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LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

*"Thou wisely hast ordained
the holy ministry
That we, Thy flock, may know
the way to God through Thee."*

The Lutheran Hymnal 485:1



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Workers in the Word, Called by God

Carrying out the Lord's kingdom work under a divine call is a truly awesome privilege. It is, at the same time, both enormously gratifying and profoundly sobering to recognize that God Himself has elected you to the office you hold. The Holy Spirit through Paul communicated the weight and origin of the divine call with these words: "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." (Acts 20:28 ESV) He taught the gravity of the divine call by reminding us that the work is all about caring for souls that "he obtained with his own blood"—human beings for whom our Savior suffered and died. He also assured us that the origin of the divine call is God Himself.

The context of these words is also informative. They were spoken to the elders of the church at Ephesus. From Miletus, on the return leg of his third missionary journey, Paul had asked the elders from Ephesus to come to him. We therefore conclude from these words ("in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers") that every divine call has the same source or origin—God the Holy Spirit—and that every single individual laboring under a divine call is charged by God Himself with the care of His own beloved children. Every Christian called to provide any aspect of soul-care to others is included. Divine calls are not limited therefore to the obvious (pastors, teachers, and missionaries), but include also every Sunday school teacher, every church council member, every elder and deacon, every layman that the congregation calls to conduct a Sunday service in the Pastor's absence or to assist with the distribution of the elements in Holy Communion.

As with every Christian doctrine, we err if we say more or less than what God Himself has revealed to us in His Word. While every called worker should have no doubt that the origin of his call is God Himself, it is also true that God

today communicates with us *mediately*, not *immediately*. That means that God does not whisper in our ear; He speaks through His Word. A calling body prays for God's guidance, but then issues calls as fallible human beings—praying that God would guide the recipient to accept or return the call as God alone wills. Those who receive a divine call go through a similar process, asking God for His guidance. Though the process is not an exact science, we nevertheless have God's assurance that whenever a call is extended and accepted, that call is from God Himself.

While regular reminders of the origin and importance of the divine call should fill every called worker with a renewed sense of sobriety and awe, the divine call itself provides no internal change. That means that unless God Himself has imposed other restrictions in His Word, every Christian has the same authority, power, and commission. The call changes only the scope of the work. Every Christian can baptize, forgive or retain sins, recall the erring, witness to others, and comfort the sick and dying. The divine call simply empowers or authorizes the called servant to act publicly on behalf of those who have called him. While any Christian can baptize, for example, the divine call dictates that the individual who has been called will ordinarily carry out that work in the name of the calling body.

Continue to support those who carry out this invaluable work in your name, at every level. "Esteem them very highly in love because of their work." (Thessalonians 5:13 ESV) Satan knows that the best way to scatter the sheep is to cripple the shepherds. Our Savior also reminded us that even those not serving under a divine call have a vital role to play: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2 ESV)



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

Building the Body of Christ

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, "Hans and Franz" wanted to "pump you up!" Two comedians were mimicking body builder and actor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Wearing stuffed sweatsuits, weightlifting belts and gloves, Hans and Franz complained about "flabby arms" and weak bodies. In their comedy routine, they talked about wanting to "pump you up" by lifting weights.

While their comedy sketch was funny, truly weak bodies are no joke. Ask anyone who has weak or atrophied muscles how hard it can be to carry out the simplest of everyday tasks. To "pump up" our weak muscles, we often make use of "PT"—physical therapy—to strengthen our bodies.

Even more serious than weak muscles in our bodies are Christians whose understanding of God's Word and will is weak. Paul writes about the danger of being *"tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting."* (Ephesians 4:14) Paul's imagery is that of a little boat being tossed about on a stormy sea.

That is a picture of what can happen to someone whose understanding of the Bible is weak. Because such a person doesn't know what to believe, false doctrines can easily blow that faith off course. The smooth words and flattering speech of false teachers deceive the hearts of the simple.

Christ does not want His Church drifting aimlessly and helplessly through life. He wants to "pump up" the faith of His precious lambs and sheep; so He provides "PT." No, not physical therapy, but instead Pastors and Teachers. Look at the gifts Christ gave (and continues to give) His Church when He ascended into heaven: *"He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."* (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Notice why it is that Christ gave these gifts to His Church: "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ministry means "service." Edifying means "building up." Christ has given gifts to His Church to equip believers to serve their

Lord, their fellow believers, and their neighbor in various capacities.

Christ gave these gifts to His Church to build up the Church so that it would not be like a little boat tossed all over the place by *"every wind of doctrine."* Instead, building their faith on the solid foundation of the God-breathed words of the apostles and prophets, the Holy Spirit "pumps up" the faith of believers.

The ascended Lord continues to give gifts to His Church to further "pump up" our faith. Pastors and teachers who bring us God's Word build up our faith by pointing us to Christ. They correct us with God's Law when we stray from God's right paths. They bring us the comfort of full and free forgiveness of sins through Christ when we wrestle with guilt. When we sorrow over the death of a fellow Christian, they comfort us with the sure and certain promise of eternal life for all believers in Christ, and the promise of the resurrection on the Last Day. They teach us God's Word and how His Word applies to our daily lives as we follow Jesus.

Pastors and teachers equip and build up the Church when they bring us the Word in sermons, Bible studies, and catechism classes. They equip and build us up from youth on through Sunday schools and Christian day schools. They equip saints for works of service through our Immanuel High School, College, and Seminary. The "body building" continues through personal instruction, counseling in the Word, and administering the sacraments. Any time pastors and teachers bring you God's Word and point you to Christ, they are building you up in the faith.

