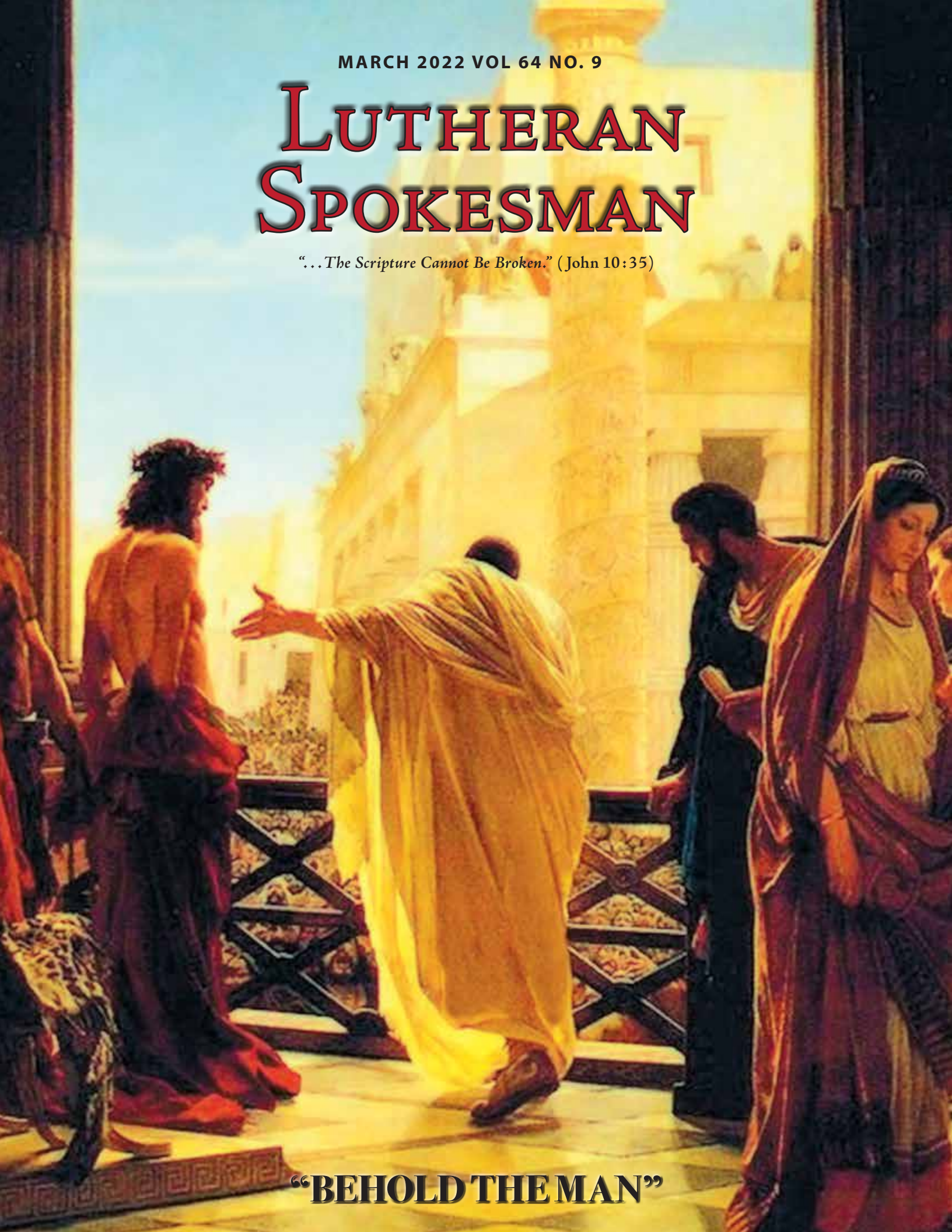


MARCH 2022 VOL 64 NO. 9

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



"BEHOLD THE MAN"



IN THIS ISSUE MARCH 2022

Taking Time to PONDER During Lent 3	WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU
A Cross for Christ..... 4	Saint John's Lutheran Church
	Clarkston, Washington 10-11
PILLARS OF FAITH	NOTES FROM THE FIELD
The Sufficiency of Scripture 5	CLC-Tanzania Seminary Report..... 12-13
Do You Have a Secret? 6	Bread of Life Readings, MARCH 2022 14
Our "Go-To" Lord and God..... 7	ILC NEWSLETTER
WALTHER'S LAW AND GOSPEL	Dual-Credit Classes at Immanuel 15
The Gospel Is Not a Preaching of Repentance .. 8	SEEN IN PASSING / ANNOUNCEMENTS..... 16
OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY	
Lutheran Liturgical Reform, Part 2..... 9	

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Take Time to PONDER During Lent

*I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works;
I muse on the work of Your hands. (Psalm 143:5)*

How would you like to take a unique tour of the Holy Land? There are, of course, many different options for traveling to the land of Jesus' ministry and seeing the sights, but no one else offers a tour like this one, where you'll be able to visit all the major highlights in only twelve hours! You'll never need to get off the bus as you stop briefly in the parking lot of the Church of the Nativity, travel across a bridge over the Jordan River, and drive past the Sea of Galilee and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. You'll view the Garden of Gethsemane, Calvary, and the Garden Tomb, all from the window of your air-conditioned coach. All this can be yours for only \$1,199.95! (plus airfare).

Is there anyone who would seriously consider this kind of tour? Of course not. A passing view of these places would never satisfy. If you're going to travel halfway around the world to see the places where Jesus lived, died, and rose again, you will want to truly experience them. You'll want to sit quietly among the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane and think of the Savior struggling in prayer. You'll take your time as you stand at Gabbatha, the stone pavement where Jesus was put on trial before Pilate, and imagine the crowd crying, "Crucify Him!" You'll linger at Calvary as you contemplate the deep darkness of the world's sin that Jesus bore on the cross. You'll savor the joy at the Garden Tomb, as the angel's announcement, "He is risen!" echoes across the centuries.

