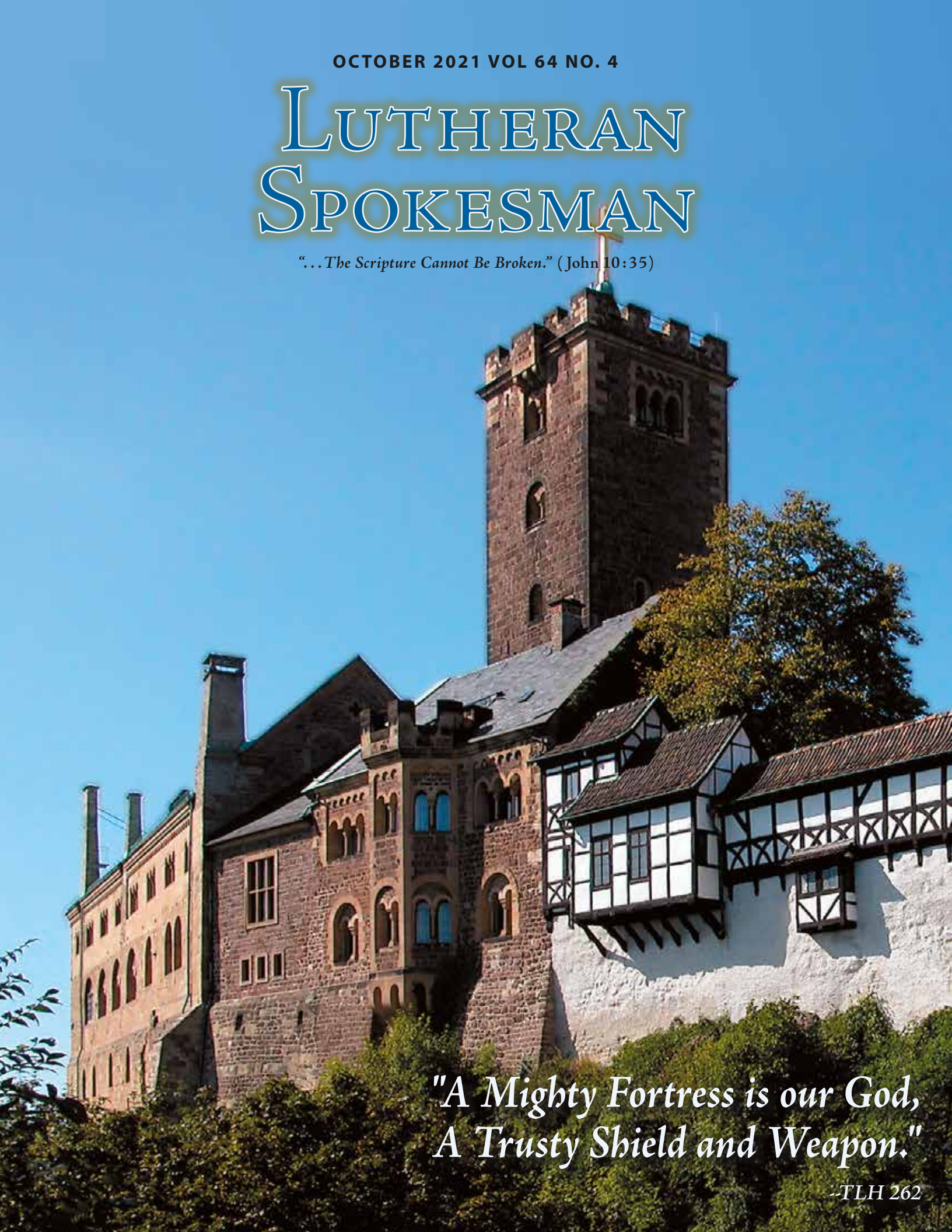


OCTOBER 2021 VOL 64 NO. 4

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



*"A Mighty Fortress is our God,
A Trusty Shield and Weapon."*

-TLH 262



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Reformation—An Act of God’s Grace!

When we think of the Lutheran Reformation, we no doubt think of great men like Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, Johannes Bugenhagen, and others. They were all front and center in bringing back the glorious truths of “Scripture Alone,” especially our salvation by “Grace Alone,” through “Faith Alone.” However, the Reformation was not just *about* the grace of God, the Reformation itself was a wonderful act of His grace.

Mankind always has a propensity for turning away from God but has no power to turn back to Him. Psalm 81:11-12 says of the nation of Israel, “*But My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn hearts, to walk in their own counsels.*” (ESV)

Despite a rich heritage of God’s amazing protection, deliverance, and blessing, His people turned away from Him and would have nothing to do with God or His Word. God made multiple attempts over several centuries to bring them back, but to no avail. So, with great sorrow in His heart, God gave them what they wanted and what they deserved; He let them follow their own stubborn hearts. Without God, they fell prey to their enemies and were taken into captivity. Yet God had not given up on them for good. He promised a time when He would restore a remnant of His people.

History Repeats Itself

God did restore a remnant of His people by an extraordinary act of His grace. God gave His own Son to die for His people’s sins and rebellion. He raised up the apostles to proclaim the Gospel far and wide, and God’s Church grew and spread once again. The heart of man, however, remained rebellious. Over the centuries the visible church was turning farther and farther away from God. As in the days of old, they would not heed God’s voice in His

Word. The church of Rome persecuted and killed those who tried to proclaim the truth of salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone. So, God gave them over to their own stubborn hearts.

