


OCTOBER 2022 VOL 65 NO. 4

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



*"Is not My word like a fire?" says  
the LORD, "And like a hammer  
that breaks the rock in pieces?"*

*Jeremiah 23:29*





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# The Power and Authority of Light

How ironic that God's blessings can actually serve to obscure His blessings! More than that, there is a danger that we allow His blessings to cause us to fail to fully comprehend or appreciate all that we read in His Word. When we read, for example, of how people in Bible times waited anxiously for the light of dawn, or that they had to sit patiently in darkness, we today tend to gloss over the reality of what life was like back then because of God's blessing of modern lighting. The darkness today can be dispelled with the flick of a switch. Not so back then. When their fires went out, they had little recourse but to sit in darkness and to wait for God to dispel the darkness with the light of dawn.

We also therefore tend to miss the Bible's analogy between the light of dawn and the "light" of God's Word. As people then had no recourse but to sit in darkness until the sun rose, so also human beings can exist only in spiritual darkness until the light of God's Word illuminates their understanding. As man was powerless to provide physical light, so also man remains powerless to provide himself with spiritual light. That is the power of God's Word, but that power can never be appreciated by those who imagine that they can produce their own spiritual light as easily as they can now produce physical light.

Isaiah once wrote: "And when they say to you, 'Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,' should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn." (Isaiah 8:19-20 ESV) Man has always tried to produce his own spiritual light, but true light and understanding come only from God's Word. So also Solomon wrote in Proverbs 4:19, "The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble." (ESV)

Only God's Word can dispel the spiritual darkness of man. Scripture thereby attests to the power and authority of God's Word by referring to it as "light." Isaiah foretold, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." (Isaiah 9:2 ESV)

Clearly this was a reference to Jesus, Whom John not only referred to as "the Word," but as that which "gives light to everyone." (John 1:9 ESV) John the Baptist was called from conception "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:79 ESV) This calling he carried out by sharing the Word of God.

And yet as powerful and as miraculous as the gift of God's light truly is, that power is neutralized and wasted whenever human beings deny the authority of God's Word, or when they refuse to allow its power to illuminate their sin-darkened existence. Man's rejection doesn't change the power of that Word, it just

robs that individual of its benefit. God's Word continues to offer "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path," (Psalm 119:105 ESV) but human beings rob themselves of that benefit when they deny the authority of that Word. To do so is, in fact, the height of foolishness, for the core message of that Word is not oppression, but freedom. Not animosity, but love. Not anxiety, but safety. The beating heart of the Word of God is the message of forgiveness and life eternal through faith alone in Jesus Christ. So also we confess with the Apostle Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." (Romans 1:16 ESV)



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

# "Trust Your Equipment"

An Army paratrooper recalls the story of having a bad jump from an airplane that left her with a bloodied mouth and tangled parachute cords. As she hurtled toward the earth, she remembered the words of her instructor: "Trust your equipment. It will not fail you." Sure enough, her parachute did what it was supposed to do, and she landed safely on the ground.

Soldiers and law enforcement personnel need equipment they can trust. A soldier does not want to rush into battle with a gun that always jams. A police officer will not engage in a high-speed pursuit if he thinks the wheels are going to fall off his patrol car.

The Lord reminds Christians that we are in a spiritual battle. *"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 6:12) The enemies that oppose the children of God cannot be chased away with police cars or threatened with machine guns. These enemies are spiritual. They attack us with spiritual schemes (Ephesians 6:11).

But God has not left His children defenseless. God has provided equipment. In Ephesians 6, Paul urges us to put on all the armor that God has provided: truth, righteousness, the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation.

One piece of armor God has provided can be used both to defend oneself and to attack the enemy. *"And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* (Ephesians 6:17) In Paul's day, soldiers wanted a sword that was strong so that it could deflect the strikes of the enemy. They wanted a sword that was sharp so that it could strike the enemy with deadly effect.

