

JUNE 2022 VOL 64 NO. 12

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



*"The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.  
And yet they are not three gods, but one God."*

*--Athanasian Creed*





**IN THIS ISSUE JUNE 2022**

**Our Triune God—Glorious, Incomprehensible.....3**

**Working Together for the Lord.....4**

**PILLARS OF FAITH**

**The Truth of God's Creation .....5**

**The Twin Towers—Still Standing.....6**

**The Greeting of a Letter of Encouragement .....7**

**1963 CLC Convention Delegates ..... 8-9**

**WALTHER'S LAW AND GOSPEL**

**Sinners Still, but Not Ruled by Sin ..... 10**

**OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY**

**The Trinitarian Invocation..... 11**

**NOTES FROM THE FIELD**

**A Foundation Laid for a Lifetime ..... 12-13**

**Bread of Life Readings, JUNE 2022 ..... 14**

**MISSION NEWSLETTER**

**Endings and Beginnings ..... 15**

**SEEN IN PASSING / ANNOUNCEMENTS ..... 16**

The Lutheran Spokesman (USPS 825580) (ISSN 00247537) is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: [www.clclutheran.org](http://www.clclutheran.org)

Periodicals postage paid at Eau Claire, WI and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701-7134

Editor: Paul Naumann, 3732 Claymore Lane, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, E-mail to [paul.naumann@ilc.edu](mailto:paul.naumann@ilc.edu); Assistant Editor: Craig Owings; Art Director, art direction & graphic design by Page 1 Printers; Proofreaders: David Lau and Paula Naumann; Staff: James Albrecht, David Bernthal, Timothy Daub, Wayne Eichstadt, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, John Klatt, Joseph Lau, Delwyn Maas, Bruce Naumann, John Pfeiffer, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Peter Reim, Sam Rodebaugh, Michael Roehl, Robert Sauers, David Schierenbeck, Chad Seybt, Steven Sippert, Mark Weis.

Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Naumann three months before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Naumann.

Business Manager: Rev. James Sandeen, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701. E-mail to [jim.sandeen@ilc.edu](mailto:jim.sandeen@ilc.edu). Individual subscriptions {foreign-U.S. currency only}: \$18.00 {\$36.00} for one year; \$34.00 {\$50.00} for two years; \$50.00 {\$72.00} for three years; sent in bulk to congregations: \$15.00.

Send address or payment question requests to: [lutheranspokesman@ilc.edu](mailto:lutheranspokesman@ilc.edu)

Spokesman Online Version at: [www.lutheranspokesman.org](http://www.lutheranspokesman.org)

Printed in U.S.A.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New King James Version, © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# Our Triune God—Glorious, Incomprehensible

Christians understand that true science is the humble study of God's creation, together with the internal interactions of that creation. True science is therefore a good thing, but it can never fully comprehend the God Who exists beyond, or outside of, His creation. Our godless society, however, seeks to transform and elevate the study of God's handiwork into a god that is itself to be worshiped. This is obviously not new. Two thousand years ago, Paul identified the existence of this same foolishness when he referred to those who "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." (Romans 1:25 ESV) Today man has taken that a step further by elevating the mere study of our world ("science") as the god that can provide for all of our needs. Science has been both personified and deified.



While true science is a blessing, those who study God's creation will never fully understand that creation, let alone the Creator Himself. Scientists today do not fully understand something as basic as light, let alone how light enters the eye, is converted into data that is carried by the optic nerve into the brain, and is there "decoded" or processed into human thought. Failing to fully comprehend, they nonetheless confidently declare that this astounding mechanism, through time and chance, came into existence all on its own. Rather than worship the God that could instantly create something so amazing, using only the power of His Word, sinful man opts to elevate the created thing itself, along with those who study it.

Given man's failure to fully understand God's creation, it should certainly come as no surprise that man cannot even begin to fully comprehend the Creator Himself—even the attributes of God that He chose to reveal to mankind in His Word. The doctrine of the Trinity is one such divine truth that God chose to reveal to His creation. There is one God, and that one God exists in three separate and distinct persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

While the word *triune* does not appear in the Bible, it serves not only as an accurate description of what God in His Word has revealed about Himself, but also as a word which immediately distinguishes Him from every false god.

That God teaches us this about Himself in His Word is beyond dispute. Not only did God say, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4 ESV), and "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5 ESV), we are also told to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) God the Holy Spirit was present at the creation: "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2 ESV), as was Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."

(John 1:1-3 ESV) Jesus Himself said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30 ESV), and "all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." (John 5:23)

When the godless label such Bible truth as "illogical" and "unscientific," they are foolishly imposing their own limitations on that which is infinitely greater than themselves. Which, however, is more amazing—the fact that our God is triune, or the fact that He has revealed Himself as the God Who chose mercy and grace over annihilation or abandonment?