However, God is forever merciful. In an act of grace, He chose to restore a remnant of the faithful once again. God raised up a few men whom He captivated with His Word, turned their hearts to Himself, and compelled them by His love to proclaim that Word. Luther himself gave all credit to God for the Reformation. God was pushing and driving him to preach the Word as he learned to cherish the Word. Luther said, “For so says Christ: ‘*Go ye . . . and preach the Gospel to every creature*’ (Mark 16:15); again: ‘*No one hides a light under a bushel*’ (Matthew 5:15). This causes the Word to be like a live coal in our mouth; it cannot be kept there but forces us to open our mouth.” (*What Luther Says*, vol. III, page 1195)

Ripe for Reformation Today

The Gospel prevailed for several centuries following the Reformation. Christianity spread far and wide under God’s amazing grace. Now, however, we are again living in a time of great apostasy. The pride of man thinks he knows better than God, and those who were once God’s people are turning away from God at an alarming rate and will not heed His voice. They will have none of the true God. As they want and deserve, God gives them over to their own stubborn hearts, to walk in their own counsels. As a result, our world is falling to new depths of wickedness.

It is by God’s grace alone that you are still a child of the Reformation and listen to God’s Word. May we not only celebrate the Reformation, but by God’s grace, may we carry on the Reformation today.



David Reim is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Vernon, British Columbia.

A Light Burden

I hope that your time in school was a wonderful, enriching experience. But few things are more exciting for any student than the first days of summer vacation. Perhaps as an adult you have continued to keep the tradition of having certain times off every year. While I hope that you have a fulfilling, enjoyable job, it's important to have a work/life balance. We sometimes need some rest and relaxation, or R&R. But having a day off school or work doesn't excuse us from responsibilities to our family, needs around the house, preparing meals, paying bills, feeding pets, exercising, and so on. That third R of responsibility may seem unwelcome, but it's a blessing from God.

"He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.' And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, 'This Man blasphemes!' But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins'—then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' And he arose and departed to his house." (Matthew 9:1-7)

Notice the reaction of the scribes when Jesus forgave the sins of the paralyzed man. They were indignant! Rather than allowing them their unspoken protest, Jesus called them out. The order of His actions ranked the importance of forgiving sins above that of healing paralysis.

"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain

the sins of any, they are retained.'" (John 20:21-23)

The order of things is also important here. Jesus breathed and told His disciples to receive the Holy Spirit, then told them to forgive sins. A Christian's "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9) responsibility to forgive and retain sins seems quite heavy, especially when we study the examples above. But compare life with and without Christ. The burden of unforgiven sins is unbearable. In contrast, here's how Christ describes His burden: *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* (Matthew 11:29-30)

Our responsibility to Christ is a blessing! Jesus did the hard work of paying for sins. Freed from slavery, we have God-given

purpose to tell that the unbearable debt of sin has been freely paid.

God gave the Old Testament priests many responsibilities. They offered sacrifices, prayed on behalf of others, worked in the tabernacle and temple, and performed special ceremonial duties. Jesus has made each Christian a New Testament priest. We get to announce the forgiveness of sins to all, to the salvation of those who repent and believe in Jesus. We also call others to repentance by withholding forgiveness. Jesus trains us through His Word and sends the Holy Spirit to help us faithfully perform these blessed responsibilities until He calls us home to heaven. Thanks be to God for freeing us from the burden of sin and for giving us both the will and ability to perform the responsibilities He gives us!



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TLH HYMN 262

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

<http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/262.mp3>

Defiance—a bad thing, or good? The parents of a defiant teenager might give a very different answer from that given by those who defy illegitimate tyrants. In truth, the moral character of defiance depends on what is being defied. Defiance can be sinful rebellion against legitimate authority, or it can be godly steadfast courage in a struggle against powerful enemies.

Many American Christians are inattentive to the fact that we do have strong spiritual enemies that we are called to fight. We sometimes forget that—in this world—God calls us to be the Church Militant. It is too easy for us to simply ignore the spiritual foes that surround us and act as if there were no ongoing war. But the fact is that we have enemies, and it is our duty to fight them—not to respond to their evil with acquiescence. We are called to battle, and neglecting that call is cowardly. This hymn emboldens our wavering hearts with the knowledge that our battles are God’s battles and that our ultimate victory is assured.

Dr. Martin Luther’s great hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” sings out defiant opposition to the evils that confront Christians in this life. It is “The Battle Hymn of the Reformation.” Singing it, we defy the tyranny of Satan and his agents, and assert the mighty power of God, Who has already overcome the devil and won the victory for all Christians.