God has given us a strong and sharp sword with which we can defend ourselves when spiritual attacks come and with

which we can also attack the lies of the enemy. This sword is strong and sharp because it is from God Himself. *"All Scripture is breathed out by God."* (2 Timothy 3:16 ESV) *"The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword."* (Hebrews 4:12)

When Jesus was tempted by spiritual scheming of the devil, He drew the sword of the Spirit to defend Himself and attack the lies of the devil. *"It is written . . . It is written . . . It is written. . ."* He said to counter each attack (Matthew 4:1-11).

The Sword of the Spirit is reliable, and Easter proves it. Throughout the Old Testament (Psalm 16:10 and Job 19:25) and throughout Jesus' ministry (Mark 9:31 and 10:34), the promise was made that the Savior of the world would suffer and die, but on the third day He would rise. That a certain person would die is not a hard promise to keep. But that a dead person would rise again on the third day, that is an impossible promise to keep.

Jesus kept that impossible promise and rose from the dead on the third day. His keeping of that promise means that we can be sure that *"all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen."* (2 Corinthians 1:20) Because Jesus kept that resurrection promise, it means that our sins are truly forgiven and that we too will rise from the dead on the Last Day.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead means that you can "trust your equipment." *"The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him."* (Psalm 18:30)



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## 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 Lutheran worship service.*

# The Gloria Patri

**“Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”**

Some Lutheran churches have begun using “contemporary worship” services and other somewhat casual formats instead of the traditional liturgy. The reason for that is often the statistically unsupported belief that our liturgy is at least partly responsible for a general decline in church attendance.

We know that God has not prescribed any specific form of collective worship services for New Testament Christians. He does tell us not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25), but the particular form of our worship service is a matter of Christian liberty.

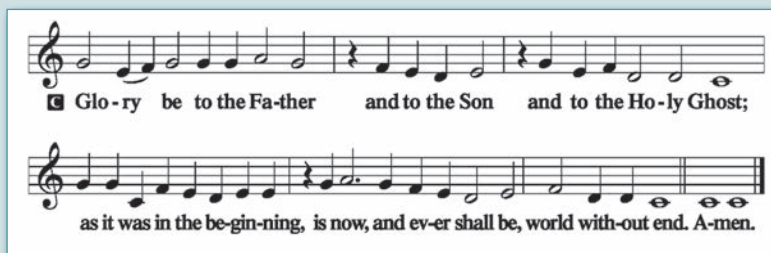
However, it would be a mistake to conclude therefore that how we structure our worship services does not matter, or that all forms of public worship are equally pleasing to God or equally edifying to believers. Worship, rightly understood, involves reverent love for and devotion to the one true God. The church is not an entertainment venue. Evaluated by the standard of what the Bible tells us about Law and Gospel, the nature of God, the nature of man—and about worship itself—we see that some expressions of public, collective worship are better than others.

Consider—for just one example—the careful sequencing of the liturgy parts used by liturgical Lutheran churches. Perhaps you’ve never thought about why the various parts of the liturgy are in the order they are, but the fact is that each separate part of the liturgy has Biblical significance in and of itself, and those parts are arranged in a systematic order.

Our worship services begin with the **Invocation**, in which we call upon the one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as the object of our worship. This is consistent with the First Commandment, and it establishes at the very beginning of every service that we are worshiping only the one true God. What more appropriate beginning to a worship service could there be?

After the Invocation comes the **Confession of Sins**, a necessary

prerequisite to worship, without which sinful man cannot approach the holy God. Having confessed our sins and our sinful nature, we then receive the **Absolution**, in which the pastor announces that for Jesus’ sake, all our sins have been forgiven. It is only with our confession and Jesus’ forgiveness that we can approach and worship God. Our liturgy makes that explicit.



Having been assured from God’s Word that our sins are forgiven, the **Introit** is next. The word *introit* means “entrance,” and as Pastor Klatt stated in last month’s article, “With assurance of God’s grace in Christ we are able to enter into God’s

presence and begin our service of prayer, praise, and instruction in His Word.” The Introit includes a Psalm passage, usually linked to the theme of the day’s worship.

Then we come to the **Gloria Patri**. This thirty-word element of our service is a short doxology (a praise of God) that connects the Old Testament Psalm passage we heard in the Introit with our New Testament Christian worship. As such, it is consistent with and echoes such New Testament passages as Romans 16:27 (*to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever*), Ephesians 3:21 (*to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever*), and Philippians 4:20 (*Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever*).