Sadly, too often the business of our lives keeps us from taking advantage of the real "tour" that our Lord has in mind for us during the Lenten season. We sing "Jesus, I will ponder now, on Thy holy passion," and then breeze past the events of His self-sacrifice with only a passing thought. We flip through the scenes of our Savior's passion as we would a travel brochure, thinking

"Yes, I've been there." Then our thoughts return to our schedules, responsibilities, worries, and various entertainments. That's a terrible shame, because the price for this full tour was astronomical--Jesus paid for it with His own innocent life. The blessings of this full tour are immeasurable, when you experience once again the love of God for you personally, with the assurance that Jesus did all these things to pay the price for your sins, make you His own by faith, and draw you to Himself in heaven.

"Keep watch with Me," the Savior said to His disciples in Gethsemane, and so He says to us. The full and blessed depth of meaning in the message of Lent can't be appreciated with only a cursory view. It takes personal and prayerful contemplation with God's Word. And, like the best tours, your experience will be enhanced on a group trip with a capable guide. What could be better than to visit the sites of Jesus' outpouring of love for us with fellow Christians, along with a guide who will help us to slow down and really ponder the events and their meaning? That is the very purpose of Lenten worship services, so be sure to take advantage of these well-guided tours.

"Go to dark Gethsemane . . . Follow to the judgment hall . . . Calvary's mournful mountain climb . . . Early hasten to the tomb." (TLH 159) We do this when, like David, we remember the days of old, meditate on all of God's works, and muse on the work of His hands. May God bless the time you take to truly ponder what Jesus has done for you!



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

A Cross for Christ

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” (Matthew 16:24)

Over the centuries, people have recognized that a cross is a symbol of suffering. Many from all walks of life have used the expression “to bear a cross” to describe difficult situations—from the serious, such as suffering with a terminal disease, to the insignificant, such as dealing with a cold. However, these are not the crosses Christ is calling us to.

We may have run-ins with church members and Christian friends, family, or even those outside of our fellowship. These problems often arise because of our pride. We may be unwilling to allow someone else to get the upper hand in a discussion or take advantage of us in some deal because we know we are in the right. We would rather suffer under the indignities of a “cross of martyrdom” of our own making than apologize or make amends with others.

Often our own choices lead to what we may think of as crosses to bear. Poor financial decisions may lead to a budget cross. Poor use of our time or overindulgence in some activity or substance may cause us to bear other crosses as well. Yet these are not the crosses Christ is calling us to. And it really doesn’t make sense to complain about the many crosses we have to bear in our lives when we are in the back yard with hammer and nails creating our own. If we find ourselves suffering under a cross of our own making, it is time for confession and correction.

So what crosses is Jesus calling us disciples to take up, and for what reason? Paul told his Philippian congregation, “For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.” (Philippians 1:29 ESV) We have been granted—in other words, it is our privilege—to not only believe in Jesus, but to suffer for His sake as well. This suffering for Christ is written of many times throughout the New Testament. Paul and Peter especially focus on the crosses and sufferings of Jesus’ followers. These crosses are presented as the typical or

expected result of doing what is right—following Christ’s commands. Peter tells us in his First Epistle that if we suffer for our own wrongdoings, that’s only to be expected. But if we suffer for doing what is right and bear it patiently, we are showing Christ to the world!

Christ suffered for us. There was no wrong-doing or sin on His part. He willingly and patiently bore our sins and those of the world all the way to the cross. This canceled the debt we owed to God. This, along with Christ’s righteousness now credited to our account, puts us right with God.

Peter states, “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.” (1 Peter 2:21) Follow His example!

When a true cross of Christ is laid upon us and we respond with anger, hatred, retribution, and ugliness, the world sees and understands these very human responses. If, however, we respond to persecution with kindness, meekness, forgiveness, and love, the world can’t understand it, for these responses are only understood through the guidance and providence of the Holy Spirit. This again gives us the opportunity to present our Savior to the world.

Because our Jesus reigns in our hearts, we can seek to follow His counsel, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.” (Matthew 5:10-12 ESV)

Let us rejoice and be glad in all situations!



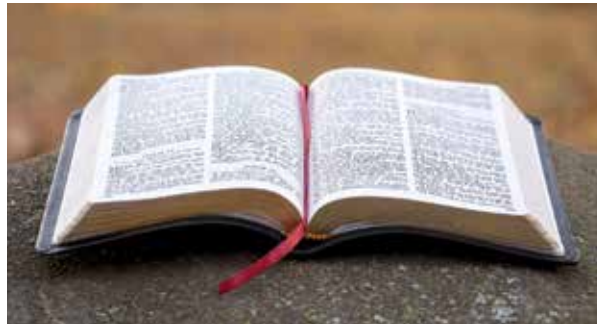
David W. Bernthal is a retired teacher. He lives in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

This series offers an overview of the chief teachings of the Christian church.

The Sufficiency of Scripture

Owner’s manuals, employee handbooks, and college catalogs are examples of documents people use as guidance for their new appliance or how to navigate the requirements they face on the job or at school. It’s only a matter of time, unfortunately, until the document in question proves to be insufficient, and the person has to turn elsewhere for an answer that the document can’t provide. Thankfully, the Bible does not have this problem. By bestowing upon us the Old and New Testament books of Scripture, God has provided a complete Bible that offers everything that a person needs to know for a Christian’s faith and life. This characteristic of Scripture is known as its *sufficiency* and is closely related to the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, as well as its clarity and efficacy.

In fact, the inspiration of Scripture and the sufficiency of Scripture have a common proof passage in 2 Timothy 3:15-17: *“From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* Verse 15 puts a focus on the power of the Old Testament, which Timothy had been learning as a young child. It contains the prophetic Gospel of salvation, which gave him and many others the wisdom of saving faith in Christ. The same goes for the New Testament and its Gospel of Christ crucified and risen in fulfillment of God’s plan and prophecies in the Old Testament. The two Testaments together, as inspired Scripture, comprise all that we need for teaching the Lord’s revealed truth, for refuting that which is contrary and false, for exposing that which is sin, and for showing that which is right for God’s people to do.