God gives us tools for both defense and offense: both shield and weapon. Without the tools that God provides, we would be helpless against the might of the devil. *“A mighty Fortress is our God, / A trusty Shield and Weapon; / He helps us free from ev’ry need / That hath us now o’ertaken. / The old evil Foe / Now means deadly woe; / Deep guile and great might / Are his dread arms in fight; / On earth is not his equal.”*

We do not fight alone. The almighty God, Jesus Christ,

the Lord of all things on earth and in heaven, is our Commander in the fight. *“With might of ours can naught be done, / Soon were our loss effected; / But for us fights the Valiant One, / Whom God Himself elected. / Ask ye, Who is this? / Jesus Christ it is, / Of Sabaoth Lord, / And there’s none other God; / He holds the field forever.”*

We can face the enemy and his vast forces with confident defiance. *“Tho’ devils all the world should fill, / All eager to devour us, / We tremble not, we fear no ill, / They shall not overpower us. / This world’s prince may still / Scowl fierce as he will, / He can harm us none, / He’s judged; the deed is done; / One little word can fell him.”*

The devil and his agents cannot overcome God’s Word. They will win occasional battles, we might even lose all the earthly things we hold dear, but even then, our loss is inconsequential in light of our ultimate victory. *“And take they our life, / Goods, fame, child, and wife, / Let these all be gone, / They yet have nothing won; / The Kingdom ours remaineth.”* No matter what happens to us in this life, in the end we will leave the Church Militant, and become an ever-joyous part of the Church Triumphant, solely by God’s grace to us in Christ.

Take heart, Christians. Fight the good fight: *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”* (II Timothy 4:7-8)



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

“You shall not commit adultery.”

Exodus 20:14

The Definition

Our English word *adultery* is from the Latin word *adulterare*, meaning to corrupt. The Hebrew word used in the Sixth Commandment has a similar meaning; literally, to stain with a dye, and by extension, to defile. So adultery is a staining or defiling of God’s institution of marriage. This defilement occurs when a married person has sexual relations with anyone other than that person’s spouse.

While the Sixth Commandment refers specifically to unfaithfulness within a marriage, it also forbids sex outside of marriage. Adultery, after all, is a form of sexual immorality. And sexual immorality is condemned throughout Scripture. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:3, “*But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints.*”

As with all of God’s commandments, the Sixth Commandment embraces both action and thought. Human nature insists, “It’s okay for me to look, as long as I don’t touch.” Such logic is often used to justify pornography, or sexual flirtations at work. But according to Scripture, if the looking inspires lusting, it is sin and by no means acceptable to God.

The Consequences

The Sixth Commandment is God’s commandment. Therefore, any sin against this commandment is first and foremost a sin against God. But adultery is also a sin against others, especially one’s spouse and family. The long-term cost of adultery is virtually incalculable when measured in terms of broken hearts, broken homes, and broken families. And by destroying families, adultery also undermines the God-ordained building blocks of society.

Are adultery and immorality as harmless as society insists? Far from it. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 6:32, “*Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul*”—or translated another way, “destroys his own life.” His life, and the lives of many others.

The Intent

God created us as sexual beings, intending the gift of sex to be pleasurable, procreative, and reserved for the lifelong commitment of marriage. Within that commitment, sex was to be an intimate expression of the oneness of marriage; a oneness which Adam immediately recognized, saying in Genesis 2:23, “*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*”

Marriage was also intended to be the stable, loving framework for raising children; but there is nothing caring, committed, stable, or loving about adultery. These are selfish, destructive acts, which is why God prohibited them. God did not give the Sixth Commandment to deprive us, but to keep us from hurting ourselves, our spouse, our children, our neighbor, and ultimately, society itself.

The Solution

As Christians, our sincere desire is to please the Lord and obey His commandments. Yet, despite our best intentions, we still sin in thought, word, and deed. We say with the Apostle Paul, “*For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice . . . O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*” (Romans 7:19,24)

But we also rejoice in the apostle’s answer: “*I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*” In Jesus we find the forgiveness of sins, the will and strength to walk the way of God’s commands and, when tempted to commit adultery, the ability to say with Joseph, “*How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*” (Genesis 39:9)

As Luther rightly explained: “We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and each love and honor his spouse.”



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“God Willing . . .”

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” (James 4:13-17)

Back in the day when pastors didn’t have equipment to produce bulletins, after Sunday services they made oral announcements. One pastor in particular brought out his schedule book for this purpose. It was referred to as his “God willing” book, because all his announcements were preceded by saying, “God willing,” this or that meeting will be held. He prefaced his announcements this way, for since all things are subject to God’s providential will, and only God knows the future, Christians bow to His will concerning the future.

In the section of Scripture before us, James was addressing Jewish Christians who didn’t take into account the Lord’s will in regard to their plans. They sinfully boasted that without a doubt they would be making a business trip to a certain city and after a given length of time they would come away with a profit from their dealings. These foolish people believed that the future rested in their hands without God having a say in the matter. They failed to keep in mind that their lives were like vapor; it might well vanish in the next moment. Then what would become of their plans?

God oversees everything in this world and governs our lives according to His gracious good will. Since He

possesses all wisdom and can foresee the future, the Lord rules according to what is best for us. So then, when we make plans, it is good for us to keep in mind and even include in our conversations that whatever we are hoping to do, ultimately it is up to God if it is to take place.



Jesus Christ, Who had all wisdom and knew the future, was willing to entrust His earthly life into the hands of His heavenly Father. He knew well God’s plan for our eternal salvation which involved His sacrificial death on the cross. Being aware of what lay ahead for Him, Jesus said to God, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.” (Mark 14:36) Thank God that Jesus was willing to submit to His Father’s will, for it results in making us heirs of heaven.