May God grant that we understand and appreciate the blessings of our liturgy, lest we weaken a form of worship that glorifies Him and edifies believers.



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



# How Should We Then Live?

*“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’ ” (1 Peter 1:13-16)*

The heading of this article is the title of a book written by Francis Schaeffer. The premise for his book is this, that when we base society on the Bible, on the infinite-personal God Who is there and has spoken, this provides an absolute to which we are to conform our lives and by which we can judge society.

As redeemed children of God and heirs of eternal life in Christ Jesus, we are on a pilgrimage, with the final destination being heaven. While on this journey, we want to live God-pleasing lives that honor the Lord and serve for our good and for the welfare of others.



For an answer to the question “How should we then live?” we certainly wouldn’t look to the unbelieving world. Modern-day society has many things upside down, calling evil good and good evil. It is like the wayward Israelites about whom the Bible oftentimes said, as in Judges 17:6, “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” In other words, they lived according to the dictates of their sin-corrupted minds. In view of this, the Apostle Peter admonishes his readers to be “obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance.” (verse 14)

Instead of taking our cue from the world as to how we should live, Peter directs us to the ways of our God by saying to us, “as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” (verses 15-16) The Lord God provides us with the standard by which we are to conduct our lives in giving us the Ten Commandments. Live and walk in the ways of Christian love.

In preparation for our heaven-bound journey, Peter exhorts

us, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober.” (verse 13) To our western minds, this saying is difficult to understand, but it would have been easily understood by those who lived in the ancient Near East. In that culture, people often wore

long flowing garments, and when they got ready for action or a journey, they drew up their clothing and tied a belt around it. This enabled them to go about their tasks unhindered. As we make our way toward heaven, we are exhorted to prepare our minds for the journey by gathering up and casting aside any fleshly thought or worldly way that would hinder our walk of faith with God and

cause us to stumble and fall spiritually. To this Peter adds “be sober,” that is, exercise self-control. With the help of God, we shouldn’t let our sinful natures get the better of us.

As sinner-saints we still fall into sin. On account of this, Peter exhorts us to “rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (verse 13) The hope of our salvation rests alone upon the saving grace of God. That grace takes away all our sins and enables us to be welcomed into heaven.

There is no better journey to be on than that which ends in heaven. Lord Jesus, help us to reach our destination.



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

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

# The Two Natures of Christ

**D**NA testing has become popular as curiosity about ancestry leads people to investigate family roots. Is my family lineage limited to one continent? Are my ancestors from one country or are they German with a bit of British and splash of Scandinavian?

The test report provides a percentage for each part that makes up the ancestral whole. When all the percentages are totaled, the sum is one hundred—the whole “you.”

The report on Jesus is 100% God + 100% Man = 1 unique Savior. In “Divine Math,” the sum of two 100% ancestries is still 100%—one person. How this can be true defies human logic and testifies to the uniqueness of our Savior.

Even unbelievers acknowledge that a man, Jesus of Nazareth, existed.

The accounts of His life and ministry show that He was born, ate, drank, cried, slept, hurt, bled, and died just like any other human being.

Jesus’ humanity is straightforward even to human reason, but His divinity came first. Jesus is the eternal Son of God Who “*became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). Jesus retained His divine nature completely, and at the same time, He became fully man, taking on flesh and blood.

This is where human reason becomes stuck and starts to dismiss the miracle of the two natures of Christ. Some explain away His humanity while others dismiss His divinity. Yet anything that results in a Savior Who is less than 100% God and 100% man contradicts Scripture and is completely false.

Through the personal union of God and man, we have the only Savior Who could redeem us from our sins. To save us, the Christ needed to be human so that He could be one of us. To be our substitute, He had to live under the law (Galatians 4:4) just as we are obligated to fulfill God’s expectations of us. To bear the punishment for our sins, He also had to die. The eternal Son of God could neither be under

the law nor die, and thus the Christ had to be man.