As amusing as "Hans and Franz" were, let us give thanks and praise to Christ for the "body building" He Himself continues to provide His Church through "PT"—Pastors and Teachers of the Word! Amen.



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

A HYMN OF GLORY LET US SING

TLH HYMN 485

<http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/417.mp3>

“Lord Jesus, Who Art Come”

Bernard of Clairvaux, whom Luther once called “the most pious monk that ever lived,” said that the office of the public ministry is “*Sacerdotium non est otium, sed negotiorum negotium.*” Fortunately for me, the source where I came across that quote also contained the translation. The first part of it means “The office of the ministry is not leisure,” and the second part can be translated either as “but work above all work” or as “but difficulty on top of difficulty.” For those who are faithful in that office, that observation is certainly true.

Luther didn’t disagree with Bernard on that point, but he did have a more germane observation about the pastoral office. He said, “It is a very great glory for a miserable human being to be called a messenger of God and to have this name in common with the heavenly spirits.” In another place, Luther commented, “Scripture certainly praises and lauds this position very highly. St. Paul calls preachers God’s stewards and ministers, bishops, teachers, prophets, God’s ambassadors, too, sent to reconcile the world with God (2 Corinthians 5:20). Joel calls them saviors; David calls them kings and princes (Psalm 68:13); Haggai calls them messengers (1:13); and Malachi says: ‘The priest’s lips should keep the knowledge . . . for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts (2:7).’”

As with the priests and Levites in the Old Testament, God has in our time established and ordained a group of people through whom His Word is to be publicly administered. In the New Testament era, however, that office is not hereditary as it was with the priests and Levites. It is, rather, an office entered by a divine call, and its proper function is the public proclamation of God’s Word, through which the Holy Spirit works to create and sustain faith. “*Thou [Jesus] wisely hast ordained / The holy ministry / That we, Thy flock, may know / the way to God thro’ Thee.*” (v.1)

It is through God’s Word that saving faith is both created and sustained, and the public preaching of that Word is the primary function of the pastoral office. The pastor’s focus is not to be on the advancement of social welfare or on political advocacy, but rather on faithfully proclaiming and correctly applying divinely revealed Law and Gospel, to the salvation of souls and the spiritual feeding of God’s people. “*Thou hast, O Lord, returned, / To God’s right hand*

ascending; / Yet Thou art in the world, / Thy kingdom here extending. / Thro’ preaching of Thy Word / In ev’ry land and clime / Thy people’s faith is kept / Until the end of time.” (v.2)

God has instituted the pastoral office for the blessing of His people, and it is our duty—and also our privilege!—to pray for God’s blessings upon those who publicly proclaim His Word on our behalf. What, then, should be the content of our prayers for our called servants? This hymn especially urges us to pray that they faithfully proclaim pure doctrine, that they may be preserved in sanctification, and that the Holy Spirit would give them power to boldly apply unchanging divine truth to the changing circumstances of Christians. “*The servants Thou hast called / And to Thy Church art giving / Preserve in doctrine pure / And holiness of living. / Thy Spirit fill their hearts, / Endue their tongues with power; / What they should boldly speak, / Oh, give them in that hour!*” (v. 5)

This world—increasingly so in our own day—is often antagonistic toward Christ and those who are His. The road ahead of us may very well be a bumpy one. Nonetheless, we know where that road ends, and the ministry of faithful shepherds helps us to know the way along that road and sustains us as we go. “*Press onward with Thy Word / Till pastor and his fold / Through faith in Thee, O Christ, / Thy glory shall behold.*” (v.7)

In the Israelites’ battle against Amalek at Rephidim, God’s people prevailed as long as Moses held up his hands and staff. But when Moses became weary, Amalek prevailed. Therefore Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands until sundown, and the Israelites overwhelmed Amalek. In like manner, it is our duty and privilege to be the ones “holding up the hands” of our pastors. Praying for them is an important part of that support. May we always remember to support those whom God calls to be a blessing to us.



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

Your Word Has Given Me Life

2 Kings chapter 25 tells of how Nebuchadnezzar and his army laid siege to Jerusalem. The situation became so desperate that King Zedekiah fled from the city.

“But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.” (25:5-7)

One thing that makes this account especially poignant is the geography.

This was the land that God “swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” (Genesis 50:24) He had delivered their descendants from Egypt and brought them here. When the people crossed the Jordan River, they marked that occasion by setting up twelve stones taken from the Jordan to be a memorial, “that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.” (Joshua 4:24) Standing there on the plains of Jericho, they had arrived in the land which God reserved for a people He set apart to be guardians of His Covenant and testimonies—a land designated to be the cradle of the promised Messiah.

Scripture goes on to tell us of how the land was divided among the tribes of Israel. During the time of the Judges we read of God repeatedly leading His people to repent and then rescuing them. Eventually Israel united to become a kingdom under the leadership of Saul and David, the first two kings. Solomon built the temple, and “the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.” (2 Chronicles 5:14) God remained faithful and true as He watched over His people. They were far from perfect, so repentance and faith were fundamental to their lives as His people.

Following the death of Solomon, Rehoboam and Jeroboam



discussed the terms of how to proceed. Their conversation revolved around things like imposed public service and taxes. Not once, however, did they discuss the Lord or following His Word. Judah and Benjamin followed Rehoboam. The other ten tribes went with Jeroboam (1 Kings 12).

