start with a wrong premise, you'll wind up with a wrong conclusion. That is true of false doctrine in general. It is especially true of Pelagianism in particular.

Pelagius was a priest who lived and worked in the late 4th and early 5th centuries. Appalled by the lack of piety that he saw among professing Christians in Rome, he assumed that this was due to too much grace and not enough Law.

Pelagius taught that people, by nature, can freely choose to obey or disobey the Commandments. After all, if God commands something, it has to be doable, right? How could a just God require what none of us are able to fulfill? This was his premise. A cascade of errors inevitably followed.

One error was his denial of original sin. The Bible teaches that Adam's sin and its consequences are passed downstream to each succeeding generation. The proof? Death. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12) We begin life spiritually blind, dead, and enemies of God. We do not become sinners because of sin, or when we sin. We sin because we are sinners already from the womb. Augustine, who was a contemporary of Pelagius, correctly stated that, by nature, "I cannot not sin."

David confessed, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5) Paul struggled with "this body of death" (Romans 7:24) until the moment when God delivered him from this life. These truths, as clear as they are, did not fit with the premise that Pelagius had already adopted.

Pelagius taught that Adam was merely an example of someone who made the wrong choice back then, just as people may make the wrong choice today. He used Deuteronomy 24:16 to argue that Adam's sin was not passed down to his descendants, "Fathers shall not be put to

death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin." His flawed understanding of our sinful nature led to a flawed understanding, and ultimate rejection, of God's grace.

To Pelagius, grace meant the gift of a free will, plus the Law that tells us what to do, plus the example of Jesus for us to imitate. Is that grace? Hardly. Grace does not mean that God rewards those who do good and punishes those who choose evil. Grace is not about us getting what we deserve. It is always about God giving us what we don't deserve: the complete forgiveness of our sins and the perfect life of Jesus credited to us by faith.

In A.D. 418, the Council of Carthage branded Pelagius a heretic and removed him from the church. Though he had been a prolific writer, few of his materials remain. The little we know about him comes from the theologians who used Scripture to refute his false conclusions.

Sadly, Pelagianism and "semi-Pelagianism" (the idea that we *contribute* to our salvation in some way) live on. But grace is never about us and what we do. It is always about Jesus and what He did in our stead. The piety that Pelagius hoped to produce does not flow from the rules and requirements of the Law. It comes from the message of God's undeserved love for us in Christ.

Watch out for false doctrinal premises. They always result in faulty conclusions. Often, they change the Gospel into Law and God's grace into man's works.

Grace is not about us getting what we deserve. It is always about God giving us what we don't deserve: the complete forgiveness of our sins.



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

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the church of the Lutheran Confession

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Jamestown, North Dakota

90 Years of Preaching the Gospel

Our Savior's Lutheran Church is approaching its 90th anniversary of preaching the Gospel of forgiveness to the Buffalo City and beyond. As with all things, we give glory to God for what He has done through dedicated men and women of the congregation, along with the long list of called servants who have served here.

Since our last report a casual observer might say little has changed. When it comes to the pure teachings of God's word, that's a good thing. A few updates do come to mind.



Above Left: Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Jamestown, ND.



Above Right: One of the stained glass windows in Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

JARS

For decades, Redeemer in Bowdle, South Dakota, has hosted the Joint Area Reformation Service, or JARS. Our pastoral study club invites a preacher from another conference, and members gather from around the Dakotas and Nebraska to worship and have a meal on a Sunday evening around Reformation. Redeemer asked Our Savior's to assume the responsibility of hosting this special service, which we did, first in the fall of 2019 with Neal Radichel of Immanuel, Mankato as our guest preacher. Unfortunately, we didn't hold JARS last year due to . . . well, you know why.

COVID

A lot has changed around here due to the virus. While those changes are common to many Lutheran Spokesman readers, you may find our circumstances and response to this crisis interesting. In North Dakota, all restrictions placed on churches came in the form of recommendations. Here at Our Savior's, we felt blessed to have the freedom to decide for ourselves how to respond. We suspended in-

person services on March 18th of last year and resumed them on May 17th.

Masks are not required but also not looked down upon at Our Savior's. We've blocked off a few pews and reduced the size of each table at communion. We have had no monthly potlucks. VBS last summer was a "take home" affair and the Children's Christmas Eve program was recorded and posted online.