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



# Working Together for the Lord

Every week, like-minded Christians gather together to hear God’s Word, receive His blessing, and build each other up in the faith. Depending on the size and location of your congregation, at times one can feel quite small in the scheme of the world. That’s why it is such a blessing that we share an even larger synodical connection with believers across the United States, in Canada and Mexico, across Africa, and throughout Asia. In the early days of our synod, it was agreed that we would hold biennial conventions in order to deal with the business of the church. Due to a COVID-related cancellation in 2020, we held convention last year and now have the rare privilege to attend two summers in a row. This will enable us to get back on an even-year cycle. Here is a quick snapshot of what is in store for our delegates.



**Theme:** The theme for convention is “*The Light of the World.*” Professor Mark Weiss and Pastor Cory Drehle will enlighten and guide us with their essays on this theme.

**Devotions:** Convention sessions begin and end with devotions to keep hearts and minds focused on the fact that we are doing the Lord’s work. Pastor Samuel Rodebaugh will be encouraging us in this capacity.

**Communion Service:** Anyone who has attended the communion service at Convention will surely remember the uplifting singing and edifying messages. Pastor John Hein will be the speaker and Pastor Robert Sauers the liturgist at our service this year.

**Memorial Service:** Every convention takes a few moments to reflect on God’s gifts in the form of servants of our fellowship who have fallen asleep in the Lord since the last convention. Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer will speak at the memorial service.

**Doctrine:** “*Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.*” (Acts 15:2 NIV84) The early church seemed to set

a precedent by gathering together to discuss doctrinal issues. Differences then troubling the church were thus laid to rest in a God-pleasing manner. This summer we will continue to address recent doctrinal discussions with the WELS/ELS.

**Finances:** “*Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside.*” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) The Lord has given us opportunity to support our church with our time, talents, and treasure. This applies to our synod as well as to our local congregations. Our synod’s finances can be used for mundane things such as paying off loans or bills, as well as exciting ventures such as overseas missions. Discussion will be needed to set budgets for the various boards, home and foreign mission spending, and the proposal to build an athletic center on the campus of ILC.

**Missions:** “*And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.*” (Acts 15:12 ESV) The CLC is active in missions both in North America (domestic missions) and elsewhere (foreign missions). Mission pastors will be presenting reports showing what the Lord is accomplishing through our efforts.

This is merely a glimpse of the work in store for our delegates. Much could be said about the committee meetings, food, fellowship, and bonding that takes place. Please consider representing your congregation as a delegate and pray for the Lord’s will to be advanced through our synod convention.



**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 Truth of God's Creation

**W**hen it comes to the question of origins, be it the existence of the universe, or planet earth, or the human race, the prevalent view for many is a belief in the theory of evolution. I say "belief" because evolution is not proven as indisputable fact. For that matter, neither is creation. While there is solid evidence to point persuasively in the direction of a Creator Who made all things, the Bible declares that creation is a matter of faith. *"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."* (Hebrews 11:3)

One's faith in creation is not based on a gut feeling or some logical conclusion drawn from the way plants, animals, and humans are so well designed. We have the reliable record of Genesis to explain what was made, when it was made, how it was made, and Who is directly responsible for the existence of all things visible and invisible. The first chapters of Scripture lay out in clear language the order of creation that God carried out in six twenty-four-hour days by simply speaking into existence what He chose to make. We can read Genesis 1-2 for more on how it all came to be *"in the beginning"*: God's perfect creation of the universe, the earth, and everything on it, including our first human ancestors, who were made holy in the image of God. When God had finished His creation, all of it *"was good."*

Other passages in Scripture testify to the truth of God's creation as compelling reason to honor Him in worship. Give credit where credit is due, we say. The psalm writer says: *"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. . . . Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."* (Psalm 33:6, 8-9) God's truth of creation beckons all

people to "stand in awe" of Him. Sadly, the widely accepted view of evolution has led in the opposite direction, so that those who were made by God dare to deny Him as Creator and even deny His existence altogether.

As the Lord leads us to confess Him as Maker of heaven and earth and to trust His revealed record in Genesis, He leads us also

to make His truth of creation quite personal in claiming the Psalmist's words as our own: *"You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well."* (Psalm 139:13-14)

Such reverent knowledge of God as our personal Creator is never automatic. It is often excluded by selfish fixation on the things God made, viewing them as treasure pursued for our own misguided use. But the God Who made us is the God Who saved us. Though He did

not create sin or death, He forged a plan before the world was made to take away our sin and lead us from death into life. Note how the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Hebrews both begin with Jesus in His divine role as Creator. As the Word Who was with God and was God, as the Son of God sent by God, Jesus would rescue His fallen people by entering the world He made and dying for the people He made. Praise be to the Shepherd Who not only created His sheep, but also was for us the *"Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* (Revelation 13:8)

***While there is solid evidence to point persuasively in the direction of a Creator Who made all things, the Bible declares that creation is a matter of faith.***



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

# The Twin Towers—Still Standing!

Every Bible student has heard of the Tower of Babel. Tourists are fascinated with the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Historians know of the Lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the wonders of the ancient world. As for twin towers, the Petronas Towers of Kuala Lumpur were initially the tallest towers in the world, and are the tallest twin towers still standing. Not so the World Trade Center towers of New York, brought down by terrorists on 9/11. Whether out of pride, bragging rights, or perhaps economy of usage, men do build their towers.