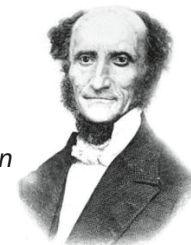
Some years back after our congregation in Ipswich, South Dakota, celebrated a Christmas Eve service, a ninety-year-old member said to me, “I’ll see you tomorrow, pastor.” For some reason it popped into my head to respond by saying, “Lord willing.” The next morning the Lord in His wisdom and good will ended this gentleman’s life. It was the Lord’s will for this child of God to join all the hosts of heaven in the everlasting celebration, praising and thanking Jesus for making it possible for sinners to be eternally saved.

Believers say of God’s will, *Yea and Amen!*



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

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.



Faith Alone Saves. Works Follow.

“Thesis X—In the sixth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher describes faith in a manner as if the mere inert acceptance of truths, even while a person is living in mortal sins, renders that person righteous in the sight of God and saves him; or as if faith makes a person righteous and saves him for the reason that it produces in him love and reformation of his mode of living.

In men's eight rowing, there are two phases to each stroke: drive and recovery. The tension and strain of the catch into the water, followed by the powerful glide with each release. With each member balancing his 12.5-foot oar precariously off either side of the boat, precision was essential.

Thus, we needed our ninth team member, the coxswain. Typically smaller in stature and tucked into the stern, his voice calling out across the shell kept everyone in sync.

The beauty of colonial architecture along the Charles River and the power of propelling through the water were breathtaking. But if either benefit became a distraction, the ensuing turbulence could lead to a dislocated joint or a plunge into Boston Harbor.

The Spirit of God produces tremendous benefits in the believer's heart and mind. Pure scriptural doctrine is far more beautiful than any New England fall day, and there is great spiritual power in Christian love of God and neighbor. These two, knowledge and love, flow naturally from living faith, just as the sun “need not be told to shine” (p. 211).

Since no work of the heart can save, though, to focus on

either of these benefits would lead to a shipwreck of faith.

There was no more perfect human knowledge and love than Adam and Eve's in Eden. Yet neither faculty prevented their fall into sin.

The Law sternly warns how faith can be lost, but the Gospel is God's commitment to restore you to faith. Law and Gospel are not rightly divided when faith becomes confused with the benefits of knowledge or love. Faith's sole object is faith's sole source: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17 KJV)

Law and Gospel are not rightly divided when faith becomes confused with the benefits of knowledge or love.

Yoked together with a motley crew of teammates, all out of synch concerning the righteousness God requires, we sinners should be jettisoned into eternal death. But the Savior who calmed Galilee's waters has made peace between you and your God through His cross and empty tomb.

By grace alone, the pulpits and schools of our fellowship yet resound with a concerted effort to keep this Law and Gospel in proper balance, lest one soul be lost. Pray the Spirit keep us steady toward that goal.

So, when you find yourself tossed about, refocus on that voice calling out from the stern: drive and recovery! “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.



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.

Paulicianism

Did you know that, by learning four simple chords, you can play hundreds of popular songs? It's true. Four chords, arranged in different progressions, provide the structure for many well-known tunes.

False doctrine works the same way. Satan can take a few of the same basic errors, and from them spin hundreds of different religious groups. This has been evident throughout this series on Error's Echo. Satan has mixed, matched, reformatted, arranged, packaged and sold false doctrine in ways that appealed to different people at different points in history.

Paulicianism is another example of that. It first appeared in Armenia during the 7th century. It was a devil's brew of teachings, taken buffet-style from false religions that preceded it. It is part Docetism, part Gnosticism, part Dualism, and part Asceticism. The primary difference between Paulicianism and its component parts was the fact that it operated outside of the Roman Catholic Church and was not a movement within it.

Paulicianism promised to return the church to the glory days of Pauline Christianity. Its leader was Constantine (not to be confused with the Roman emperor of three centuries earlier). Constantine named his disciples Timothy, Titus and Tychicus, and took the name Silvanus for himself. While the group focused especially on the writings of the Apostle Paul, in reality its doctrine relied on the faulty logic and sinful human reason of its leaders.

Paulicians believed that spirit is good and matter is evil. Therefore, Jesus did not have human flesh because the body itself is evil. Jesus also did not suffer physically, nor did He need to. The real purpose for His coming was not to save us, body and soul, for eternity, but to free us from the physical realm.

Paulicians blatantly violated the Scriptures. They separated passages from context the way lions separate a wildebeest from the herd. Isolating God's truth allows it to be twisted into saying whatever people want it to say. Strip

Scripture of its context, and anything goes.

Paulicians rejected the Old Testament, arguing that the God of the Old Testament was not the same as the God of the New. The former was harsh, judgmental, and vindictive; the latter is the God of love, patience, and grace. The God who prescribed death by stoning for adulterers (Leviticus 20:10) is not the same God who said, "Neither do I condemn you..." (John 8:11) and, "Judge not and you will not be judged." (Matthew 7:1) Can you hear Paulicianism's echo today? Of course.