While not going to church seemed as strange and wrong to us as it did to many of you, we came out of the experience with a lot of positives:

- We began recording services and devotions and posting them to Facebook. Technological challenges related to this (including a steep learning curve for the pastor!) were overcome. We discovered that it wasn't that complicated after all and we probably should have been doing it all along.
- A stronger connection with members-at-a-distance was established and is being maintained.



Left: The sanctuary of Our Savior's where we will celebrate 90 years of Preaching the Gospel this year. Bottom inset: Members of the Tour Choir of Immanuel Lutheran College sharing a meal with us.



- We developed better communication between leadership and members via email and text.
- We learned to respect and listen to each other's varying levels of concerns in this time when factual information about risks seems hard to come by and "qualified opinions" are often contradictory.

GARAGE

The parsonage garage was replaced during the last year. Members in the congregation who are in the trades found an opportunity for a "free" 25'x25' modern garage to replace the much smaller and aging one we had. Anyone familiar with building projects knows why the word "free" is in quotation marks. Concrete, permits, electrical, grading, and so forth all cost money, but a combination of generous financial gifts and a lot of volunteer labor made it happen.



TOUR CHOIR

Our Savior's was very happy to host the Tour Choir of

Immanuel Lutheran College on March 14th. We give glory to God for what He continues to do through dedicated and selfless students who share the Word in this way. We especially thank Him for the thirty-three tours directed by retiring Professor John Reim (see page 15) and, of course, his decades of teaching at ILC. Thank you, Lord, for Professor Reim!

TEMPUS FUGIT

Time flies. We were surprised to get a request for an update from the Spokesman, until we realized that it has been over six years since the previous article. We're still here at the corner of 5th Avenue and 4th Street SE in Jamestown, still meeting at 10:00 A.M. every Sunday, and still thanking God for sending His Son to die for our sins so we sinners can stand righteous in that great Day. Come, Lord Jesus.

Until then, come on by and see us!



James Naumann is pastor of Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jamestown, North Dakota.



Story of A Himalayan Seminary Student

[Ed.: the following is a report about current activities in the HCLCN. It is written, in his own words, by the indigenous pastor who is our main contact in Nepal. Names of people and places are being withheld because of the risk of persecution. The report is lightly edited for clarity.]



Far Left: Church service.
Left: Newly baptized members.

The Himalayan Bible Institute has two facilities to train and equip students with the Word of God for the church ministry. Of the fourteen students enrolled at one of them, we are going to tell about one young man who came to us for Bible training so he could lead and preach the Word at his rural church.

This young man was born in 1994 in Salyan district, which is in the western part of Nepal. He was the youngest child in the family. He has an elder brother and a sister. He was brought up in a Hindu family and grew up in the rural community which was bound by superstition and witchcraft. The place he belongs is one of the remotest areas in the country. As he is from a low-income family, he had to face many difficulties and challenges. He often didn't get proper food, education, or health services as a result of his poor financial situation. He used to go to the temple of the Hindu god Shiva, but he did not feel peace in his heart, therefore he did not like idol worshiping. He received school education in the village school.

At that time, he heard the Gospel from a preacher from a nearby village. The Holy Spirit ignited faith in his heart. His wife's uncle is a Christian, and he learned something from him. Our local HCLCN pastor went to him and had some Bible lessons and instructed him from the Word of God.

After several months going to our sister church in the area, he was baptized on January 26, 2014. He got some Bible classes and regular worship services. About six months later he went to his own village to preach the saving Word to the community who did not know Christ the Savior.

His father and mother are against his conversion from Hindu to Christian. He is hated and mocked and humiliated for being a Christian. His parents and a brother tried to persuade him to return to Hinduism. His sister is a Christian, so she supported him. He has a wife who is a faithful Christian woman, a son, and a daughter. Even though he is facing various kinds of persecution and difficulty, he is continuing the work of the Kingdom.

Eventually, this young man enrolled in our Himalayan Bible Institute. There he completed a two-year course and is now ready for graduation. He says the training has helped him a lot and he knows more about biblical teachings and truths which he can preach and teach to the congregation which he serves. He says that the Lord has brought more people into His flock.

Now he serves over thirty souls in his village. They gather in a small hut where he preaches and leads the congregation. The HCLCN helped them to build the hut as a worship place. We pray and look forward to training and equipping more local leaders so that many may hear and come to know the truth and be saved.