Thus we are not surprised to hear of two notable towers built by Solomon. The king assigned Hiram to cast two bronze pillars, with bronze capitals set on top (1 Kings 7:15-22). The overall height of each pillar was approximately thirty-two feet, with a circumference of eighteen feet. Estimated weight of each pillar: 16-20 tons. Each pillar was erected at the portico of the temple in Jerusalem. So the first thing the people would see as they came to the temple of the Lord was those two enormous towers with their ornate capitals. Eye-capturing indeed!

Yet the pillars were not merely decorative, nor were they load-bearing. But each pillar had a name – a name with great significance. The name of one was Jachin, which means “He has or will establish.” The name of the second was Boaz, meaning “In him is strength.” In context, this can refer to none other than the Lord God Himself.

What a visual sermon for every Jewish worshiper. God created the universe, and established all things in it. Later He established with Abraham a covenant of grace, making from him a great nation and the father of all believers. He then established His beloved Israel in their promised homeland of Canaan. And He swore unto David, Solomon’s father, that through him and his Seed, He would establish an everlasting kingdom of grace and glory, which would include people of all nations.

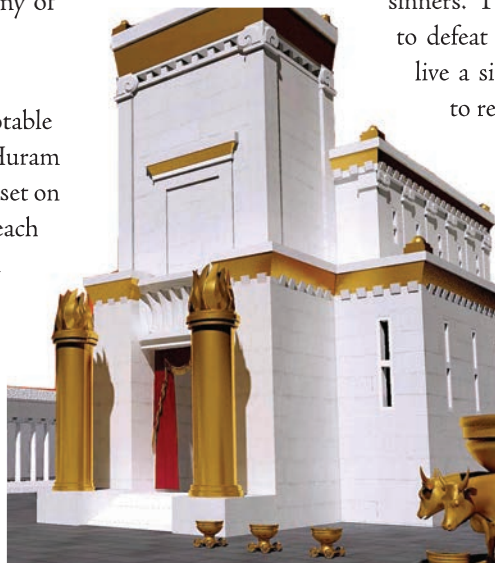
So the Lord could establish, because “in Him is strength.” Indeed, the ancient Jews had seen and experienced that strength at work

for them many times—the miracle of the Red Sea crossing, manna from heaven, water from the rock, victories over and deliverance from their earthly enemies. Surely God was their strength, and not they themselves.

But more! All the Old Testament Gospel pointed ahead to the day when God’s own “Tower” would come from heaven to destroy the works of the devil, overcome the world, and so save sinners. That took great grace and strength; strength to defeat the temptations of the Deceiver, strength to live a sinless life to earn our righteousness, strength to redeem the world and atone for all sin with His precious blood. Every day the two temple towers—Jachin and Boaz—testified that God establishes, for in Him is strength. Every day the worshipers were to see and remember, believe and be encouraged.

Like the Twin Towers, the two pillars of Solomon’s temple no longer stand. They were cut up and carted off by Nebuchadnezzar centuries ago. But can they still stand? The Old Testament temple is long gone, but God has his New Testament building project—for each believer in Christ is a temple built by the Holy Spirit.

Can Jachin and Boaz still stand? By faith they can stand in the portico of our hearts. Thus every day we can pull up their image in wonderment. Ahead of us stands Jachin—the Lord establishes! He protects and keeps us on the Jesus Way, and establishes our resurrection bodies and mansions in heaven. He does so because He is Boaz—the eternal God with unlimited strength and grace. So close your eyes. Envision the Twin Towers of God. They still stand for our salvation and will forever.



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



# The Greeting of a Letter of Encouragement

*“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect, temporary residents in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied to you.” (1 Peter 1:1-2 EHV)*

**W**ith this article, we begin a study of First Peter. May the Lord bless our consideration of it for the strengthening of our Christian faith and life of loving obedience to God.

Ordinarily the writer of a letter inscribes his name at the end of a missive. However, in the case of most of the New Testament epistles, the writers revealed themselves at the beginning. The authors identified themselves at the outset, because they wanted their readers to know the sender of these messages. Like the other apostolic writers, Peter desired his audience to be assured that his letters were not merely from him, but were divinely inspired epistles from Jesus. As an apostle (“one sent out”) of Jesus Christ, Peter had been sent out by Jesus to reveal His message of life and salvation.

While the birth name of this apostle was Simon, he preferred to use his name given by Jesus, namely Peter, which means “rock” (Matthew 16:18). For his own sake, as well as for fellow Christians, this rock-man reminded all that they were firmly grounded on the unshakeable foundation of Jesus: His teachings and His redemptive work.

The original readers of 1 Peter were Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians greatly in need of divine words of encouragement, for they were being faced with severe persecutions which were intended to cause them to forsake the Lord and His Church. These Christians were scattered throughout five Roman provinces in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) which were under the ruthless rule of the ungodly Emperor Nero.