It is painful to read about the ensuing faithlessness of the people, which often degenerated into idolatry of the most revolting kind. Some kings of the southern kingdom feared God. None of the northern kings did. Over the years God sent one foreign army after another to take people from both kingdoms out of the land of promise.

After King Zedekiah was captured on the plains of Jericho, he was taken across the Jordan River and out of the Promised Land—the very place where Joshua had led Israel into the promised land.

As we reflect on this history, we are reminded of how vital it is to walk humbly with our God, daily praying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” (Luke 18:13)

Wellbeing that is true and lasting cannot be found on a path that leads away from God’s Word.

Jesus Himself says, “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28) The word for “keep” in the original text emphasizes that God’s Word is something to treasure. Hold it close and it will keep you safe.

*“Remember the word to Your servant,
Upon which You have caused me to hope.
This is my comfort in my affliction
For Your word has given me life.” (Psalm 119:49-50)*



Delwyn Maas is pastor of Gift of God Lutheran Church in Mapleton, North Dakota.

Best Friends Forever

"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, 'The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?'" (James 4:4-5)

Two's company, three's a crowd. Such is the nature of certain exclusive relationships where a third party is an intrusion or worse. Try a three-child playdate where one of the three often ends up on the outside looking in. Watch a teenager struggle with two very opposite BFFs. No human relationship, however, is more close, exclusive, or important than that of husband and wife. God has made the two wonderfully one, leaving no room for any third party. And marriage is reflective of Christ's beloved union with His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:22-32). Similarly, God's blessed friendship with us (James 2:23) was created by Christ's reconciling sin-sacrifice and His reconciling Gospel at work in us.

Yet there is an evil and jealous enemy who desperately wants to intrude and replace God as our best friend. And he has a willing accomplice in His spiritually adulterous scheme. With a number of alluring tools at its disposal, *the world* relentlessly woos us, seeking our friendship. And there's a part of us that is truly smitten with its charm.

As God's children, we already have a wonderful faith, family, and friend relationship with our God and Savior that meets our deepest spiritual needs and provides immeasurable blessings for life and eternity. That relationship has been divinely created, nurtured, and strengthened by God's promises and assurances, found in His scriptural love letter to us. And this relationship is exclusive. There is no other God. We have no other Savior Friend than Jesus. His single-minded, loving devotion to us even creates a holy "jealousy" when He sees our sometimes-wandering eyes and hearts.

How then could we ever be friends with someone who only wants to hurt us and undermine and destroy our heavenly friendship? As the Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, what do God and Satan, truth and

error, righteousness and unrighteousness have in common? They are not just polar opposites; they are spiritual and eternal opposites. You simply cannot love God and the world at the same time (1 John 2:15-17). To do so is nothing less than spiritual adultery.

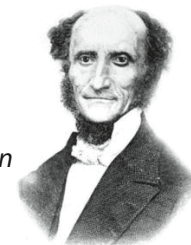
James's words offer a loving warning to the scattered believers he addresses and also to each of us. Cozying up to the world and its ways is often easier than fighting another challenging faith-battle. Which of us doesn't daily compromise our blessed friendship and fellowship with God by entanglements with the world? In our beliefs and values, our attitudes and relationships, our behavior and lifestyle choices, how easy it is to allow the world in, little by little—all the while reassuring God and ourselves that all is still well between us. As far as the world is concerned, we're just casual friends, that's all.

Once again, James has us looking in the mirror of the law, and what we see isn't pretty. In fact, our sin and failings should hurt deeply—and that's good. It drives us outside of ourselves for help and hope. In repentance and faith we look again to the cross. And there we find "*more grace*" (James 4:6)—God's grace and mercy that just keeps on coming in spite of ourselves. It is impossible to escape the glaring contrast between our sometimes compromising, *unfaithful* friendship, and God's abounding grace and mercy, His *faithful* friendship. In His grace alone we trust, live, rejoice and give thanks. In Christ, we are and will remain "best friends forever."



David Schierenbeck is a retired pastor and a member of the CLC Board of Doctrine. He lives in St. Paul Park, Minnesota.

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.



Law First, Then Gospel

“Thesis VII--In the third place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is preached first and then the Law; sanctification first and then justification; faith first and then repentance; good works first and then grace.”

A farmer told me the best hired help he ever had was a seminary student on summer break.

Other farmhands felt the basics were beneath them and rushed headlong into what they thought best, making a mess of things in the process. But this young man from Eau Claire, with no prior experience in manual labor, listened intently to the farmer's every word and followed his instructions in precise order.

A worker who sticks to the fundamentals as the key to success is a rare find, because most people are insulted by such entry-level training. Sadly, when it comes to God's Word, it is no different.

Law first, then Gospel. It doesn't get simpler than this.

This is the order in which each is solemnly revealed in Holy Scripture: Sinai first, then Calvary.

This is the Apostle Paul's systematic approach to Christian doctrine in his epistle to the Romans. Walther says, "Here we have a true pattern of the correct sequence: first the Law, threatening men with the wrath of God; next the Gospel, announcing the comforting promises of God." (page 94)

Luther's Small Catechism is structured the same: Commandments first, then Creed.