Professor John Reim Retires

When those outside of the ILC community think of Professor John Reim, they would likely visualize him in the front of a church directing a choir concert. When students or faculty at Immanuel picture John, they may imagine a man, papers in hand, running across campus. First impressions could lead one to think that he is running because he is late. However, for those who know John, his rapid transit from place to place is instead an indication of his approach and dedication to his work.



During his elementary and high school years, John attended several different schools in California as well as Immanuel Lutheran High School in Eau Claire. He continued his training at Immanuel Lutheran College to receive college and seminary degrees. After serving several years as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Winter Haven, Florida, John accepted the call to return to his alma mater as professor, taking up this role in January 1988 and continuing to serve until May 2021. In 1997, John married Carolyn Gerbitz. They were blessed with three children, all of whom are now college age or older.

For thirty-three years at Immanuel, John was the director of both the mass choir and tour choir. Those who have attended an Immanuel choir concert have witnessed the enthusiasm and joy exhibited by John as he leads the students in their songs of praise. This joy and enthusiasm is often mirrored in the faces of smiling vocalists. Those who have had the privilege of attending many ILC concerts would have noticed that each concert was fresh and new. It seemed that every concert included a new, original composition from John. Many concerts also included songs from different cultures and musical styles from around the world. Without a doubt, selecting music and preparing concerts was a year-round marathon for John.

Although John's most visible role was as choir director, he also taught music, German, Spanish, Greek, religion, piano, and organ classes. John was as energetic in his class

presentations as in his choir directing. He could often be heard down the hall, his voice conveying an unmistakable liveliness as he engaged with his classes.

When students and staff recall Professor Reim, they will likely remember his chapel talks. His presentations were rich with the Gospel message. He often included a clever linguistic analogy or visual aid that assisted the hearer in understanding and remembering the spiritual message.

John was not content with standing still professionally, either. Although he had the equivalent of a Master's degree by virtue of his seminary training, John took courses at the University of Wisconsin and earned a Master's degree in Music. When Immanuel needed a Spanish teacher, John pursued training so that he could transition from teaching German to teaching Spanish. Many of his summers were spent taking advantage of professional development opportunities, literally around the world. Though a seasoned teacher with plenty of experience, John was always striving to learn new things to improve his work at Immanuel.

In addition to choir concerts, John impacted the lives of many CLC members by compiling the Worship Supplement (year 2000). Many of the hymns selected and liturgies written by John have become ingrained in the worship lives of CLC members and beyond.

Following the 2020-21 school year, John and Carrie plan to take up residence in the Milwaukee area. We thank the Lord for the work He accomplished through both of them, and wish His continued blessings on their family.

"Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!" (Ps 96:1) Thank you, Professor Reim, for helping so many of us sing songs of praise to our Lord!



Jeff Schierenbeck is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS APRIL 2021