Numbered among them were Christians who had heard Peter’s wonderful Pentecost message which brought them to Christ (Acts 2:9). Upon their return home they no doubt shared with their neighbors the Gospel message of the crucified and risen Savior Jesus Christ.

In order to bolster their Christian faith and life, Peter referred to

them as “*the elect, temporary residents in the world.*” (v. 1) In eternity before the world began, God had chosen them to be a part of His eternal kingdom and therefore heirs of everlasting life in heaven. He foreknew them and chose them not because of anything in them, but because of the redemptive work of Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. And although some of them might face death for their faith, they were to remember that they were merely temporary residents in the world—with heaven being their eternal home.

***Although some of them might face death for their faith, they were to remember that they were merely temporary residents in the world***

That same Spirit Who brought them to faith would continue to be at work in them through the Gospel in Word and Sacraments. By His sanctifying work, the Holy Spirit would sustain their Christian faith so that even though they might falter in the face of opposition, they would continue to be washed clean through the sprinkling of the shed blood of Christ. And, as they were reminded of God’s unconditional love for them in Christ Jesus, the Spirit of

God would increase their love so that they would willingly and cheerfully live a life of obedience to God.

The final words of greeting “*Grace and peace be multiplied to you*” (v. 2) were God’s promise of pouring out upon them the abundant blessings of His unmerited love and a peace of mind and heart that surpasses understanding.

To these words of encouragement we say, “Yea and Amen.”



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





In October of 2020, the *Lutheran Spokesman* published on its cover a group photo of the pastors and delegates to the 1963 CLC Convention, held at Calvary Lutheran Church in Marquette, Michigan. There was much interest in this photo, and many emails were exchanged in the attempt to identify all the people in the photo. Professor Emeritus Paul Koch, who was himself present at that early convention, undertook to collate all these identifications into one master list. With thanks to Professor Koch we reprint the photo, with the list of names, for your encouragement during this month of our 35th Convention of the CLC.

**Front row kneeling, left to right**

1. Daniel DeRose
2. Daniel Hanel
3. Martin Bernthal
4. Don Skinner
5. unknown
6. J.B.Erhardt
7. Harold Duehlmeier
8. Gerhardt Blumhardt
9. Otto J. Eckert
10. Norbert Reim
11. Winfred Schaller Jr.
12. Egbert Schaller
13. C.M.Gullerud
14. Gerhard Pieper
15. unknown
16. Arvid Gullerud

17. unknown
18. Clarence Jordan
19. Richard Kuehne
20. Rollin Reim

**Standing at ground level, left to right (some behind others)**

21. Bertram Naumann
22. Adalbert Geiger
23. Norman Gurath
24. unknown
25. unknown
26. Martin Garbrecht
27. Ralph Schaller
28. Martin Fuerstenau
29. Walter Romberg
30. unknown
31. Carl Romberg
32. Martin Galstad
33. Charles Sandeen
34. Ernest Williams
35. unknown
36. George Tiefel
37. Paul R. Koch
38. George Barthels
39. Waldemar Bernthal
40. Gerhardt Mueller
41. David Lau
42. Jonathan Schaller
43. Gordon Radtke
44. Edmund Reim
45. Waldemar Schuetze
46. Egbert Albrecht
47. Walter Schaller

48. P.G. Albrecht
49. Bert Doring
50. Norman Harms
51. Alvin Sieg
52. Robert Rehm
53. Ruben Ude
54. Ron Roehl
55. unknown

**Standing on the entry steps, left to right**

56. Herman Preus
57. P.F. Nolting
58. Leroy Greening
59. unknown
60. Christian Albrecht
61. Victor Tiefel
62. Keith Olmanson

**Up another step, left to right**

63. unknown
64. Harlan Reed
65. Helmuth Rutz
66. Karl Brandle
67. L. W. Schierenbeck
68. unknown

**Back row, left to right**

69. unknown
70. John Lau
71. Herbert Witt
72. Maynard Witt.
73. Gene Schreyer
74. Unknown
75. Fritz Peterson
76. unknown



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.



## Sinners Still, but Not Ruled by Sin

**“**Thesis XVIII-- In the fourteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the universal corruption of mankind is described in such a manner as to create the impression that even true believers are still under the spell of ruling sins and are sinning purposely.”

As was his custom before addressing his thesis for the evening, Walther would often give advice to the seminary students in his audience. Before this lecture, he spoke of reasons why some who have the gifts for the ministry choose not to become pastors. He said that they wrongly conclude that they would have to “sacrifice their life’s happiness and their freedom.” However, every Christian, whether in the public ministry or not, when called upon, must live a life of sacrifice, forsaking the world for the sake of the Gospel.

What is necessary for a pastor is that he be a sincere Christian, one who is committed to live not for himself, but for Him Who died and rose again for his sake. Unfortunately, it is possible for people to intellectually know the truth of Scripture but not believe it or apply it to themselves. Shepherds of this type will not sacrifice for Christ or His flock. They will not stand by the Word when assailed by those of the world.