When understood according to its God-given purposes, the Bible is completely sufficient to accomplish what God intended the Bible to do. The truth expressed in Scripture never needs a human authority to authenticate or elucidate what it says. By design, God’s truth will lead people to know Him as the only true God through faith in Christ. This same truth reveals their need for salvation and what Christ has done to atone for all their sins and free them from death and hell. God’s revealed truth also includes the teaching of what we should think, say, and do in our earthly lives of following Him and ministering His Word to others. In fulfillment of each purpose, the Bible provides

in clear and certain terms all the necessary information, with the Holy Spirit operating in human hearts to bring about sufficient understanding and to work Christian faith and repentance in people around the world and down through the ages.

It doesn’t take much to make a man-made document obsolete.

God’s Word, on the other hand, will stand the test of time and be the only thing on earth that applies the diagnostic tool of His Law and the life-saving tool of His Gospel. The universal pervasiveness of human sin and death can only be dealt with by the inspired, inerrant Scriptures, whose clarity and effective power are completely sufficient to show us our sin and our Savior, to create and sustain our faith in Christ, and to lead us in a godly life of serving Him in worship, prayer, teaching, and witnessing, as we await His return to bring us glorious entrance into His perfect light.



Steven Sippert is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Do You Have a Secret?

I've got a secret. Can you guess my secret? Can you keep a secret? So it's often said. I even heard of a kids' club, entry into which required the telling of a secret. The entire world seems to highly value its secrets, whether it be business, government, or personal secrets.

It might be a bit surprising to learn that our Savior-God also has a secret. We read from Judges 13:18: "And the angel of the LORD said to him, 'Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?'" (KJV) At the time, Israel had been ruled by the heathen Philistines for forty years, again a result of God's judgment upon their idolatry and apostasy. But one godly couple had been praying for a son, and God answered their prayers. The Angel of the Lord Himself brought this good news to them. Their son would be Samson, who would later deliver his people from the hand of their Philistine enemies.

The Angel of the Lord had first appeared to Manoah's wife, giving her strict instructions, for her promised son was to be a Nazirite—a son set apart for the service of the Lord. Manoah had not been present at this first appearance, was unsure of the identity of the visitor, and so prayed for His return. Manoah had questions; he wanted more information.

In His return the Angel simply repeated what He had told Manoah's wife, but that did not satisfy Manoah's curiosity. He tried to obtain more information by acting very hospitably toward this stranger, not realizing He was the Angel of the Lord. But the Lord held firm.

Still Manoah insisted, asking, "What is Your name, so that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?" (Judges 13:17) As a true son of Israel, Manoah should have known better, for he already knew the name of his God. To honor His Son with another name was presumptuous.

And so the Angel gave a most intriguing answer: His name was "Secret," meaning it was too marvelous even for Manoah to comprehend. Neither was His name meant for

manipulation or prideful usage. It is a name before which a sinner can only stand in awe. The name "Secret" is also translated "Wonderful" in Isaiah 9:6, where it is cited to describe the promised Messiah: "And His name will be called Wonderful." When the time was fulfilled, He who is Wonderful "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

Do you know a secret, this secret? Indeed, the psalmist wrote that "The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him." (Psalm 25:14) In Old Testament times, God revealed His secret to His prophets, but not fully; certainly not all at once. Then the Secret Himself came, manifested Himself as Wonderful, and promised to send the Teacher of all things (John 14:26).

The secret was revealed to Saint Paul, who wrote that he knew the mystery of Christ, which was not known in ages past, but is now revealed by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:3-5). This wonderful Gospel secret, this mystery of Christ, is that He is God incarnate, that by His substitutionary death He redeemed all sinners and atoned for their sin, and that His wonderful, saving name is meant for and is to be proclaimed throughout all nations.

Do you know this secret? Yes, by the grace of God and the whispering of the Holy Spirit you do. Can you keep a secret?

Shame on us if we do! This gracious secret is now meant to be shared. The world might think it foolish and incomprehensible, but to those who believe God it is life and salvation. So join the club—the chosen Gospeleers. Tell the secret!



David Fuerstenau is a retired pastor. He lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Our “Go-To” Lord and God

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” (James 5:13-15)

In the sports world, the “go-to” player is the one expected to carry the team in “crunch time”—in critical, pressure-filled, often end-game moments. He is often the one with the skill, experience, and confidence to save the game. In the spiritual realm, there is only one “go-to” God and Savior, only one Helper and Deliverer in time of need (Psalm 121), especially in those difficult and even traumatic life moments.

It can be anything from a shocking medical diagnosis, a family crisis, a national tragedy, or the sudden loss of a loved one—any one of which can leave the adrenaline flowing, the emotions reeling, the mind perplexed: “What can I do? Whom can I call? Where can I go for help?”

While seeking medical help and emotional support are natural and important responses, our Great Physician through His Christian life counselor, James, also reminds God’s people of their vital response in such situations: Take it to the Lord in prayer. Call upon Him in the day of trouble. Seek His help and will.

And not only you, but enlist the prayers of your fellow believers as well, including the “elders” (pastors) of your churches. One of the shepherd’s greatest callings is to pray and care for his flock—personally, privately, but also publicly as the need and opportunity arises. Not only are these prayers of the righteous heard, they are also powerful and effective before the throne of grace (verses 15-20), including the prayer of the repentant heart for forgiveness.