Such false teaching is widespread in American culture. By marginalizing the uncomfortable teachings of Scripture, a person can choose whatever he wishes to believe. This is standard practice in today's secular "Christianity." Each individual can determine his own, personal brand of faith. Sincerity and piety are more important than truth. In fact, any religious piety is better than no piety, even when it rejects the work of Christ.

This is the religion of modern America. This is also our mission field. Paulicians, past and present, need to hear that the God Who demands righteousness and must punish disobedience, is the same God Who came in the flesh to bear the punishment for us. The God of the Old Testament is also the God of the New. What He promised to the people of old, He faithfully brought to completion through the perfect life, death, and resurrection of the Word made flesh. Law and Gospel are meant to be together. Without the one, the other becomes optional. Understanding this connection separates truth from error and alone can restore the church to what it should be: a place where sin and grace, judgment and mercy, eternal life or death, comfort or despair truly converge at the cross of Christ.



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Progress in Nepal

It is not always for us to understand or explain why things do not go the way we have planned. These past several months of the coronavirus pandemic have proven this to us in many ways. But this is also true in many areas of life. When earthly explanations fail to materialize, our Savior's faithfulness is such a comfort! The perfect love and the sacrifice He made for us on the cross is the substance of our faith that provides the resolve to trust and believe what He has promised in His saving Word, for His Word reveals—

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts . . . So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.'" (Isaiah 55:8–9,11)

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

After waiting through more than a year of pandemic lockdowns and travel restrictions, I finally had an opportunity to visit Nepal when the Nepali government announced that they would open the country to international visitors beginning in March. I got excited, prayed for the Lord's blessings, and sent in my visa application. The application took extra time but was finally approved, and the ticket was purchased. My plan was to visit Nepal for about three and a half weeks. This included a mandatory self-quarantine for five days upon arrival. The itinerary would include pastoral training seminars in four districts, congregational visits, and a graduation/ordination service for thirteen students who had been waiting for more than a year for COVID-19 restrictions to be lifted so they could gather for the service.

All seemed to be going according to our plans through the first six days in Nepal as I quarantined and then traveled by



Left: Nepal construction.

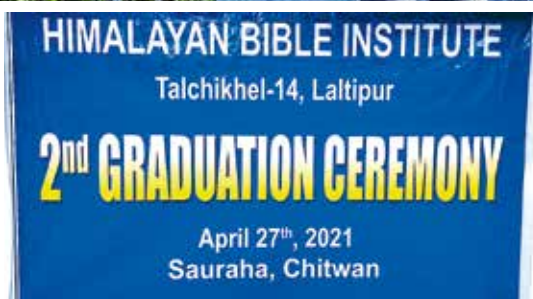
Above: Future classroom.

car to the west. But as soon as we headed to the Chitwan district for the first two-day seminar and graduation/ordination, we began to hear reports that the government was going to announce new travel restrictions and lockdown measures due to rising COVID-19 cases. By late afternoon,

it was clear that all our plans would need to be adjusted because all public transportation would be stopped beginning at 6:00 P.M. the following day, and Kathmandu and several other major cities and towns would be locking down.

It was decided to go ahead with the seminar and graduation but to limit the time from two days to a half-day program so that everyone would be able to travel home before the district borders closed. All visitors coming from a distance to attend the seminar and graduation were told not to come.

The seminar began at 8:00 A.M. and concluded with a brief graduation service just before noon. Everyone quickly gathered their things and said their goodbyes as we prayed together for safe and uneventful travel. Raju and I spent the rest of the day looking at the HCLCN building project and talking to the contractors. We got up early the next morning to travel back to Kathmandu. The typically four-hour trip took more than ten hours due to massive traffic jams on the narrow winding roads that take you through the Himalayan foothills and down into the valley. This was caused by the mass exodus from the Kathmandu valley as



Top: Machapurchre, Nepal 2021. Above: Nepal graduation ceremony banner. Right: Nepal 2021 graduates.

everyone was trying to get out of the valley before the lockdown that was to begin that evening.

The government also announced that they would be closing their land borders with India and China soon, and that all international flights would most likely be suspended or canceled within a few days. It took several hours on the phone, but I was able to find a seat on a flight leaving in four days. It seems that I may have gotten one of the last seats available out of Nepal. Two days after I left, the government suspended all international flights in and out of the country. I spent four more days in lockdown in a hotel in Kathmandu waiting for my flight. I returned home a couple of days later, a bit disappointed, but safe and glad to have avoided being stuck in a hotel in Nepal for several weeks.

I spent nearly eighty hours in air travel and layovers, a total of nine days in hotel quarantine, and sixteen hours traveling by car. All of this so that I could teach for about three hours and preach a short graduation/ordination sermon to encourage thirteen newly ordained pastors. Certainly not what I had planned.

Would I change how things went on this visit if I could? Probably, because I have this old sinful flesh that still wants to call the shots. Am I thankful and full of reasons to rejoice to have been a part of those two weeks? Yes, I am! Why? Because I have experienced the unfurling of God's plan for me as I was

encouraged in my faith, and I was able to encourage others through the truths of His saving Word. Because I am God's own child, I trust His plans! His plans! Plans that are born of His love for sinners. Through our Savior's life, death, and resurrection, we are redeemed, restored, and forgiven, and the new heart that our Savior has given to us has replaced that cold, dead heart of sin and unbelief. This new heart, and His love dwelling in us leads us to rejoice always in Him. This new and living heart also finds contentment and purpose in His faithfulness, His plans, His wisdom in all things, and the forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life that only He can and did and does provide. What a privilege we have been given to serve Him wherever, whenever, and however He gives us the opportunity!