In Thesis XVIII itself, Walther warns against using broad brushstrokes in characterizing all Christians as those who still live in open, unrepentant sin. One should, however, be bold in describing the only two spiritual classes of people there are—believer or unbeliever, converted or unconverted. There is no in-between place where a second chance at faith is granted once one dies. The outcome is either heaven or hell. Many in our world

today don't want to hear of such stark realities.

Walther makes a clear distinction between believers, who still have a sinful flesh clinging to them, and unbelievers, who willfully lead sinful lives with no desire to repent and turn from their sinful lifestyles. Sin has dominion over them. A Christian turns to Christ daily for forgiveness, trusting he will receive it. Christians still daily sin much, but their desire is to serve their Savior. A

hypocrite, no matter how pious he pretends to be, allows sin to rule him. To illustrate, Walther uses the analogy of a traveler who is attacked by robbers on his journey. He is overtaken because of his weakness. It is not his desire to be overcome and killed. He wants to escape and find refuge. So it is with a Christian who attempts to fend off temptation and yet falls into sin. His desire is to escape and serve his Lord.

Walther rightly criticizes Calvinists who teach that once a person is converted, he can never lose his faith. The Bible does not teach that. Some do lose the saving faith they once had through their own rejection of the Gospel message. Rather than repent, they choose to cultivate the sins that draw them away from Christ and into damnation. Pastors do their congregations a disservice by avoiding sermon texts that clearly present these truths. There are only two classes of living people, believers and unbelievers. There are only two final destinations for all people, heaven or hell. May God help us to clearly proclaim this message for the eternal benefit of His children.

**Be bold in describing the only two spiritual classes of people there are—believer or unbeliever, converted or unconverted.**



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

[To read Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* for free online, and to access related Bible class materials, go to [www.ilc.edu/Walther](http://www.ilc.edu/Walther)]



## OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY

*Ever wonder why we Lutherans use the form of worship that we do?  
In this series we examine the depth and meaning of the various elements of our worship service.*

# The Trinitarian Invocation

It has been said that wherever Christians build a humble chapel for the worship of the true God, the devil sets up beside it a grand temple to some false god. His purpose is ever to create ambiguity and confusion between the eternal God revealed in the Bible and the idols that are the work of human minds and hands.

Because of the devil's attempts to sow confusion, it is necessary that when we gather for worship, we express clearly that we are there to worship the one true and living God.

This is what we do when we open our services with the trinitarian invocation, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." With these words we are saying to anyone who is present, "Let there be no question about the God we worship here. He is the God Who has made Himself known in the Bible: our Maker, Redeemer, and Comforter."

This opening statement in our services also achieves essential purposes for the believers who are gathered for worship.

It reminds us of our Baptism. We recognize the trinitarian invocation as the words that Jesus spoke when He commanded His disciples to go and make disciples of all the nations. They were to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19-20) When we hear these words spoken at the beginning of a service, we are hearing again the words that were spoken when we were baptized. These are mighty words that first came from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are what make Baptism "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5), by which we died with Christ and were raised to life with Him (Romans 6:2-3).

This remembrance of our Baptism at the beginning of a service is

a reminder that we were saved by God's grace in Christ alone. The blessings of forgiveness and eternal life were poured out on us by the Holy Spirit as a gift. When we gather for worship, we do not approach God on the basis of our works. It is only through the merits of Christ that we can come before Him and bring to Him our offerings of praise and prayer. It is by His grace that He speaks to us in His Word.



With the invocation, we call upon God to bless us with His gracious presence at the service. We know that we are always in God's presence, but in a formal worship service we are especially conscious of His presence. We ask Him to receive our praises in liturgy and hymns. We ask Him to hear and answer the prayers we bring to Him, trusting in the promise of Christ that whatever we ask in His name will be given to us (John 16:23). We ask for the blessing of the Holy Spirit as the Word is read in the Scripture lessons and preached in the sermon. We acknowledge that we need the Spirit to open the Word to us so that we understand it, believe it, and respond to it.

The words of the invocation are indeed precious words. Let us rejoice to hear them. And they need not be reserved only for public worship services. Luther fittingly used them to begin his morning and evening prayers. It is good for us to make use of these words of Christ at the beginning and at the close of each day. In this way we will be reminded that we live continuously in God's presence, that we stand always in His grace, and that we live under His constant protection.



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



## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

*In this series, those involved with CLC foreign missions profile one aspect of our overseas endeavors.*

# A Foundation Laid for A Lifetime

*[Ed.: The following is a report from Pastor Jyothi Benjamin, in his own words, about current activities in the Church of the Lutheran Confession in India (CLCI). The report is lightly edited for clarity.]*

**“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”** (Romans 10:14 NIV)

Smiles spread on every face, and everybody enjoyed the CLCI seminary 2021 graduation day. The seminary graduation was a very festive and special occasion. By the wonderful grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the climax had come for the 2021 class of the CLCI seminary. Due to coronavirus, we had total lock downs in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states, and were unable to conduct CLCI seminary graduation as we planned in the month of June. Commencement was held on Monday, August 16th at the CLCI mission campus.