Only the meticulous tilling of sin and sowing of grace bring forth true spiritual fruit. Walther says, "I must first know that God has forgiven my sins, that He has cast them into the depth of the sea, before it affords me real joy to lead a sanctified life." (page 91)

But the sinful flesh is like the farmhand who knows better than his boss: "Man is by nature a conceited being." (page 97) Not content with God's straightforward counsel, many preachers venture headlong into more "advanced" topics:

- ✦ The Bible as a book of tips and tricks for achieving a happier life
- ✦ Motivational talks concluding with a courtesy mention of Jesus
- ✦ Manipulating worship styles to achieve a more "exciting" spiritual experience

I have not always been part of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. The saddest part of my time in other Lutheran synods was watching people grow fascinated with trends like these, instead of sticking to the simple proclamation of Law and Gospel. We rightly identify the error of those synods by their public statements which conflict with Scripture, but the real danger lies in the pulpit. For without true confessional integrity, men begin preaching, unchecked, in any way that seems good to them. By trying to improve on God's simple instructions, they end up making an awful mess of His saving truth.

Law first, then Gospel. This isn't just the first step in preaching. This is the whole job, and a blessed job it is!

Maybe, then, it wasn't lack of experience which made that seminary student the best help that farmer ever had, but the meticulous training he received in the early days of Immanuel Lutheran Seminary: "*Hold fast the pattern of sound words.*" (2 Timothy 1:13) It is by grace alone that such attention to detail still flourishes among us today, as the Spirit keeps us focused on one clear message: "*Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*" (I Corinthians 2:2)

So, if you ever find your preacher a tad boring or wonder whether there's not more to be had in the Christian life—don't get ahead of yourself! Repeat it again: "The Law shows me my sin . . . the Gospel shows me my Savior!" Marvel at how divine wisdom can be both so basic, yet at the same time so advanced.



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[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.

Monothelitism

There is a reason why little children are greatest in the kingdom of God. They grasp in simple faith what adults stumble over through logic and reason. Consider, for example, the person and nature of Jesus. Ask a child, "Who is the Baby in the manger?" and they'll tell you, "The Baby is God." Ask human reason, and the more deeply it probes, the more likely it is to be wrong.

Monothelitism is an error of human reason. Emerging in the 7th century, it was a compromise teaching that was meant to gloss over a doctrinal difference regarding the person of Jesus Christ. Some rightly taught that Jesus is fully God and fully man in the same person. Others believed that only the divine nature was present. Monothelitism correctly taught the two distinct but inseparable natures in Christ, but then went off the tracks by saying that the two natures had only one will, hence the name: *Mono* ("one") *thelitism* ("will").

That may seem like a small point that only theologians would quibble over, but Satan's attacks are seldom done on a straight line. The devil is more effective by planting doctrinal land mines out of plain sight. Ultimately, every attack on doctrine is an attack on the Gospel itself. Satan's objective is to undermine what Jesus has done for lost mankind.

Monothelites taught that Jesus did not really face the same temptations that we face. Since the divine will was greater than the human will, they argued, He was predestined to succeed and could not sin. In effect, Jesus merely went through the motions, because He was incapable of sinning anyway. That may seem reasonable, but it is not biblical. It minimizes His work of keeping the Law in our place and contradicts (among others) these words of Scripture, "*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*" (Hebrews 4:15) With only a single will, fully controlled

by God, the wilderness temptations (and all others in His life on earth) were not real temptations at all.

The Bible refutes Monothelitism with simple and clear passages. Jesus explained, "*I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*" (John 6:38) In Gethsemane, far from "going through the motions," Jesus was overwhelmed with sorrow. Three times He prayed in desperation, "*Not My will, but Yours be done.*" (Luke 22:42) Clearly, Jesus had both a divine and a human will.

The devil is more effective by planting doctrinal land mines out of plain sight. Ultimately, every attack on doctrine is an attack on the Gospel itself.

Luther taught that there is a place for logic and reason, as long as they are subservient to the Word. After all, the Bible says, "*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh. . . .*" (1 Timothy 3:16) The Person of Jesus, like the Gospel itself, is a mystery that has to be revealed. When Peter made the confession, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,*" Jesus explained, "*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*" (Matthew 16:17)

Human reason disregards the "mystery of godliness" and imposes human limitations on God and His work of saving us.

Monothelitism was rejected at the Third Council of Constantinople in A.D. 680. The doctrine of the Nature and Person of Christ is carefully and correctly expressed in the Formula of Concord of the Lutheran Confessions, where Scripture, not reason, prevails.