The accompanying “anointing with oil” and “laying on of hands” likely reference outward signs that would indicate spiritual blessing. An anointing would indicate God’s

blessing upon someone chosen for a special calling. Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings were anointed, all pointing forward to Christ, the ultimate “Anointed One.” Likewise, the “laying on of hands” in Scripture and in our usage today symbolizes the Spirit’s call and blessing today on the believer chosen to serve (Acts 8:17-18; 1 Timothy 4:14). Praying “in the name of the Lord” humbly recognizes in faith that Jesus is both the Savior Source of true prayer and the One Whose authority must lovingly prevail in answering our petitions.

“And the prayer of faith will save the sick and raise him up.” While our Lord and His disciples did through prayer heal the physically sick and raise the dead during their ministries, these miracles served to confirm His glory as the eternal Son of God (John 2:11), as well as to confirm the disciples’ apostleship. Once His and their ministries were complete and the written

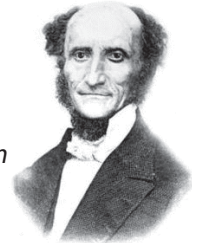
Scriptures available, there was no longer any need for these extraordinary miracles that accompanied the preaching of the Word (Hebrews 2:3-4). Nor is there evidence of these special gifts continuing in the church beyond the Apostolic era.

In all life moments, in joy or sorrow, “go to” the Lord for yourself and all in need. Seek the support and prayers of your shepherd and spiritual family. And your dear Father will hear and help and heal you in the most wonderful way imaginable.



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.



The Gospel is Not a Preaching of Repentance

“Thesis XV—In the eleventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is turned into a preaching of repentance.”

Have you ever been misunderstood in a text that you have sent? One thing that texting has taught me is that words matter. Just because I understand what I am writing doesn't mean that my message will be understood by its receiver. Modern communication reminds me of an Emily Dickinson poem I learned in high school: "A word is dead when it is said, some say. I say it just begins to live that day." How much more so is this an important reminder for those who share the truth of God's Word. Because His words matter, our words matter.

Based on how he addressed his seminary students, Walther agreed. He said that equally important to a pastor having genuine faith was his ability to present the truth in "sound words," that is, "in clear, plain, unmistakable, and adequate terms." Over the ages, numerous doctrinal controversies have arisen due to a lack of a clear understanding of words and their meanings, both in scripture itself and in the interpretation by fallible humans. Heretics, in order to cloak their heresy, make use of scriptural terms but alter their meanings. It is incumbent upon an orthodox minister to choose his words carefully and to be certain that they precisely reflect Scripture. Once spoken, they "begin to live that day." Walther emphasized the importance of prayerful study in sermon preparation so as not to say anything that could be misinterpreted by the congregation, to rightly divide the Law and the Gospel, and to "find a way of making a goodly haul with the Gospel net."

In his fifteenth thesis, Walther focuses on how the words "Law" and "Gospel" have been misused. Both terms are

used in Scripture in both the wide and narrow (strict) senses. For example, in Romans 2:16, "Gospel" is used in the wide sense to mean all of God's Word, including the Law. However, most references to the Gospel speak of it in the strict sense, "of nothing but consolation, mercy, and forgiveness of sins." That is why it is both dangerous and harmful to equate the Gospel message with an angry God calling on sinners to repent. For it is the Law that reveals our sin, not the Gospel. Antinomians were one group who ascribed to the Gospel in the strict sense something that only could be ascribed to the Gospel in the wide sense. As students of Scripture, it is important to know which passages use the term "Gospel" in the wide sense and which in the strict sense. Walther provides guidelines as to when "Gospel" is used in the strict sense (pages 294-295). Throughout Scripture God would have poor sinners know that the Gospel focuses on the work of Christ granting us salvation by grace through faith. It is the proclamation of sins forgiven and righteousness obtained for us.

In this thesis Walther also includes some encouragement for young people to consider the preaching and teaching ministries as a profession, the blessings of which are often overlooked, both in his day and ours. Despite being rejected by many in this world, Gospel work is glorious. It works to the benefit of immortal souls and people's spiritual welfare. It requires the daily use of God's Word, both to the benefit of oneself and others. It provides a reason to be happy in this life and promises eternal happiness in the life to come. The work is never in vain, and the rewards are great!



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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]

OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY

*Ever wonder why we Lutherans use the form of worship we do?
In this series we examine the depth and meaning of the various elements of
our worship service, beginning with the history of Christian worship itself.*

Lutheran Liturgical Reform, Part 2

In the Old Testament God laid out explicit instructions for worship. Specific sacrifices were to be offered at specific times and in specific ways. The priests were to be careful to carry out these instructions in every detail. All of this served the purpose of teaching the holiness of God and the sinfulness of the people; they could not approach Him except with the blood of sacrifices that He had instituted, sacrifices that pointed to the blood of the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world.

With Christ's fulfillment of all that was pictured in the detailed Old Testament system of sacrifices, we no longer are bound by a system of rules for worship. Instead of comprehensive instructions, the New Testament gives us principles to follow: worship should be orderly, dignified, and—above all—edifying (1 Corinthians 14:40; Romans 14:19; 15:2).

These were the principles that guided the Lutheran reformers in the sixteenth century as they examined the worship practices of their day and set about to reform them in the light of God's Word. This was done through the new Church Orders that were produced in Luther's time to give the churches in the Lutheran lands forms of worship that were edifying and uplifting.

The need for these Church Orders became evident after the Diet of Speyer (1526), at which the German princes that accepted the teachings of the Reformation gained the right to govern the churches within their lands. The churches needed guidance now that they were no longer connected with the Roman Catholic Church. They weren't getting it from the bishops, many of whom were still loyal to Rome. It was the Lutheran princes who took the lead and asked Lutheran theologians to draw up the Church Orders. These included statements of doctrine, rules governing organization and administration of churches and schools and other matters, as well as detailed directions for worship. Between 1523 and 1555, many such Orders were produced, but they differed

mostly in minor matters, owing largely to the influence of Luther.