We call these ceremonies “commencement exercises” because graduation is not the end; it’s the beginning. The purpose of the CLCI seminary training is to lay the foundation in the lives of our students for a lifetime in the Lord’s ministry. We are very pleased to inform you that God has led another seventeen students to complete the seminary course successfully. We were able to complete the seminary syllabus for these graduates in time, despite the lockdowns.

As usual, we planned to have an outdoor graduation program. A beautiful dais was set with microphone and loudspeakers, lights and decorations. Everything was very carefully prepared. But all of a sudden, rain ruined our plans. So we shifted the graduation program indoors, to the church building upstairs.

As principal of the seminary, I congratulated the graduates and conveyed my best wishes and blessings. I encouraged all the

graduates with a commencement address and told them that they should never forget their true goal. I spoke from 1 Thessalonians 5:14-25 and gave instructions to the newly graduated students as they enter into paths of service and CLCI ministry with new life. All the graduates received these instructions very attentively. Finally, I congratulated the graduates and repeated my warning to them to keep their lives pure.

Many CLCI pastors and members attended the graduation ceremony and congratulated the graduates. Many members, students, and pastors walked to the front to shake hands with the graduates. Following the commencement exercises a wonderful feast was held to honor the graduates. Everybody enjoyed chicken curry with colored rice biryani.

As principal of the seminary, I do miss these graduates. This class is really something special to me. They really did very hard work in learning their lessons throughout the tough COVID period. It was a joy for me to experience, on a daily basis, their passion, intelligence, curiosity, frustration due to COVID lockdowns, honesty, doubts, and hopefulness. All of them became my good friends. It’s an amazing thing to see them, now, going out into the church as pastors. Really, I miss them in the class. But I know I should never forget that everything is happening within the framework of God’s will. God made the world. God loves the world. God is at work in the world today. In fact, God is on a loving mission to save, bless, set free, and reconcile the world. And God works through these ordinary people to get that done. I encouraged all the graduates to be faithful in proclaiming the good news, even when they meet apathy or opposition. Pastor Nireekshana and some of our CLCI pastors conveyed their greetings to the graduates and prayed for them, laying their right hands on the heads of the graduates. The principal of the seminary also conveyed the best wishes and blessings on behalf of the CLC-USA.





Some of the graduates have shared their testimony and expressed their special thanks to the seminary for its valuable training. They have more than a diploma that they can hang with pride on the wall; they have the opportunity to literally change the course of history by bringing the Word of God to bear on all the people. They also expressed their thanks to the honorable sponsors of the CLC for their kind support.

We awarded the certificates and gifts to both the correspondence students and the seminary graduates. Special prizes—leather Bible bags—were also presented to the seminary graduates. Even though the graduates enjoyed the excitement, they also shed tears and felt sad in that moment. Those of us who have passed through seminary know that there is one day that every student has to face—graduation day. A day where they breathe freedom, yet shed tears for leaving behind the place where they were transformed from ordinary men into fully trained pastors. Now they are ready to serve the Lord with their whole hearts. They will find themselves refreshed in their work by the presence of the Lord. St. Paul said in the book of Philipians, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* (4:13) I am sure that each of the graduates will touch many lives during this new phase of their lives.

We have presented certificates, prayed for graduates, labored and laughed together, and this has all happened with the kind help from the honorable CLC. Your fellowship is a special gift from the Lord. We thank and praise God for the wonderful assistance we have been receiving from the respected CLC Mission Board and Kinship Committee. Pray for God’s hand of blessing to rest upon these seventeen men as they go into the Gospel field as shepherds to spread the Word of God. Please pray also that more young people will be challenged to take up the call to the ministry. Thank you!!