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

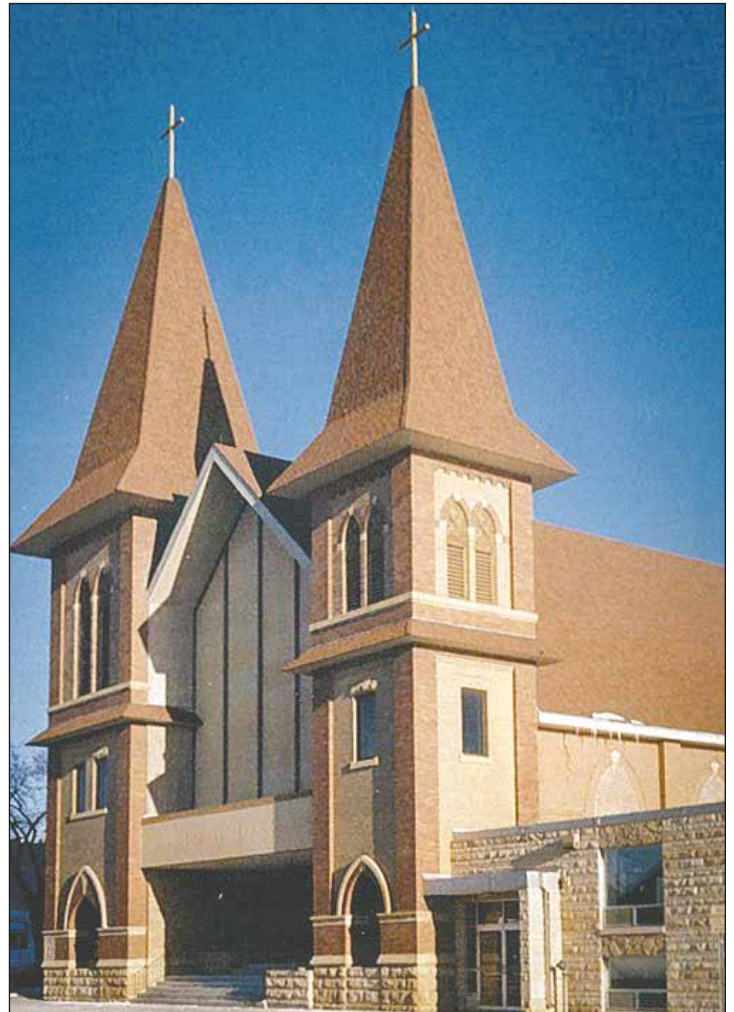
Fiftieth Anniversary of the Mankato Church Fire

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior." (Isaiah 43:1-3)

There was no plan to build a new church. In the early morning hours of July 4, 1971, lightning struck one of the two distinctive steeples of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota. The fire that followed engulfed the beautiful sanctuary. By the time the sun began to dawn, the roof had collapsed and the bells that would have been ringing to mark the beginning of worship that morning were trapped in rubble in the basement.

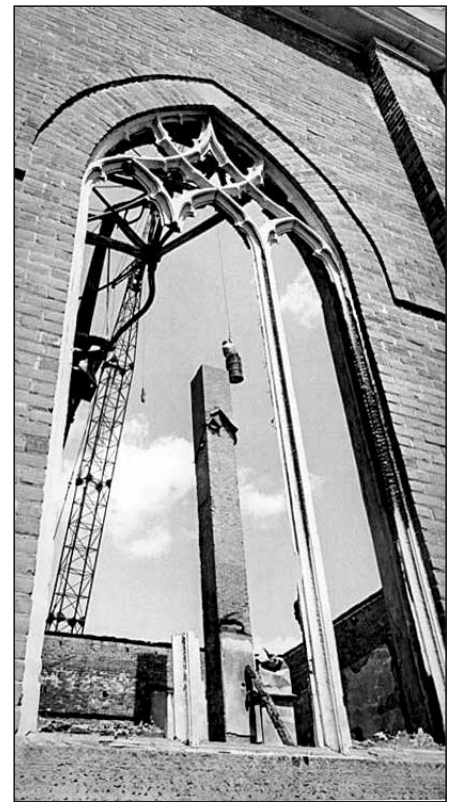
In one night, the Lord had taken the third edition (built in 1913) of Immanuel by fire and laid the responsibility upon the members of that church to build a fourth sanctuary. Immediate steps were taken to secure temporary quarters in which to hold services. On the very morning of the fire, a service was held at the Mankato High School auditorium. Services were held in that auditorium each Sunday thereafter until October 22, 1972, when the members of Immanuel returned to their church building even though it was not quite complete.

On September 1, 1971, the congregation approved a plan by Mr. Richard Rice, an architect in Mankato, to rebuild the church. The plan retained the old basement, the old walls, and the towers. On October 7, 1971, the first workmen appeared on the scene to begin the huge task of clearing the burned rubble. We acknowledge the many Immanuel members, young and old, men and women, who took part in the rough and dirty work of salvaging and clearing the mountain of rubble, so that they could save what could be saved. Work had to be done to protect the furnace from the weather so that classes could still be held in the brand-new attached school building. Many members at that time remember cold and dirty people chipping mortar from frozen brick, shoveling ashes, and



Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota
(current church).

cleaning out nails from joists that were to be reused. This was indeed a labor of love—they could have no other reason for doing what they did.



As you come up the steps into the church from Second Street, you will find on the right two date stones. The top one marks the work that was done in 1971-1972 in reconstructing the church. Below that is a large date stone which commemorates the building of the first church on this property. On the northwest corner of the large tower, you will find the date stone of the church that burned. It is indeed unusual to have three date stones in one building. The 1884 date stone marks the confessional position that Immanuel Congregation took in a period of unionism. The letters U.A.C. stand there as a public acknowledgment that this congregation held to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. The other date stones, 1913 and 1972, indicate that the Lord has been with this congregation in preserving this confessional position by providing four houses of worship on this corner.

As you look above the altar, you see a cross that catches the eyes of all who worship here. It is of special interest because the timbers from which this cross was made were in the 1913 church. Those who saw the fire-damaged building will remember the huge 12x12 timbers that ran from one steel truss to another, high in the sky. It is from these charred purlins that our cross has been made. It stands

Above: The church fully engulfed in flames. Photos on the right: Immanuel during the reconstruction.

there as a constant reminder to us of the heartache we experienced when our precious building burned, but especially of God's continuing love to us in Jesus Christ, in spite of all earthly changes.