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Apr 1	TLH 164	John 9:34-41	Spiritual blindness is worse than physical blindness, and spiritual sight (faith) is greater than physical sight.
Apr 2	TLH 178 (LSB 429)	John 10:1-21	The Good Shepherd lays down His life but also has the authority to take it up again!
Apr 3	TLH 592	John 10:22-30	The Good Shepherd gives eternal life to us, His sheep!
Apr 5	TLH 200 (LSB 461)	John 11:1-44	Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life.”
Apr 6	TLH 198 (LSB 480)	Habakkuk 2:6-20	All who reject God are eventually overthrown, but we stand in awe of Him because He is our God of grace and mercy!
Apr 7	TLH 205 (LSB 478)	Habakkuk 3:1-15	Habakkuk’s song exalts God’s great deeds, especially those by which He saves His people. Here is one that we recall this week: the resurrection of Christ from the dead!
Apr 8	TLH 201 (LSB 490)	Habakkuk 3:16-19	Although he knows trouble is coming, Habakkuk is not afraid but rather looks to the Lord for strength and rejoices in the God of his salvation.
Apr 9	TLH 196 (LSB 468)	John 11:45-57	Would you turn against the Author of life? Our sinful natures all would. How we need Jesus who lived, died, and rose again to cover our debt of sin!
Apr 10	TLH 619 (LSB 674)	Zephaniah 1:14-18	Zephaniah warned of the coming destruction of Jerusalem some forty to fifty years before it happened. For us, we might be reminded of the judgment coming at the Last Day.
Apr 12	TLH 315 (LSB 618)	Zephaniah 2:1-3	What do we do when we have sinned and God’s judgment is hanging over us? We fall on our knees, confess our guilt, and turn to Christ for forgiveness. That is, we repent.
Apr 13	TLH 293 (LSB 693)	Zephaniah 3:1-8	God is not fooled. Those who do not produce the fruit of faith have no faith and their sins will condemn them.
Apr 14	TLH 477 (LSB 647)	Zephaniah 3:9-20	There was still hope for sinful Judah. In the end, there would be some (a remnant) who trusted the Lord to forgive them and save them. He would. He saves us in the end too!
Apr 15	TLH 157; LSB 788	John 12:1-11	Mary remembered her brother’s resurrection and no amount of expensive oil could repay the Lord for that gift. But Mary wasn’t repaying it, she was joyfully giving thanks to the Lord of life.
Apr 16	TLH 161 (LSB 443)	John 12:12-19	“Look, the world has gone after him!” Jesus’ enemies said. Yes! The world goes after Him because He came after the world.
Apr 17	WS 728	John 12:20-36	Jesus predicted both His death and His resurrection. Both would result in salvation for us and glory for God.
Apr 19	TLH 138	John 12:37-50	Just as Isaiah had said, many would not believe in the Messiah, but for us He brings light, scattering the darkness of our sins.
Apr 20	TLH 317	2 Kings 25:1-21	After so many prophecies and warnings, Judah was finally overthrown. While in exile, they would have an opportunity to think on their sins, repent, and turn back to the Lord.
Apr 21	WS 789 (LSB 736)	Haggai 1:1-11	Returning to Jerusalem after 70 years in exile, the people of Judah took care of their own houses, but eighteen years later the Lord’s house still had not been rebuilt.
Apr 22	TLH 465 (LSB 912)	Haggai 1:12-15	The people recognized their error and in 520 BC the rebuilding began. The temple was the Lord’s dwelling place among them, so it was important for them to get it back into shape.
Apr 23	TLH 441 (LSB 781)	John 13:1-20	In contrast to Judas Iscariot’s selfish desire for money, Jesus selflessly served others—and bids us to do the same.
Apr 24	TLH 146 (LSB 434)	John 13:21-38	By our sins we betray the Lord, act without love, and deny Him. Yet He willingly laid down His life in our place, making the sufferings we deserved His own.
Apr 26	TLH 467 (LSB 645)	Haggai 2:1-9	Outwardly, the rebuilt temple wasn’t nearly as glorious as the old one, but it would be glorious in a different way: Jesus Christ, the Messiah, would visit there!
Apr 27	TLH 436 (LSB 710)	Haggai 2:10-23	God called on the people of Judah to remember how with Him they had blessings, but without Him they faced trouble and misery. May God’s goodness and mercy draw us to Him.
Apr 28	TLH 326 (LSB 608)	Zechariah 1:1-6	Like Haggai, Zechariah preached to the exiles, encouraging them as they returned to Judea. But first, let Judah understand why she was exiled and call for her repentance and return to the Lord.
Apr 29	TLH 361 (LSB 554)	John 14:1-14	Jesus is not only the way to the Father, but He is the exact representation of His Father. He is God in human form. If we know Him, we know God.
Apr 30	WS 739 (LSB 650)	John 14:15-26	The disciples were to know that even after they saw Jesus no more, they were not alone. Jesus would dwell in them and the Holy Spirit would be poured out on them.

IN THE PIPELINE

Want to meet the person who may be your next pastor or Christian day school teacher? This series profiles the men and women who are in their final year of preparation for the public teaching or preaching ministry at Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Kathleen Lynne Naumann

Age: 25

Program: College—
Teaching Track

Year in School: Senior

Where were you born?

Olympia, Washington

Where did you grow up?

In the Pacific Northwest—Tacoma, Washington, to be exact.

Married? Unmarried? Tell us about your family.

Unmarried. I'm the middle child of five, with two older brothers (Nick and Drew) and two younger sisters (Claire and Jane).

What hobbies, sports or extracurriculars interest you?

I enjoy puzzles of all kinds, thrifting, and hanging out with family and friends.

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

Though never much for organized athletics, I've always been an excellent badminton player!

Which academic subjects especially interest you?

Math and English have always been some of my strongest subjects.

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

When I graduated from ILHS, I was considering becoming a dental hygienist, but I don't enjoy chemistry very much, and dental hygiene programs involve quite a few chemistry



classes. My cousin Michaela Winters and I are very close, and she called me one day as she was nearing her graduation from the Education program at ILC. When she spoke about how excited she was to get into her own classroom, her enthusiasm was contagious, and I couldn't help feeling that I wanted to see for myself if this was the right track for me.