The emphasis in these Church Orders was on worship that would be truly edifying to the participants. Doctrinal purity was the main consideration. The services needed to be cleansed of all ideas that attending worship was a deed that earned God's favor. The lay people needed to be active participants in worship, not just observers. The service needed to be in the language of the people.

But the purpose of the Orders was not to enforce uniformity everywhere. Latin was still permitted in places where there were Latin schools. Orders of service for village churches were simpler and entirely in German.

Luther wanted to retain what was good in the liturgy rather than make a complete break with the past. "The Lutheran Reformation was not a radical revolt. It was a conservative reform." (Luther Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*) "We take the middle path," Luther wrote in his 1525 tract, *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, neither holding onto anything merely to retain the traditions of the past nor throwing out good things just because they could be identified with Rome.

Luther also recognized music, art, and architecture as gifts of God that could be and should be used to glorify God. There should be beauty in Christian worship.

The God-given wisdom of Luther and others in their approach to reforming the liturgy has been a great blessing to Lutherans down through the centuries following the Reformation. They followed the guidance of the New Testament and passed down to us forms of worship that are orderly, dignified, and beautiful, and that lead us in confessing our sins and rejoicing in the forgiveness and life that we have in Jesus Christ.



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

Saint John's Lutheran Church Clarkston, Washington

Greetings from Saint John's Lutheran Church in Clarkston, Washington! The city advertises itself as "The Gateway to Hell's Canyon," a popular tourist attraction nearby on the Snake River. There is no better place to be for a thriving congregation with energetic enthusiasm for the Gospel! The city also claims that it has "golf all year round" and averages only one inch of snow per year. As this is being written in the last days of 2021, we have eight inches of fresh snow with more on the way—not exactly conducive to an afternoon tee time, or supportive of the yearly average. But no matter what the earthly conditions, by faith we know that the light of Jesus Christ our Savior shines in us and through us to a sin-darkened world. Each of our CLC congregations is a light shining in the darkness, and Saint John's is no exception.

In our last Spokesman article in 2016, you were given the historical highlights of St. John's. The culmination of those highlights was the start-up of a Christian school named Valley Bible Academy—St. John's Lutheran. We went through the first year with Mrs. Desirae Naumann as the primary teacher for grades K-8, and the second year was set to begin with eleven students.

Now, six years later, we are half-way through our seventh year at VBA with fifteen students and two full time teachers. The Lord continues to pour out His steadfast love and kindness to both church and school in measures we could not have imagined.

The school has proven to be a great outreach tool for the spreading of the Gospel. The little lambs whom the Lord has entrusted to our care have been given an education with Jesus Christ at its center. This past Christmas Eve



twenty-two children recited from memory the Luke 2 account of Jesus' birth. They were encouraged to recite it at home to their families and friends during the Christmas vacation. This memorized account of God's love will, by faith, serve them well throughout their entire lives. "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11) Several parents of students have taken classes and joined our congregation. In the first year of the school's opening, twelve young people were baptized, and there have been many more since then. Contacts for congregational outreach abound through the school.

It hasn't always been easy, but it's always been blessed. When we needed more teaching staff, the Lord provided in various ways. In the spring of 2019, teacher graduate Nathan



Buck was assigned by the call committee for graduates and was installed that summer. The following March, during the pandemic, the church and school went online for a brief time. In the fall of 2020, Teacher Desirae Naumann was diagnosed with brain cancer, and the Lord took her to her heavenly rest four months later. During that time, Teacher Nathan Buck, with the help of volunteers, continued the work of teaching Christ's little lambs. In May of 2021, Teacher Buck accepted the call to Messiah, Eau Claire. God was with us and blessed the school by having two members of Saint John's step up to the task of teaching. For the opening 2021 school year, Shantel Hocum was called as the primary teacher, and Moira Drager was called as the lower grades teacher. For family reasons, Shantel resigned by Christmas, but not before helping to train God's next gift, Mrs. Margie Parker, as the primary teacher of Valley Bible Academy. The blessings of the Lord continue as His Word grows among us.

On a personal note, the Lord through His strong Word has blessed and healed me of my grief after the loss of

Desirae. I was kept busy with the pastoral ministry in both church and school. After my ten months of living in a big empty parsonage alone, the Lord brought Christy Mattson and me together. We were married on Reformation Sunday at Trinity Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington, and have begun our lives together as one in the love of our Savior Jesus. The loving-kindnesses of our gracious God are uncountable!

With the Lord at the helm, we the members of Saint John's Lutheran Church and Valley Bible Academy look forward to His continued blessings. Like all our CLC congregations and schools, we, by faith, join you all in following His Word and finding joy in bringing the message of salvation through the cross of Christ to all ages, as the Holy Spirit gives opportunity.



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CLC-Tanzania Seminary Report

On November 14, 2021, five graduates, three faculty members, one missionary, and about one hundred guests and government dignitaries gathered for the inaugural graduation of five students who successfully completed three years of study at the Wittenberg Lutheran Theological Seminary of the CLC-Tanzania.