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! . . . Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:4,6)



Todd Ohlmann is a full-time visiting missionary for the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

For additional photos and a more detailed report go to: www.MissionaryOhlmann.BlogSpot.com

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

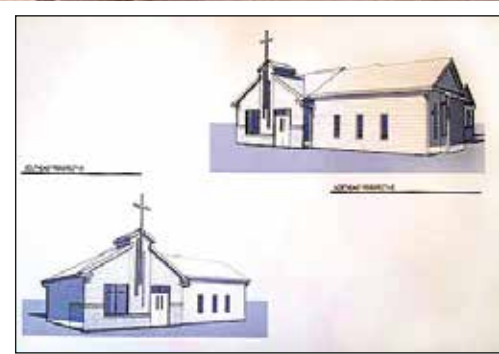
Updates from congregations around the church of the Lutheran Confession

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Loveland, Colorado

Prince of Peace in Loveland, Colorado, is set in the shadow of the majestic Rocky Mountains where we preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Over the past few years, this small congregation, although it has not grown in number, has had several interesting changes. The first major change was Pastor Timothy Wheaton accepting the call after the retirement of Pastor John Klatt.

Shortly after Pastor Wheaton was installed, Prince of Peace suspended in-person worship services because of the Colorado executive order concerning COVID-19. Because of the suspension of worship, the congregation was presented with the opportunity to begin sermon videos on its Facebook page. These sermon videos have continued to the present, providing a great outreach tool to proclaim the Gospel. They have also allowed our shut-ins and members who live at a distance to receive the Word of God by means other than the mailed sermons and bulletins. For the most part, the mailing of sermons and bulletins has been discontinued, and emailing them has become the practice used to send them to both local members and those at a distance. The congregation is also considering adopting other types of technology that might assist us in spreading the Gospel both to our members and to the community.

An exciting recent development at Prince of Peace is the proposed expansion to our present facility. The present building has not been remodeled since its



Top: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church's front entrance. Center photo: Proposed entry remodel. Above: some members of Prince of Peace.

original construction in the early 1980s. The proposed expansion includes a remodel of the sanctuary as well as the addition of a narthex. The narthex will include two handicapped-accessible bathrooms. These restrooms will be a blessing since we have one individual in a wheelchair



and an aging congregation. In addition to the restrooms, a handicapped-accessible ramp will allow access to the

fellowship area. Because of the rising cost of construction materials in the last six months, the proposed project was placed on hold until the beginning of 2022. Although this has been a setback, the members of Prince of Peace have remained positive through their financial and physical support of the expansion project.

While the congregation waits for the cost of the construction materials to decrease, the remodel of the fellowship area is planned to begin with many of the members contributing their labor. This portion of the project consists of remodeling the kitchen. It also involves removing unused rooms that no longer serve a function, so that the fellowship hall can be expanded. The kitchen remodel will result in twice the present area and plenty of counter and cabinet space. The expansion of the fellowship hall will greatly increase the seating

area, allowing for more comfortable accommodation for Bible classes and potlucks.

Once the proposed expansion project is complete, the congregation will have an inviting and recognizable church facility, including a distinctive cross at the entrance. No longer will the neighbors mistake the building for a family dwelling, as has happened in the past. Now the structure will be easily recognizable as a church building. We will keep our brethren in the CLC informed as this project comes to a God-pleasing conclusion, and we celebrate this great blessing with a dedication service.

If you ever have the opportunity to visit northern Colorado or the Rocky Mountains, know that you are always welcome to visit us at Prince of Peace in Loveland, Colorado.



Timothy Wheaton is pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Loveland, Colorado.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS OCTOBER 2021