What have you appreciated most about your time at ILC?

The Christian community that surrounds each student here. In high school, I remember some classmates complaining that there's "too much Jesus talk" at ILC. After I graduated from high school in 2014, I found myself very much missing all that talk about Jesus at chapels, in the classroom, around campus, etc. Christ is made the central focus of all aspects of education and life on campus, and

that atmosphere is very encouraging and edifying for young Christians at a time in their lives when they are extremely impressionable.

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

1 Corinthians 13:1-3,13: "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

"And now these three remain: *faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*"

SEEN IN PASSING

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

North Dakota Bill Aims to Outlaw All Abortions. HB 1313, a bill currently making its way through the North Dakota state legislature, proposes that "a person [would be] guilty of murder of an unborn child" if he or she "intentionally or knowingly causes the death of an unborn child." This would apply both to the subjects and the providers of abortions, with no exceptions for rape or incest. In recent years, many states have investigated ways to restrict or eliminate abortion, and some have expressed themselves eager to provide a test case that might force the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider the 1972 *Roe v. Wade* decision. Payne, Daniel. "North Dakota bill would make abortion murder under state law." *State Houses. JustTheNews.com*, 6 Feb. 2021. Web. 11 Feb. 2021.

Self Esteem Is Overrated. In an article for the magazine *Skeptical Inquirer*, medical doctor and former Navy flight surgeon Harriet Hall noted that self-esteem has been promoted since the 1980's as a way to increase positive outcomes, especially in children. "We are encouraged to reward children and not punish them, to praise them not only for real accomplishments but also for trivial successes and even failures. As a result, we are in danger of becoming a society of entitled people with unrealistic views of themselves." Said Dr. Hall, "Most people believe that fostering self-esteem in children will have many benefits, from happiness to better school performance, but that belief is not supported by the evidence." She summarized results of a recent study by the Association for Psychological Science, which found "no evidence that modern Western societies are suffering from an epidemic of low self-esteem. If anything, self-esteem seems generally high in most North American samples." As for the results that were promised from the promotion of self-esteem, the study concluded that "the benefits of high self-esteem are far fewer and weaker than proponents of self-esteem had hoped." Hall, Harriet. "Self Esteem Is Overrated." *SkepDoc's Corner. SkepticalInquirer.com*. 25 Jan. 2021. Web. 11 Feb. 2021.

This is What Professors Do at Wittenberg Nowadays. "A German New Testament scholar at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg has taken a break from hefty academic tomes for a new project: the Bible in Playmobil. Professor Michael Sommer will stage the biblical narrative with the children's toys in a yearlong series of YouTube videos. His channel has more than 100,000 subscribers. In 2009, another German attempted to tell the Bible story in Playmobil but was told to stop by the company." Silliman, Daniel. "Bible reenacted with Playmobil." *Gleanings. ChristianityToday.com*, 23 Nov. 2020. Web. 11 Feb. 2021.

Purple Fabric from the Time of David Found. *Science Magazine* recently featured a news item about several scraps of purple cloth that showed up in an excavation in southern Israel: "In the ancient Middle East, purple was a symbol of prestige: To produce dye of this 'royal' color, people had to collect and smash sea snails for their juices. Priests and royalty, including Kings David and Solomon, are often described in the Bible wearing clothing dyed with these extracts. Now, archeologists have excavated the oldest example of this purple dye ever found throughout the southern Levant, dated from 1000 B.C.E. The dyed wool fragments were found in an ancient copper mine at the Timna Valley in southern Israel, and go back to King David's era, researchers report this week in *PLOS ONE*. Chemical analyses revealed the dye came from sea snails in the Mediterranean, more than 300 kilometers away from the site." Moutinho, Sofia. "In biblical times, purple was the new black." *Latest News. ScienceMag.org*, 29 Jan. 2021. Web. 16 Feb. 2021.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anniversary Celebration. St. John's Lutheran Church of Okabena, Minnesota, will hold the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the church and the 25th anniversary of the school on Sunday, July 4, 2021.

—Pastor James Albrecht

The Spring 2021 Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference will meet virtually on April 21-22. The exact schedule and agenda will be determined and announced as the date draws nearer.

—Pastor Mark Tiefel, Conference Secretary