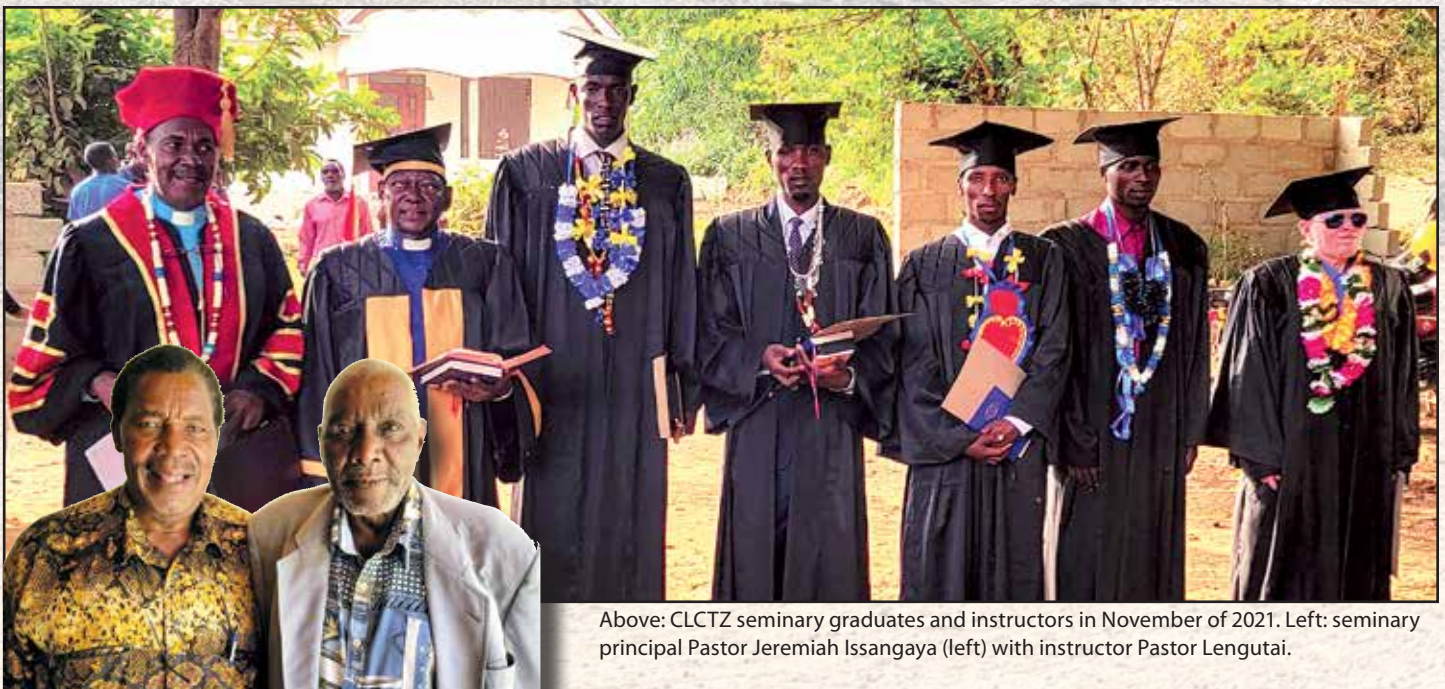
This graduation was a long time in the making. It all began when the CLC responded to an opportunity to assist in proclaiming the Gospel in Tanzania back in 2000. Financial assistance was approved and sent to the Lutheran Church of East Africa (LCEA) to start St. Peter's Seminary. During these early years of our work in Tanzania, a crew of CLC Mission Helpers traveled to Himo, Tanzania, to help purchase and remodel a building for use as a seminary facility with classrooms, dormitory, offices, and a large garden plot. It wasn't too many years later that greed and deception among a few LCEA leaders led to a break in fellowship and the end of the CLC's involvement in and support of the seminary.

Over the next few years, Tanzanian church leaders and pastors who remained honest and faithful to the Scriptures continued to work with the CLC to train pastors and

evangelists. For various reasons, these efforts did not go well, and subsidy to Tanzania was eventually suspended until church leaders came up with an organized plan to continue the work in a decent and orderly way.

Within just a couple of years, a small number of faithful church leaders decided to reorganize and register with the government a church body called the Church of the Lutheran Confession of Tanzania. With a constitution written and approved by CLC missionaries, registration paperwork was filed with the appropriate government offices, and the leaders of the newly formed CLC-TZ began making plans to restart a pastoral training program.

On the outskirts of Arusha, in the village of Ambureni, land and a church building were officially and legally donated to the CLC-TZ for a new seminary. Funds were raised, and a modest building with four dormitory rooms was constructed. A faculty of four pastors was chosen to teach on a rotating basis as they continued with their full-time pastoral duties. With a financial grant from the CLC Mission Development Fund (MDF), books were purchased and necessary improvements were made to the existing church building for use as a classroom during the week.



Above: CLC-TZ seminary graduates and instructors in November of 2021. Left: seminary principal Pastor Jeremiah Issangaya (left) with instructor Pastor Lengutai.



Above: Mount Kilimanjaro. Right: Maasai church building under construction in the CLC-TZ Ruvu District.



The CLC-TZ has four districts in different parts of the country. Each district has a different climate and, therefore, the districts produce different products and resources. Each district committed to supplying food items for the students attending seminary. For example, the Arusha district is known for the climate and soil necessary to grow abundant bananas and vegetables, so they committed to supply unlimited bananas and vegetables to the seminary. The Maasai tribes are known for their livestock and grains, so the Ruvu district donated maize and goats. The Tanga district is more tropical in the low-lying coastal region, and they committed to donations of rice and fruits.

With all of these plans in place and students ready to begin their studies, a request was made and approved for CLC-Kinship Seminary Student support. Sponsors were found, and classes began in January of 2018. Thankfully, the pandemic didn't seem to slow things down much in Tanzania, and classes continued mostly uninterrupted, so that graduation could take place on schedule.

Ten new students are enrolled in the seminary and began classes at the end of January, 2022. A few changes have been made with this new cohort of students by adding one year of pre-seminary classes to the program. This newly added first year of classes will focus on an introduction to Christian Doctrine, Old and New Testament studies, evangelism, and an intensive course in English. At the end of the one-year pre-seminary course, each student will be evaluated and either move on to the three-year seminary course or conclude their studies and receive a certificate of completion and approval for service to the CLC-TANZANIA as an evangelist.

Another change for the seminary is the addition of a full-time instructor and academic dean. A house has been rented near the seminary, and arrangements for a monthly stipend have

been made so that one of the faculty members can step down from his pastoral duties to be fully dedicated to teaching and to the administration of the seminary. This is a big step for the CLC-TZ as they have prayed for and expect the Lord's blessings as they dedicate more time and resources to training more men to be faithful preachers and teachers of God's saving Word.