However, no ordinary human being could keep God’s Law perfectly. The death of an ordinary human would not be valuable enough to satisfy the sin-debt of the whole world (Psalm 49:7-8a). Nor could a sin-laden human being conquer sin and death by rising from the dead. Simply stated, no mere human being could be the Savior.

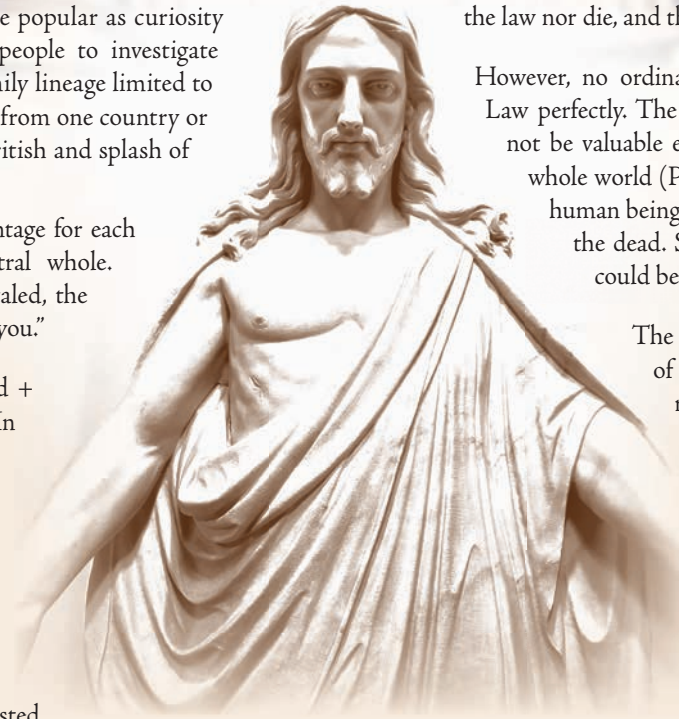
The only way to fulfill God’s expectation of every human being and pay the debt recorded on every ledger of sin was if that Savior were true God and true Man.

The human nature of Jesus was taken into the divine when the Holy Spirit conceived Jesus in the womb of the virgin, Mary. The communication of divine attributes to the man Jesus is evidenced by the miracles Jesus

performed and the divine attributes which Scripture reveals – His omniscience, omnipotence, divine honor, and more.

The apostle Paul instructed the early New Testament Christians concerning the truth of Who Jesus is. “*There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*” (1 Timothy 2:5), and “*In Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” (Colossians 2:9).

DNA testing has removed many questions concerning human lineage. Only Scripture unveils the mystery of Who Jesus our Savior truly is. Scripture reveals this so that we may know and believe that the Son of God was made flesh to redeem us from our sins. “*Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh.*” (2 Timothy 3:16)



**Wayne Eichstadt** is pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Spokane Valley, Washington.



## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

# A Bangladesh Baptism

[Ed.: The names of certain people and places in this article are withheld because of the risk of persecution.]

On our visit to Bangladesh in May, the Lord provided an incredible example of His grace, mercy, and patient blessings. After a couple of weeks of travel, teaching, and discussions, the trip was coming to a close, but the Lord had more blessings to give.

On our way back to Dhaka, Pastor M.B. and I attended worship services at three Bangladesh Lutheran Church Mission (BLCM) congregations. I was told there would be a few Baptisms, but I was unprepared for what I was about to witness, and the story of God's grace behind it. Following the sermon, Pastor M.B. invited an older lady in the back of the church to come to the front for Baptism. As she made her way through the crowd of people sitting cross-legged on the floor, you could see that she was very emotional. By the time she made it to the front, she was

sobbing and laid her head in the arms of Pastor M.B. and continued to cry. I later learned from Pastor M.B. that this woman had heard and resisted the Gospel of Jesus for several years. But in the past few

months, she had begun to listen and ask questions and was finally brought to faith.

I can only imagine what this woman must have felt at that moment as she was about to have her sins washed away in the water and the Word of Baptism! Her whole life had been spent worshiping the idols of Hinduism. She had carried the burden of her sins as she tried hopelessly to follow the tenets of Hinduism, hoping to die and be reincarnated into a better station in life, based on her attempts to be a better

person to affect her "karma." But now, finally, she had come to know the love of Jesus and His sacrifice that had paid for her sins, given her a new life, and provided her with forgiveness, salvation, and an eternal



Above: Missionary Ohlmann and the carpenter's mother.