We praise and thank God for the work that He accomplished through His people of rebuilding this marvelous house of worship so that we too may hear of His wonderful grace and mercy in sending His Son Jesus Christ to suffer and die to take away all of our sins. May this building ever be a testament to the love of our great Savior, Immanuel, "God with us."



Joseph Naumann is associate pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato, Minnesota. His article is adapted from a 1972 commemorative bulletin entitled "From Ashes to Honor."

A Promising Leader in Liberia

It is truly astounding how the awe-inspiring Gospel message leads to heart-warming connections that were never foreseen. As an example, I'd like to introduce a faithful pastor whom I truly admire: Jethro Wallah.

In November of 2015 I traveled to Liberia as a part-time missionary of the CLC. One of the places I visited was the remote area of Bopolu. I recall passing a place called the Bopolu Bible Mission, a church and school with several buildings that occupied a large campus, including homes for the staff.

A year later, in 2016, we traveled to Bopolu again, my contact spontaneously arranging a meeting with several church leaders. This is when I first met Jethro, who quietly listened to us explain what the CLC was all about. When Jethro spoke, it was obvious that he was the one everyone wanted to listen to. He made the point that, given their remoteness, few visitors offered them in-depth Bible teaching—something many in the region greatly desired. Most of the pastors and teachers in the area had only a limited background in the Bible.

In 2017, plans were made to provide a three-day Bible training seminar in Bopolu. It was difficult to accomplish this in such a remote area. Missionary David Koenig joined me in teaching the Word to eager students. A lot of excitement was generated by our presence. We later learned that many had not believed that we would actually show up, and were shocked that we followed through with our plans.

Jethro was quite charitable in accommodating us while we were in Bopolu. It was clear that he was a hard-working, good-natured pastor who faithfully tended to his flock and also provided leadership for various preaching stations well outside of Bopolu. His motorcycle helped him get around. He was admired by his own members, as well as by the local clergy, who looked up to him as a leader in the community.

One day, as we were returning from a preaching trip to a remote village, I spoke with Jethro about his personal interest in learning more about the CLC. He told me that he was overjoyed by what he had



Left: Hein and Wallah in 2017.
Bottom: Bopolu, Liberia





Top: Bopolu bible training seminar. Bottom: Radio interview.

learned so far, but realized that he needed to proceed cautiously so that he was certain of what we taught. I commended him, telling him that I would do the same thing if I were in his shoes. As a final expression of Jethro's kindness, he made sure that our vehicle was topped with plantains, bananas, rice, and mangos as we left. He waved farewell to us with his pleasant and infectious smile.

The following year I was unable to travel to Liberia. However, Pastor Joseph Kwiwalazu, our lead trainer in Liberia, was able to make regular trips to Bopolu to build upon this initial seminar. He took Jethro and many others through a full systematic course in Bible doctrine. I regularly received reports from Joseph, who expressed joy in Jethro's understanding of the Bible, as well as his growing commitment to sound Lutheran teaching.

During my 2019 trip to Liberia I truly got to know Jethro well—his charming personality, his unassuming friendliness, his cheerful sense of humor, his respected influence in the Bopolu community, his appealing pastoral leadership and, most of all, his lively faith and commitment to the truth of God's Word. Though over the age of sixty, his eager absorption of biblical truths and his bustling energy to minister to souls was obvious. Once again our Bible training there was well received, with one pastor tearfully expressing joy in learning so much from God's Word. While Jethro was not outwardly vocal, he was obviously working behind the scenes, quietly interacting with people and expressing how he himself had grown in God's Word.

This journey for Jethro has not been an easy one, particularly since his contact with the CLC. In 2018 a representative on the governing board for the Bopolu Bible Mission became jealous and bitter toward Jethro. To the dismay of the congregation, the board assigned a new head pastor and reassigned Jethro to be the assistant. In October of 2018, Jethro's wife suddenly passed away and left him with four young children to raise. He later expressed to me how touched he was by the prayers and support he received from his CLC contacts in Liberia and

the USA. The Lord has since provided Jethro with another faithful wife, the sister of his former wife. In November of 2019, Jethro met with me in Monrovia and experienced an accident on his way home. His three-wheeled taxi tipped over, crushing his leg and ankle. One might think that the timing of all these things would lead Jethro to question his connection to the CLC, but it has done just the opposite.

During my 2019 trip to Bopolu, Jethro and two other pastors in the area went through a colloquy, an interview to pursue becoming a pastor in fellowship with the CLC. Jethro answered our questions in a straightforward manner, backed up with Scripture passages.

Though Jethro wants to be in fellowship with the CLC, he has chosen not to make any hasty decision to do so. He realizes that once he is in fellowship with the CLC, his relationship with the Bopolu Bible Mission would end, including living in the home he is provided. He has therefore decided to build his own house adjacent to the mission campus so that he can minister to those souls who would like him to serve as their pastor. This demonstrates how bold Jethro is in witnessing to the Bopolu community his commitment to the Word of God. Pastor Joseph Kwiwalazu is continuing to instruct Jethro at this time.

Where this will go, only the Lord knows. But given how the Lord's hand has moved things thus far, we trust that He is unfolding His incredible will before us. Pray for Jethro and the others in Bopolu who are currently being trained by Joseph as they intend to eventually become a part of the CLC efforts in Liberia.