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



# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JUNE 2022

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

Date	Hymns	Readings	Comments
June 1	WS 769	Acts 16:1-10	Paul and his companions are prevented by the Spirit from going into certain areas. Instead, God directs them to take the Gospel to Macedonia. Missionaries rightly make plans to take the Gospel to certain locations, but the Spirit often directs them elsewhere. Trust God to open doors for the Gospel!
June 2	TLH 452	Acts 16:11-24	Satan dogs the missionaries through a demon-possessed girl. But, in a head-to-head confrontation, Jesus shows His power over the forces of darkness. Satan doesn't give up, however, as evil men put Paul and Silas in prison. We'll see how that didn't work out well for Satan either.
June 3	WS 773	Acts 16:25-40	With Paul and Silas in jail, perhaps Satan thinks he can keep the Gospel from spreading. Not so! God works wonders even in a prison cell, as we see the Gospel win the hearts of a jailor and his family.
June 4	TLH 261	Acts 17:1-15	Thessalonica is the next stop as the message of a risen Savior marches on. But it's in Berea where we learn the vital lesson of carefully reading our Bibles to make sure we're being taught the truth of Scripture.
June 6	TLH 297	Acts 17:16-34	The Greeks in Athens didn't know a thing about the Scriptures, so Paul had to start from square one with creation. He appeals to their natural knowledge of God, but then proclaims to them what they can't know unless it's revealed: Jesus is the Risen One, Who is judge over all!
June 7	TLH 658	Acts 18:1-17	Being a witness for Christ is not easy in a God-hating world, but the Lord will not fail to hold us up so that we can keep on going: <i>"Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you."</i>
June 8	TLH 283	Acts 18:18-28	No matter how learned we are in our knowledge of Scripture, there's always room to grow. Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures, but was in need of more accurate knowledge. Let us all be eager students of the Word, learning God's truth as accurately as possible.
June 9	TLH 430	Acts 19:1-20	Paul brings the Gospel to Ephesus with the usual results: many reject Christ, while others believe. Noteworthy is the burning of expensive books of dark magic formerly owned by those who now found in Jesus a treasure worth far more than all the world.
June 10	TLH 495	Acts 19:21-41	Idol maker Demetrius raises an uproar against the Gospel, which was winning many hearts away from Diana to Christ. To this day the Gospel continues to win hearts for Christ away from the idols of this world.
June 11	WS 781	Acts 20:1-16	As Paul preaches on to midnight, a young man falls out of a third-story window and dies. By Jesus' power Paul restores his life, and then gets right back to preaching. Preaching God's Word is urgent business! Let's keep at it!
June 13	WS 780	Acts 20:17-38	God calls the Church today to be like Paul in its dedication to preaching the whole counsel of God. He calls pastors to faithfully shepherd blood-bought souls, especially guarding them against the false-teaching wolves.
June 14	TLH 656	Acts 21:1-14	Agabus prophesies Paul's arrest in Jerusalem at the hands of the Gentiles. While Paul's friends try to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem, Paul asserts he's ready to die for Christ. Yes, He is worth dying for!
June 15	TLH 464	Acts 21:15-25	We read of a joyful meeting between Paul and the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem. What a blessed fellowship we share with Christ and one another! Note how Paul goes out of His way to foster the unity he shares with the church in Jerusalem.
June 16	TLH 481	Acts 21:26-36	Once again Paul is viciously attacked by the haters of Christ. Hadn't Jesus said that His followers would be hated and persecuted by the world? May God give His people strength and joy to suffer for the One Who endured so much for us.
June 17	WS 777	Acts 21:37-Acts 22:21	Paul stands before the crowd, giving testimony to the grace and power of Christ to save a wretched sinner such as himself. Every Christian has his own story, but, when all is said and done, all of our stories are testimonies to the love of a forgiving Savior.
June 18	WS 770	Acts 22:22-Acts 23:11	Paul's trial before the Sanhedrin ends in a verbal fight between the Pharisees (the legalists) and the Sadducees (the liberals). More importantly, the Lord calls Paul to take courage, as He intends for the apostle to take the Gospel to Rome!
June 20	WS 785	Acts 23:12-35	The Lord works through a nephew and a Roman commander to safeguard Paul's life. The Lord works in countless ways to protect His children. May we have eyes to see His protecting love!
June 21	WS 771	Acts 24:1-27	While some may consider having to stand trial before a powerful man like Felix to be a setback, Paul sees it as an opportunity to proclaim Christ. Help us, Lord, to see even difficult situations as opportunities to serve our dear Savior.
June 22	WS 496	Acts 25:1-12	Knowing he wouldn't get a fair trial in Jerusalem, Paul appeals his case to Caesar. God had told Paul that he would take the Gospel to Rome. Off to Rome he will go for still more opportunities to bring Christ to lost sinners.
June 23	WS 786	Acts 25:13-27	In discussing Paul's case with King Agrippa, Festus admits that he is clueless as to what charge can be brought against Paul. Let it always be said of God's people that when they suffer, it is for doing good.
June 24	TLH 279	Acts 26:1-18	Paul explains his Christ-given mission to both the Jews and the Gentiles: <i>"So that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."</i>
June 25	TLH 657	Acts 26:19-32	When Paul again testifies to God's grace, Festus accuses Paul of being out of his mind. But Paul explains that what he has said is a matter of verifiable record. Regardless, if one is said to be out of his mind, let it be said he's out of his mind for Christ.
June 27	TLH 649	Acts 27:1-26	Finally Paul sets sail in what turns out to be a perilous voyage. As the storm rages on, Paul shows himself to be a calming force, speaking to his fellow shipmates of God's promise to spare all their lives. What comfort we bring when we share the promises of God!
June 28	TLH 36	Acts 27:27-44	It's a shipwreck, but one in which not one single person aboard is lost. Isn't that exactly what God, through Paul, had said would happen? Lord, help us trust implicitly all that Your Word says and promises.
June 29	TLH 339	Acts 28:1-16	The power of Jesus comes to the island of Malta. Paul suffers no ill effects after being bitten by a venomous snake, and people from all over the island are cured of sicknesses. Most certainly, Paul preaches the Gospel, God's power for salvation.
June 30	TLH 501	Acts 28:17-31	Though under house arrest for two years, God enables Paul to carry on a productive Gospel ministry. In whatever situation we find ourselves, God will give us outlets to serve in the interest of our Savior.