Another exciting aspect of the seminary is the Lord's provision in bringing more young men from the Maasai tribe to train as pastors. The CLC-TZ has focused much of its evangelism efforts among the Maasai in recent years. The Lord has blessed these efforts with several new Maasai congregations and preaching stations. Three of the five recent graduates are Maasai, and four new students are also from this tribe. This is exciting, as these men will have opportunities to take the Gospel to many unreached Maasai bomas and other more primitive tribes such as the Hadza, who live in some of the same areas.

There have been many ups and downs, setbacks, and disappointments over the past twenty-one years during which the Lord has allowed us the privilege of assisting in the spread of the Gospel in Tanzania. Yet the Lord has remained faithful to His promise to bless the faithful preaching and teaching of His saving Word. Please pray for the members and church leaders of the CLC-TZ as they continue to support and labor in this effort to train more pastors and teachers to teach and preach God's Word faithfully. And rejoice in the privilege of joining in this important work through our support, encouragement, and prayers.



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

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS MARCH 2022

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
Mar 1	TLH 279	Luke 18:35-43	Today is another day of grace, and at this very moment Jesus is passing by. Even Christians need to be reminded that today is the day to cry out for Christ's mercy.
Mar 2	TLH 324	Luke 19:1-10	Jesus loves even “short people.” He loves those who fall short of society's expectations, as well as those who fall short of God's expectations.
Mar 3	WS 786	Luke 19:11-27	God is serious about using our gifts and talents in the interest of His kingdom. Help us, Lord, to use what You give us to serve You.
Mar 4	TLH 162	Luke 19:28-40	The King of kings comes in humility to lay down His life for the sins of us all. “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”
Mar 5	TLH 297	Luke 19:41-48	Jesus' weeping eyes enable us to peer into the very heart of God. The God of love does not want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
Mar 7	TLH 296	Luke 20:1-8	When asking God questions, let us take care we do so with the humility of faith. Give us grace, Lord, to gladly bow before the authority of Your perfect Word!
Mar 8	TLH 465	Luke 20:9-19	Jesus tells the sad history of Israel's rejection of her Lord. Help us, Lord, to always receive Your Son in faith, and to build the entirety of our lives on Him, our Cornerstone!
Mar 9	TLH 577	Luke 20:20-26	A simple and timeless lesson: Give to earthly government the taxes and obedience it is due, and give to God what He is due.
Mar 10	TLH 775	Luke 20:27-40	The Sadducees seek to undermine God's Word with a convoluted story. The Word—not clever arguments — is our powerful counterpunch against all who attack it.
Mar 11	TLH 339	Luke 20:41-47	Your enemies are “toast” when you can make them your footstool. Sin, death, and Satan have been made the footstool of David's Lord and ours!
Mar 12	WS 788	Luke 21:1-4	Fervent love and real sacrifice describe the widow's giving. What else but the fervent love and sacrifice of Christ can empower that kind of giving in money-loving sinners like you and me?
Mar 14	WS 774	Luke 21:5-24	The Savior paints a dire picture of the future for the disciples of that time. But history is His Story, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's Church.
Mar 15	TLH 609	Luke 21:25-38	What will the day of Christ's return be like? For the believing child of God it will be a day of looking up with nothing but pure joy! “For our redemption draws near!”
Mar 16	WS 789	Luke 22:1-6	A great peer group! The best teacher ever! A Savior from sin and death! Judas threw all that away for a few pieces of silver. A lesson for us in this materialistic age?
Mar 17	WS 755	Luke 22:7-23	“Is” means “is!” Thank God for a fellowship which confesses the truth of the Real Presence! How blessed we are to receive Jesus' true body and blood, given and shed for the forgiveness of sins.
Mar 18	TLH 652	Luke 22:24-38	The disciples are up to their old tricks, arguing over who is the greatest. Greatness in God's kingdom is a heart willing to serve others in love. Lord, forgive our desire to be served, and help us follow your example of greatness.
Mar 19	TLH 159	Luke 22:39-53	“Go to dark Gethsemane, Ye that feel the Tempter's power; Your Redeemer's conflict see, Watch with Him one bitter hour; Turn not from His griefs away, Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.” - TLH 159:1
Mar 21	WS 777	Luke 22:54-62	When we, like Peter, try to stand on our own spiritual feet, we set ourselves up for a big crash. But it's not “three strikes and you're out!” God has grace to rescue faltering sinners like you and me.
Mar 22	TLH 451	Luke 22:63-71	Under oath in a hostile courtroom, Jesus boldly testifies that He is the Son of God! May His perfect love for us give us courage to testify of His grace and truth before a hostile world.
Mar 23	WS 762	John 18:1-14	When Jesus of Nazareth—the Great I AM—speaks, His enemies can only fall back in fear. This shows that Jesus' life was not taken from Him. Rather, He freely gave His life a ransom for all.
Mar 24	WS 769	John 18:19-27	Jesus spoke openly for all to hear. The Christian faith is not a secret society, where certain truths are kept hidden from the public eye. Shout God's truth from the rooftops!
Mar 25	TLH 294	John 18:28-40	Why was Jesus born? <i>“The reason I was born [He says] ... is to testify to the truth.”</i> The very next day Jesus will “sign” His testimony of truth in His own blood.
Mar 26	TLH 341	Luke 23:1-12	Like Pilate and Herod long ago, powerful rulers continue to join forces against the Lord and His Anointed. No matter. God will have the last laugh, and His Son will never be dethroned!
Mar 28	TLH 198	Luke 23:13-25	Not even unscrupulous Pilate can find a speck of guilt in Jesus. Yet in cowardice he capitulates to the crowd's lust for blood, and darkness has its day. But it won't be long before God will turn the table on evil's schemes.
Mar 29	WS 724	Luke 23:26-43	Read these words with penitent tears, dear Christian. Understand exactly why the Son of God was crucified. It was for your sin. But as with the thief, Jesus remembers you with mercy.
Mar 30	TLH 186	Luke 23:44-49	“May Thy life and death supply Grace to live and grace to die, Grace to reach the home on high: Hear us, holy Jesus.” - TLH 186:1
Mar 31	TLH 176	Luke 23:50-56	Luke records what Isaiah had already prophesied concerning Jesus' burial: <i>“For the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death”</i> (Isaiah 53:8-9).