John Hein is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Fridley, Minnesota, and a part-time missionary to Liberia.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JULY 2021

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Jul 1	WS 744 (LSB 801)	Genesis 1:1-31	Everything God made was very good. His original creation worked—and worked perfectly.
Jul 2	TLH 282	Genesis 2:1-25	God also made Adam and Eve, the “crown” of His creation, and they too were perfect and perfectly suited to one another.
Jul 3	TLH 369; LSB 561	Genesis 3:1-24	One sin ruined everything because only one thing wrong ruins perfection. But one Man’s perfection would later crush Satan’s head.
Jul 5	TLH 46 (LSB 921)	Philippians 1:1-11	Paul prays with confidence in the Lord’s continued work among the Philippians.
Jul 6	TLH 444 (LSB 455)	Philippians 1:12-30	When Christians face difficult situations, it is encouraging to know that the Lord can also use them to His glory.
Jul 7	TLH 158 (LSB 433)	Genesis 4:1-26	The effects of sin in the world are painfully evident in the murder of Abel, but there is good news for Adam and Eve in the birth of Seth— an ancestor of Jesus Christ!
Jul 8	TLH 596 (LSB 759)	Genesis 5:1-32	The lengthy lifespans allowed the population of the earth to grow large and for families to learn of the Lord, yet the deaths remind us that sin was in the world.
Jul 9	TLH 5 (LSB 908)	Genesis 6:1-22	God’s children by faith (like Noah and us) receive special care from His hand, and He even gives the unbelieving time to repent. What a gracious God!
Jul 10	WS 763 (LSB 512)	Philippians 2:1-11	Thinking too highly of yourself means you’ll think too little of God. Remember Jesus, Who submitted to His Father even though He was the very Son of God.
Jul 12	TLH 234 (LSB 496)	Philippians 2:12-30	We live in a “crooked and perverse generation,” so we are encouraged when we hear of Christians who are standing firm in the truth.
Jul 13	TLH 370 (LSB 575)	Genesis 7:1-14	Although God delivered a worldwide judgment on sin, He did not wipe out the human race entirely. Otherwise, Eve’s Offspring could not have crushed the serpent’s head.
Jul 14	TLH 4; LSB 809	Genesis 8:1-22	After the flood, “ <i>God remembered Noah</i> ” and continued His faithfulness to him and to the world He had made. Faithfulness which continues yet today (v. 22).
Jul 15	TLH 119	Genesis 9:1-17	God blessed Noah by giving him and his descendants dominion over creation and promising that the floodwaters he had seen would never again cover the earth.
Jul 16	TLH 219 (LSB 532)	Philippians 3:1-11	It is a characteristic of our sinful flesh to try to gain righteousness by keeping the Law—even by adding to God’s Law things He does not require of us.
Jul 17	TLH 660 (LSB 738)	Philippians 3:12-21	Knowing that our flesh seeks righteousness by the Law, we struggle against it and press on toward our heavenly goal promised to us in Christ Jesus—press on in faith.
Jul 19	TLH 628 (LSB 864)	Genesis 10:1-32	Once again God set out building up the population of the earth, blessing Noah and his family with children and more children.
Jul 20	TLH 40 (LSB 798)	Genesis 11:1-32	Noah’s flood had rendered judgment, but it could not overcome sin. Many still followed the way of evil, but the genealogy eventually led us to Abram, who looked for the Savior from sin.
Jul 21	WS 784 (LSB 722)	Genesis 12:1-9	Would you be eager to leave your country and family at age seventy-five? Abram was, but only because of God’s promise. What decisions do you make on the basis of God’s promises?
Jul 22	TLH 545; LSB 763	Philippians 4:1-9	God’s peace is greater than any peace our own thinking can give to us. His peace in Christ is able to protect our hearts and minds from anxiety and fear.
Jul 23	TLH 192 (LSB 467)	Philippians 4:10-23	With Christ on our side strengthening us and preparing us for heaven, we know we can face anything!
Jul 24	TLH 427 (LSB 728)	Psalms 4	Trouble and distress will surely find us, but that is no reason to sin against the Lord in anger. Be still, trust, and notice where He has given you gladness, safety, and security.
Jul 26	TLH 54 (LSB 918)	Psalms 5	Our enemies sometimes come after us so hard that we fall right into sin along with them. Therefore we ask the Lord to lead us in His righteousness.
Jul 27	TLH 321	Psalms 6	Does your sin ever trouble you so much that you become physically weak and cannot sleep? Take your sin to the Lord, for He hears your voice.
Jul 28	TLH 386	1 Timothy 1:1-20	Beware of false teachings because they distract from the Gospel of Christ. This is a “faithful saying” that is true: Jesus saves sinners. Jesus alone.
Jul 29	TLH 355 (LSB 526)	1 Timothy 2:1-15	Jesus Christ gave Himself a ransom for all, a mediator between God and men, therefore in Christ we can reach God in prayer.
Jul 30	TLH 542	Genesis 13:1-18	Lot selfishly chose the best land for himself, but Abram wouldn’t be hurt by it. Remember that God will take care of you too even when it looks as if someone else has gotten a better deal.
Jul 31	TLH 221	Genesis 14:1-24	Abram was great, but the king and priest Melchizedek was greater than he. Melchizedek in turn reminds us of Jesus, the greatest King and Priest.

Introducing A New Professor

For regular readers of the Lutheran Spokesman, David Schaller, the new music and Greek professor at Immanuel Lutheran College, is likely not a stranger. He has been writing articles for this publication for a number of years now.