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Oct 1	TLH 418	Genesis 42:1-38	Joseph dealt both gently and wisely with his brothers, attempting to ascertain the state of their trustworthiness and their repentance after selling him into slavery.
Oct 2	TLH 357	Genesis 43:1-34	Joseph’s love for his brothers was great even though they had done great evil to him in the past. He would not hold this against them. May we be just as forgiving.
Oct 4	TLH 591	Psalm 34	The theme of this psalm is “deliverance.” The Lord delivers His believing children who call to Him. “He helps us free from ev’ry need that hath us now o’ertaken.”
Oct 5	TLH 311 (LSB 627)	Matthew 16:13-28	Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, but He did not come in godly terror. Rather He came with healing in His wings to lay down His life for sinners.
Oct 6	WS 719 (LSB 415)	Matthew 17:1-13	Days of suffering and sorrow were coming for Jesus. Remembering this event on the mountain would reassure both Jesus and His disciples of brighter days ahead.
Oct 7	TLH 623	Mark 10:1-12	The sixth commandment stands, but v. 9 also gives us a Gospel-based reason for remaining married: God has joined you to your spouse, so you know she/he is the “right one.”
Oct 8	TLH 279 (LSB 915)	Genesis 44:1-34	Joseph’s test of his brothers’ love revealed that they were not in the habit of treating the youngest (Benjamin) as badly as they had treated him.
Oct 9	TLH 553	Psalm 35	David’s enemies were also the Lord’s enemies so in his prayer for their defeat he was not seeking personal vengeance, but rather victory for the Lord.
Oct 11	TLH 649	Psalm 36	David’s prayer is ours too: may the ungodly wicked never overtake us, but may the Lord preserve us with His unfailing love!
Oct 12	TLH 650	Matthew 22:1-14	It’s bad news for those who reject Christ’s forgiveness, but He will go out and bring others in to share His heavenly banquet and they will be blessed!
Oct 13	TLH 290	Matthew 22:15-40	The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus, but Jesus avoided their traps each time by responding with an appropriate Word of God—something like He had responded to Satan in the wilderness.
Oct 14	TLH 217	Matthew 22:41-46	Now when Jesus turned the tables on the Pharisees and asked them a question, they had no answer. Jesus had the word of God on His side and they did not!
Oct 15	TLH 573	Psalm 37:1-24	Sometimes the wicked seem to get everything they want and we get nothing of what we want. Don’t be envious of them. God knows your desires too. He’ll take care of you.
Oct 16	TLH 569	Psalm 37:25-40	The Lord will care for His faithful ones forever but the good things that the wicked enjoy now will come to an end.
Oct 18	TLH 566	Genesis 48:1-22	Jacob reassured his descendants of God’s promise to give the land of Canaan to them as a possession, a promise also tied to the coming of the Christ.
Oct 19	TLH 642	Mark 12:1-12	The chief priests and teachers didn’t miss the meaning of this parable! It was a warning to them and a call to repentance and faith. Would any hear and believe it?
Oct 20	TLH 336	Mark 12:13-34	What is more important than an outward show of religion (such as sacrifices and offerings)? To love God and to keep His commandments from the heart.
Oct 21	TLH 641	Mark 12:35-40	The so-called “teachers of the law” did not teach God’s word correctly. We too need watch that we listen to teachers who teach the Scriptures correctly.
Oct 22	TLH 405; LSB 787	Mark 12:41-44	Once again, making an outward show of religion does not matter to God; what comes from the heart does.
Oct 23	TLH 471	Genesis 49:1-28	We pay special attention to Judah’s blessing, for it was from Judah’s tribe that the Messiah would come, the One to whom the nations would come.
Oct 25	TLH 455; LSB 843	Genesis 49:29-50:21	After Jacob’s death, Joseph’s brothers feared he would suddenly turn on them, but Joseph had forgiven them and God had used even their evil deeds to accomplish His purpose.
Oct 26	TLH 463 (LSB 677)	Genesis 50:22-26	Joseph’s life—and the book of Genesis—ends with Joseph showing confidence in the Lord’s promises.
Oct 27	TLH 314 (LSB 623)	Matthew 23:1-12	Our sinful nature wants to see us rise proudly above others, but the Christian heart sees its sinfulness and humbly falls before the Savior in repentance.
Oct 28	TLH 555	Matthew 23:13-39	In our weakness we all fall into the sin of hypocrisy, but let’s not be like the Pharisees who made it a way of life! Savior, forgive us!
Oct 29	WS 775 (LSB 578)	Mark 13:1-31	Nothing in this world lasts forever and the greatest accomplishments of mankind will fade away. What never fades or changes? God’s Word.
Oct 30	TLH 613 (LSB 672)	Mark 13:32-37	It is fashionable for religious leaders to predict the day and the hour of Christ’s second coming, but the truth is none of us know. So be ready every day.

The Enemy Within

They are called “sleeper cells.” Reportedly, they are made up of radicalized militants living within quiet communities all across America. These individuals don’t appear dangerous. They live under the radar of law enforcement and work quietly to recruit more people to their cause. They may not be noticed until they launch an overt terrorist attack. Even though they are not making headlines by brazen acts of evil, it would be foolish not to take them seriously.

Likewise, it would be dangerously naïve for us to believe that just because we Christians are not facing physical persecution and death threats, we are not under attack. Jesus says, “No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15:20 NIV84) The Apostle Paul warns about unseen threats to the soul: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 6:12 NIV84) Just as it was during the days of the Reformation, the devil and the world are waging all-out war against the message of forgiveness by faith in Christ alone. The pressure to surrender and give in to the attitudes and lifestyle of our amoral society is intense.

But there is another enemy, a “sleeper cell” within each of us, called the old Adam or our sinful flesh. He doesn’t always seem that dangerous. He wants us to believe that he’s on our side. Yet the old Adam is our enemy, because he wants nothing to do with the Lord Jesus. “The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.” (Romans 8:7 NIV84)

The old Adam is clever, persistent, and patient. He may opt for an “under the radar” approach rather than an obvious challenge to faith. He finds ready allies in Satan and the world. He makes compromise and accommodation with sin seem so reasonable. For example, we know how vital Christian education is to our spiritual wellbeing and that of our children. “Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.” (Proverbs 22:6 NIV84) We know that. We agree that it is true. We tell our children that the Word needs to be life’s number one

priority.

Yet what happens? Young adults, among others, drift away from the Lord at an alarming rate. Faith’s grip on the Gospel seems so weak among so many. It’s easy to point the finger of blame at the world. We tell ourselves that the world is just so much more hostile toward believers than in past generations. We blame Satan for his nonstop scheming. Maybe we even fault God for putting people in difficult situations.