Every other month we get an update on what's been happening recently at our Immanuel Lutheran High School, College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Dual-Credit Courses at Immanuel

One of the more significant changes in higher education over the last two decades has been the rise in popularity of dual-credit courses, which high school students take for both high school and college credit. According to the *National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships*, ninety percent of high schools in the United States now offer dual-credit courses, and one-third of U.S. students take college courses in high school. The benefits of these courses include students' ability to take college courses at a reduced price and to lessen their time to graduation (thus also reducing their overall college costs).

While Immanuel Lutheran High School has already been offering a high school class in calculus that is available for college credit, as well as an AP® statistics course, this summer the Board of Regents approved having Immanuel expand their offerings of dual-credit courses. These courses offer a number of benefits. With our staffing and student population, it is difficult to provide a broad range of elective options for our high school students. Dual-credit courses allow us to expand those elective options without hiring additional staff. Furthermore, high school students who complete these courses can transfer these credits for general education courses at the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire (or potentially at other institutions), or use them to reduce their college load at Immanuel. Students, then, are potentially able to save both time and money in college, for they are reducing the number of courses required at college and are paying significantly less for them. In addition, students are introduced to college courses at Immanuel and get a better idea of what the content and workload in these classes are. Most importantly, these students receive instruction on these subjects from a biblically based, Christian perspective.

During this academic year, we are offering college-level

courses in science and psychology to our high school students. Junior and senior high school students who enrolled in Science 101 earned an elective credit for high school as well as three college credits, while students who enrolled in Psychology 102 will earn elective credit for high school as well as three college credits. We began with these courses because it is especially beneficial for our students to



Professor Mark Weis teaches Psychology 102, one of the dual-credit courses at ILC.

gain knowledge on these subjects from a Christian perspective. These courses have been quite successful. In the fall, seven high school students enrolled in Science 101, and this semester twenty-one high school students are enrolled in Psychology 102. Not only do the enrollment numbers speak to the success of the program, but we have also received positive feedback on these courses from our students. For example, one Science 101 student from last fall writes, “If

you take one of these classes, you get high school credit, which is nice, but you can also get the college credits for it, so you don't have to take them again later. It also gives you a look at what college classes will be like in difficulty level and covering of material.”

While we at Immanuel certainly do not want to follow every popular trend in secular education, we definitely feel that dual-credit courses offer meaningful benefits for our students. We will continue to explore possibilities for expanding our dual-credit offerings, especially focusing on the Christian foundation for these courses, which is the greatest benefit for our students.



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.

Bureaucrats OK Abortion by Mail. On December 16th the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a regulation allowing women to receive the at-home abortion drugs mifepristone and misoprostol by mail, removing the longstanding requirement for an in-person consultation before the drugs could be dispensed. Women can now get a prescription for the abortion pills via teleconference with a doctor in any state, and then receive the drugs by mail. The move is considered something of a formality, since the FDA decided in April “not to enforce” the in-person rule owing to COVID. Abortion advocates hailed the move and called for further loosening of restrictions. Pro-lifers, meanwhile, objected that the decision was too important to be left to unelected bureaucrats, and would have far-reaching adverse health effects on women. Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, said the decision “will lead to more lives lost to abortion, and will increase the number of mothers who suffer physical and psychological harm from chemical abortions.” Perrone, Matthew. “US Regulators Lift In-Person Restrictions on Abortion Pill.” *Health News*. USNews.com, 16 Dec. 2021. Web. 24 Dec. 2021.

Polls Showing Religious Decline May be Skewed. Much has been made in recent years of polls, especially from Pew and Barna, showing a sharp decline in religious affiliation in the U.S., and a corresponding jump in those who claim no affiliation (the “nones”). Columnist Thomas Kidd of the Acton Institute, however, advises taking these results with a grain of salt, for several reasons. In the first place, he says, the percentage of people who actually respond to polls is very small. “Polls are asking questions only of people who respond to pollsters. . . . National surveys are no longer a truly representative sample of the American people, especially in the post-landline phone era.” Secondly, “a question like ‘What is your religion?’ can be construed in many different ways. For instance, small but significant numbers of people with ‘no religion’—some studies suggest as high as 10% of them—actually attend religious services at least monthly.” Finally, says Kidd, “both secular media outlets and Christian research firms such as Barna have a vested interest in promoting the narrative of American religion’s collapse. . . . Secular folks in the media may enjoy reporting on religion’s downfall, if it means that the world is finally becoming awakened to the folly of faith. But Christian traditionalists have a strange affinity for that narrative, too. . . . Christians are familiar with hearing sermons about how the rising generation is not as godly as their forefathers were.” Kidd, Thomas. “Take recent polls about COVID hastening the demise of American religion with a grain of salt.” *Powerblog*. Acton.org, 21 Dec. 2021. Web. 23 Dec. 2021.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Installation. In accord with our usage and order, **Samuel Rodebaugh** (center), who was called by Faith Lutheran Church, Manchester, Missouri, to be its pastor, was installed on January 23, 2022. Participating were (l-r) Missionary Todd Ohlmann, congregational chairman Leonard Benter, Professor David Rodebaugh, and Pastor Neal Radichel, who officiated.



Installation. In accord with our usage and order, Benjamin Libby (middle), who was called by Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, Wyoming, to be its pastor, was installed on December 5, 2021. Also participating in the service was Pastor Thomas Schuetz (left).
—Pastor Timothy Wheaton