Nor is it surprising that many of his recent articles have been on hymns. As happens with many other people, his interest in music goes back to his childhood, as does his interest in proclaiming the wonderful works of God. From pre-school days—blowing the trumpet along with the televised concerts of the Boston Pops Orchestra—to grade school days—playing the piano upstairs, the organ in the basement, and the recorder part to a Buxtehude Cantata with a joint choir at Gethsemane congregation in Spokane, Washington, David's hobby has been music. He first played for church services at Peace Lutheran Church in Orofino, Idaho.

During his high school years, he played B-flat, C, and D trumpets in a variety of groups, including marching, pep, jazz, and concert bands; and the ILC choirs after arriving on campus as a junior. He was privileged to sing and play with nine tour choirs during his years at Immanuel.

David was in the fourth grade when computers were introduced in the Clarkston, Washington, school system, and he soon became interested in computer programming. He took a number of accelerated mathematics classes over the years in preparation for a possible career in computers. The Lord, however, had other plans for him. After studying German in high school and beginning Greek at ILC, David came to realize that languages came even more easily to him than math. This guided him to continue in the pre-theological program, which included the study of the Biblical languages, as well as the use of German in older Lutheran hymns and writings. He went on to prepare for service in the pastoral ministry, graduating from the seminary department in 1999.



That was the same year that he was married to Sarah Lau, also a graduate of ILC, and the couple moved to his first congregation, Redeemer Lutheran of Sister Lakes, Michigan, a congregation first served by his grandfather, Ralph E. Schaller, a founding member of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. For the next twenty-two years in the parish ministry, David not only regularly used the Greek and Hebrew in preparing sermons, Bible classes, and conference presentations, but he also continued

his hobby of music, arranging music for the Sunday school children and church choir, taking up the study of the violin under a University student who was majoring in the instrument, playing cornet in a community band, playing piano accompaniment for local high school students preparing and playing for solo and ensemble festivals, and accompanying local high school musicals.

He continued his organ hobby, and through computer sampling of European and other pipe organs, he began recording in Sister Lakes the organ works of J.S. Bach and posting them on Youtube along with other organ works, such as "Christ is Our Cornerstone," recorded March 14, 2019, in memory of Professor Ronald Roehl and other teachers who have gone before us. These may be viewed at bit.ly/afterdarkorgan.

So although the transition from pastoral ministry to teaching music and Greek can be a daunting change of career for someone in his late forties, the Lord has given David many opportunities to develop and maintain the linguistic and musical gifts which He has given him, as it turns out, in preparation for teaching at our college. May God bless his new ministry, and bless those who study under him.



Dr. Daniel Schierenbeck is President of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

SEEN IN PASSING

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

Finnish Legislator Facing Prison for Tweeting a Bible Passage. “A Christian member of the Finnish Parliament is facing six years imprisonment for allegedly committing three crimes, including ‘hate speech,’ for sharing her opinion on marriage and human sexuality on social media, on television and in a pamphlet. The country’s chief prosecutor has brought three criminal charges against Finnish Member of Parliament and former Minister of the Interior, Päivi Räsänen, according to the Austria-based Christian legal group ADF International. The politician, who is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and former chair of the Christian Democrats, has been under police investigation since June 2019 for publicly voicing her opinion on marriage and human sexuality in a 2004 pamphlet, for comments made on a 2018 TV show, and a tweet of Romans 1:24-27 directed at her church leadership. A medical doctor, mother of five and grandmother of six, Räsänen now faces two years in prison for each alleged crime. . . . ‘I will not back down from my views. I will not be intimidated into hiding my faith. The more Christians keep silent on controversial themes, the narrower the space for freedom of speech gets,’ she said.” Kumar, Anagrah. “Christian MP faces 6 years in prison for tweeting Bible verses on marriage, sexuality.” *CPWorld*. ChristianPost.com, 1 May 2021. Web. 11 May 2021.

SCOTUS Rejects California Limits on In-Home Worship. In April, the United States Supreme Court overturned a lower court decision that had upheld a California law prohibiting home gatherings for the purpose of worship and Bible study. “The ruling stated that before it can limit religious gatherings, the government must prove they pose a greater danger than secular activities that remain open, such as shopping or attending movies. In a 5-4 majority opinion, the court stated that ‘precautions that suffice for other activities suffice for religious exercise too,’ adding that California ‘treats some comparable secular activities more favorably than at-home religious exercise, permitting hair salons, retail stores, personal care services, movie theaters, private suites at sporting events and concerts and indoor dining at restaurants to bring together more than three households at a time.’ The majority opinion added that the state can’t ‘assume the worst when people go to worship but assume the best when people go to work.’ Stimson, Brie. “Supreme Court rules against California’s limits on in-home religious gatherings.” *Hot Topics*. FoxNews.com, 10 Apr. 2021. Web. 11 May 2021.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Left to right: Pastors John Hein, James Albrecht, Nathan Pfeiffer, Johnathan Schnose, Timothy Daub, Paul Krause and Luke Willitz.

Installation. In accord with our usage and order, **Johnathan Schose**, who was called by Bethel Lutheran Church in Morris, Minnesota, to be its pastor, was installed on May 16, 2021. Also participating in the service were pastors John Hein, Nathan Pfeiffer, Timothy Daub, Paul Krause and Luke Willitz.

—Pastor James Albrecht.



Messiah School Dedication. Pastor Paul Tiefel with parents and students of Messiah Lutheran School, at a groundbreaking service for the new school addition in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, May 30, 2021.