Below: Worshipers at Living Stone Lutheran Church.







home in heaven. All of this was His gift to her, not based on what she had done for God, but instead on His love for sinners and what His only Son had done for her and for all people on the cross! It's no wonder she was filled with emotion and overcome with tears of joy on that day! I was overcome as well and couldn't hold back my tears. They were tears of joy for this woman, and tears of praise for my Savior, and tears of gratitude for the privilege of being there to witness God's grace and mercy in action. Praise God from whom ALL blessings flow!

Now, the back-story that led to this day. About ten years ago, Pastor M.B. was doing evangelism by riding his motorcycle out to rural villages in Hindu areas, going house to house, and talking to anyone who would listen to him tell them about their Savior Jesus. In a village several kilometers from where this BLCM congregation is now located, he met a carpenter taking a break from his work. They began to talk about Jesus. This carpenter wanted to know more, so Pastor M.B. returned the next day and shared more of God's Word with him. They continued to meet whenever Pastor M.B. was in the area. Eventually, the carpenter was led by the Holy Spirit to repent of his sins, trust in Jesus, and rejoice in the forgiveness won for him on the cross. He became a believer! This man had been brought up by his parents as a practicing Hindu. His father had already died, but he wanted his mother and other family members to hear the truth of Jesus' love for them. So, he invited Pastor M.B. to his family's home. Neither Pastor M.B. nor the Gospel was well received. But the carpenter wanted his village and family to know Jesus, so he continued to invite Pastor M.B. back again and again. Others began to listen and wanted to know more about Jesus, so a small preaching station was started. Pastor M.B. visited often, and the carpenter would study with Pastor M.B. and then teach what he had learned to anyone who would listen.

Several Hindus in the area converted to Christianity, but not the

carpenter's mother. But remember how loving and patient and long-suffering our Savior is with us. Well, He was patient and long-suffering with the carpenter's mother also. After more than ten years of hearing and resisting the Gospel, she was brought to faith and confessed Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior just a couple of months ago. When others in the village and her family heard this, they became emboldened in their God-given faith and openly began to confess what they had been brought to believe about Jesus as well. More than twenty people received the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit in the water and Word of Baptism on that day. And again, I can't even think of enough words to describe the gratitude to my Savior for the privilege of being there to witness it. How do I even begin to give thanks for this privilege? I can only say, "Thank you, Jesus, for Your love in making this day possible through Your perfect life, sacrificial death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead!" I keep mentioning this woman's joy, but imagine the joy of her son, the carpenter, whom God first used to bring the Gospel to this village! He is now serving as an elder and evangelist for the congregation. He will soon begin pastoral training with Pastor M.B. He had the privilege of holding the water for his mother's Baptism; imagine the joy! God is so good to us!

What a privilege we have all been given to proclaim the Good News of our Savior Jesus wherever and whenever He provides the opportunity!



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



## VOICES FROM THE PAST—EDMUND REIM

Professor Edmund Reim was a leader in the formation of the CLC, and the first President of Immanuel Lutheran Seminary. We here reprint an article from the *Lutheran Spokesman* of August 1969.

# Revising the “I AM”?

It has become the fashion lately to take a new, hard look at almost everything that has previously been accepted as an established fact (*TIME Magazine*, May 23, 1969). It is not surprising, therefore, that even so simple and harmless a word as “I am” and its related forms (“is,” “are,” etc.) should become a target for this modern technique. Nor is this wrong in itself. There is some reason for such a challenge. When men introduce their argument by saying, “It is certain that . . .” they are often simply covering up the fact that there is something in their position about which they are themselves not quite sure. To deflate such inflated claims is surely all to the good.



The matter becomes more complicated, however, when the discussion turns to the question of absolutes. May one make a straight-forward statement like, “This is right, and that is wrong,” or should one hedge a bit by saying, “I consider this right;” or “I count that wrong?” If the speaker is not sure of his ground, the latter would surely be the honest form. But if one IS sure, why invite doubt, particularly at this time when the world is so full of it? Why let the trumpet give an *uncertain* sound?