But what about us and our role? What is the priority in life for us and our children? We make time for what is truly important. Does the Word have a cherished place in each day’s schedule? Are you more likely to stay up late for a movie or to spend more time with the Lord in prayer? When a game is scheduled for the same time as the church service, what takes precedence? Take an inventory of your thoughts during the day. Do they center on the Lord’s love for you and your service to Him in response, or are they tied up with matters of work, traffic, and what to buy on Amazon? Our old Adam is quick to jump to our defense and provide all kinds of “reasonable” explanations for not following the Lord’s will. It doesn’t seem all that dangerous, but whatever leads us away from the Savior is a threat to our salvation.

Rather than ignoring the old Adam, Martin Luther points us back to our Baptism and how it signifies that the old Adam is to be drowned by daily contrition and repentance. The enduring value of the Reformation is that it continually leads us back to Scripture. There we see the enemies lined up against us. We see ourselves dead in sin and unable to do anything about it. But above all, we see Jesus, Who won the victory on the cross, and Who gives us His righteousness by faith. By God’s grace, the enemy within doesn’t stand a chance! His hold is broken. Sins are forgiven and buried in the depths of the sea where they can’t condemn us. May the Spirit renew our strength to guard against all the subtle attacks of the old Adam and to trust in our Savior as our only refuge and strength.

The enduring value of the Reformation is that it continually leads us back to Scripture.



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

SEEN IN PASSING

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

Don't Believe in Evolution? Then You're a Racist. In an online article for the prestigious magazine *Scientific American*, Allison Hopper, "a filmmaker and designer with a master's degree in educational design," attacks Christian creationism as racist. "I want to unmask the lie that evolution denial is about religion and recognize that at its core, it is a form of white supremacy that perpetuates segregation and violence against Black bodies." Not surprisingly, Ms. Hopper (who is white) cites the Ku Klux Klan's support of anti-evolutionary legal efforts in the 1920's and then jumps to the sweeping conclusion that, "ever since then, entrenched racism and the ban on teaching evolution in the schools have gone hand in hand." Some of her characterizations of the way Christians teach creation seem bizarre: "At the heart of white evangelical creationism is the mythology of an unbroken white lineage that stretches back to a light-skinned Adam and Eve. In literal interpretations of the Christian Bible, white skin was created in God's image. Dark skin has a different, more problematic origin. As the biblical story goes, the curse or mark of Cain for killing his brother was a darkening of his descendants' skin." One is aghast at reading this—if you attended a Christian school and never heard a teaching remotely like any of the above, you are not alone! Yet this is the brush with which all Christians are increasingly being tarred. Perhaps most disquieting is the fact that this article was accepted for publication, not by Atheists.org or by Huffington Post, but by one of the most respected scientific journals in America. How should one react? Peter, in his First Epistle, suggests that the best way to combat such slanders is with good works and godly conduct: "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people." (1 Peter 2:15-17) Hopper, Allison. "Denial of Evolution Is a Form of White Supremacy." *Evolution*. ScientificAmerican.com, 5 Jul. 2021. Web. 21 Jul. 2021.

Archeologists Find Ancient Christian Inscription in Northern Israel. Archeologists have unearthed a 1,500-year-old inscribed Christian blessing that begins, "Christ, born of Mary," the Israel Antiquities Authority reported in January. The stone inscription, written in Greek, was once part of a lintel decorating the entrance of a church, located in what is now et-Taiyiba, a village in Israel's northern Jezreel Valley. The church itself dates to the late fifth century A.D., meaning it may have been built during the Byzantine Empire. In addition to the lintel, archeologists found that the previously unknown church contained mosaic pavements arranged in a geometric design. Geggel, Laura. "1,500-year-old 'Christ, born of Mary' inscription discovered in Israel." *Trending*. LiveScience.com, 22 Jan. 2021. Web. 11 May 2021.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Installation. In accord with our usage and order, **Stefan Sonnenfeld** (second from right), who was called by Redeemer Lutheran Church in Sister Lakes, Michigan, to be its pastor, was installed on August 29, 2021. Also participating in the service were Pastors Thomas Naumann (left) and Michael Wilke (right).

—Pastor Andrew Schaller.



Installation. In accord with our usage and order, **Miss Moira Drager** (left), and **Mrs. Shantel Hocum** (right), members of the congregation who were called by St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church in Clarkston, Washington, to be primary and lower grades teachers respectively for Valley Bible Academy, were installed on August 1, 2021.

--Pastor David Naumann

Joint Great Lakes / Southeast Pastoral Conference

Schott Pavilion, 5361 South Milford Road, Milford, Ohio
September 28-30

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis (Essayist's Choice)—Pastor Terrel Kesterson
- Pornography, Desertion, & Divorce—Pastor Frank Gantt
- Homiletical Study—Professor John Ude
- Health and Science—Pastor Samuel Rodebaugh
- Visits to the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter
- Chaplain—Pastor Matthew Hanel
- Communion Service Speaker—Pastor Thomas Naumann
- Communion Service Liturgist—Pastor Michael Wilke

—Pastor David Ude, Secretary, GLPC