# Endings and Beginnings

**“T**he LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”  
(Numbers 6:24-26)

That is the end-of-service blessing with which we’re all familiar; it makes for a good end-of-school-year blessing as well—wishing the Lord’s continued favor on our students as they move on to college, the workforce, the classroom, and the pulpit. But, while our school year has largely concluded, the school years of many of our Christian brethren overseas have just begun.

The Wittenberg Lutheran Seminary of the CLC-Tanzania began classes in January with ten new students. This is the first year of what is now a four-year program, the seminary faculty having added a pre-seminary year to the existing program. Following this first year of introductory theological training, each student will be evaluated by the faculty and either advance to three more years of advanced study or be awarded a certificate in evangelism and made available for service to their local congregations. Many improvements have been made to the seminary facilities over the past couple of years. With the blessing of CLC-Mission Development Fund (MDF) grants, a new roof was installed. Dormitory rooms, laundry/bathing facilities, a kitchen, office/library, and a classroom were built. Textbooks were purchased as well.

St. David’s Kinship Academy in Etago and Emmaus Milimani

Hill School in the Moi’s Bridge area have recently begun the new school year. The CLC Board of Missions approved increased funding, MDF grants, and Kinship grants to provide new textbooks and internet connectivity as well as to help fund construction projects for new classrooms at both schools.

The Himalayan Bible Institute (HBI) in Nepal is excited to begin classes in the new building that was recently completed and dedicated. This building project was a joint effort, with funding from the CLC MDF and funding raised through offerings and loans in Nepal. In mid-May, ten new students traveled from around the Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession of Nepal to start the new semester. They are the first students to stay in the dormitory rooms and study in the new classroom.

As we ask the Lord’s blessings at the end of our school year, we ask the Lord also to bless and keep these students as they begin theirs. Many of these students are supported directly by

Kinship sponsors. If you are interested in supporting a seminary student, contact Kinship Sponsor Liaison Dan Roehl at danroehl@hotmail.com or (507) 381-2042.



**Top:** Tanzania Seminary graduation. **Above:** Moi’s Bridge classroom building to be replaced.



**Samuel Rodebaugh** is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church of Manchester, Missouri.



## SEEN IN PASSING

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

**Explosion of Narcissism in America.** In an article for *Real Clear Science*, Ross Pomeroy surveys recent research indicating that Americans' opinion of themselves has risen steeply in recent decades. Previous generations of Americans had more humility, were less self-centered, and were more willing to subjugate their own interests to those of a larger group. This was especially evidenced by the generation that lived through the Great Depression of the 1930's, and their children (the "Greatest Generation"), who soldiered and sacrificed through World War II. All that changed with the Baby Boomers, says Pomeroy. "By the time they were college-aged, Boomers eschewed the collectivist mindset of their elders in favor of individualism. The trend continued with Boomers' kids. . . . One study comparing teenagers found that while only 12% of those aged 14-16 in the early 1950's agreed with the statement 'I am an important person,' 77% of boys and more than 80% of girls of the same cohort by 1989 agreed with it." And it's only gotten worse since then, with the rise of cell phones and social media tending to put a laser focus on the self, rather than the group. Pomeroy, Ross. "What Are the Effects of America's Narcissism Epidemic?" *Blog*. RealClearScience.com, 9 Apr. 2022. Web. 9 Apr. 2022.

### Professor Recommends Switching to a Dumb Phone.

A lot has been said about how to cut down on the distraction, time wasting, and other dangers posed by smart phones. In a recent article for *Christianity Today*, Professor Dru Johnson described the improvements to his life (some of them surprising) after he switched to a so-called "dumb phone." The phone, the Light Phone II, has only a paper white display (like a Kindle), and it only

allows voice and text and a few other basic functions. It has no apps, no browser, and no social media. The makers say it is "designed to be used as little as possible." Dr. Johnson said of his experience, "The first week, I kept pulling it out of my pocket as the iPhone had trained me to do. The dumb phone quickly re-trained me out of that old habit. It would just look at me, and I at it. Then, I'd realize that there was nothing to do. . . . I started having concentrated times where I could do more focused work. When I was away from the computer, I felt away—free from a sense of urgency to check. . . . Mainly, I feel as if I've gotten my brain back, but also my sensory attention. The number one benefit for me became clarity of mind and time to think. A month in and I feel much more coherent in my own headspace. After my body fully realized that there's no need to pull out my phone for anything, I began attending to smells, sounds, and sights more than before. My prayers have also increased." Johnson, Dru. "Spiritual Lessons from My Dumb Phone." *Spiritual Formation*. ChristianityToday.com, 17 Mar. 2022. Web. 9 Apr. 2022.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### The 35th Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession June 23-26, 2022

#### Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

- Theme: "The Light of the World" (John 8:12)
- Essayists: Professor Mark Weis, Pastor Cory Drehle
- Chaplain: Pastor Samuel Rodebaugh
- Convention Service Preacher: Pastor John Hein
- Convention Service Liturgist: Pastor Robert Sauers
- Memorial Service Preacher: Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
- Reporter: Professor Joseph Lau

--Pastor Paul Nolting, CLC Moderator