For there are things about which we can be certain. There are absolutes, even in civil life. When our government assures all its citizens of the civil liberties listed in the Constitution of the United States, such individuals or minority groups as are contending for these privileges are within their rights, even though an intense struggle may be involved. But they are wrong when they resort to violence to reach their goal. For it is simply wrong to rob, wreck, maim and murder—even as adultery, fornication, sexual perversion and homosexuality are wrong, to mention just a few more. For all these are absolutes.

This will, of course, provoke an argument. For has modern society not revised its standards on some of these things? It has indeed, sometimes up to the point of rejecting them in their entirety. But they stand nevertheless, these absolutes. They stand, because it

is not the authority of men which has made them what they are, but God himself. Where He speaks, there we have the true absolutes, let men deny it as much as they will!

So far this is, of course, pure law, and as Christians we recognize it as an expression of the holy and perfect will of God. But we have an even higher reason for rejecting this arbitrary tampering with those “traditional” expressions of certainty: “is” and “are”—and “AM.” For here the very name of God is involved, the one He gave Himself when He said, “I AM THAT I AM,” the one which Jesus invoked when He said, “*Before Abraham was, I AM.*” There we have that name of God which identifies His as the One who Changes Not, the One whose every

Word stands for all time, the One whose faithfulness stands as the solemn guarantee of the certain fulfillment of all that He has ever promised. There is the True Absolute!

And consider what it means when He speaks in the Person of that Son: “I AM *the Good Shepherd;*” “I AM *the Door (of entry into His Kingdom);*” “I AM *the Way, the Truth, the Life;*” yes, “I AM *the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*” And when He asks, “*Believest thou this?*” let our answer be like Martha’s: “*Yea, Lord, I believe.*”

There will indeed be for us no revising of the “I AM.” Rather, we shall have every right to apply to ourselves the wonderful assurance given by our Lord at the conclusion of His Sermon on the Mount: “*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.*” And in the face of all the tempests of our day we have this comforting sequel that when “*the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a ROCK.*”

—Edmund Reim



## VOICES FROM THE PAST—C. M. GULLERUD

*Professor C. M. Gullerud was the first President of Immanuel Lutheran College. We here reprint the first chapel talk ever delivered at that institution following its move to the Eau Claire campus. It was reprinted in the Lutheran Spokesman of October 1963.*

# Give Me Back My Child

“**A**nd the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, ‘O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!’” (2 Samuel 18:33 KJV)

This text for the opening devotion of the school year was suggested by the title to a magazine article: “Give me Back my Child.” We can think of no more anguished cry by a parent than just this cry “Give me back my child.” This could be the cry of a parent who has lost his child by a sudden and unexpected death. It could also be the cry of a parent who has lost his child to the world and its sinful pleasures. It could be the cry of a parent who has sent his child to a school where it has been educated away from God and His eternal truth. And what an accusation that would be for those to whom that child had been entrusted.

In David’s case, his cry came as a result of the announcement that his son was dead. Twice he had asked with a quivering heart: “*Is the young man safe?*” In instructing his captains for the charge against the enemy he had left express orders “*Deal gently for my sake with Absalom.*” There was much behind that request, for David knew full well that Absalom was a wayward son and not prepared to meet his Maker. He had the natural feelings of a father, but above all he thought of his spiritual welfare. When his orders were not carried out and Joab killed Absalom with three darts through the heart, David, upon hearing the news, said what he did: “O Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God, I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.” Absalom was lost to his father in more ways than one, and the most serious of all was this that he was eternally lost. He would rather have forfeited his own life than to see this happen.



We can well understand the grief of this father.

This whole story has a lesson for all of us here at Immanuel Lutheran College. It reminds us who are the teachers that we are to fulfill our calling here in such a way that no parent will find cause to come and say to us “Give me back my child. You have failed in the trust we reposed in you. You did not break for him the Bread of Life. You did not remind him of his sins that he might repent. You did not hold before his heart and soul the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the world’s sins.” Surely as faithful teachers it is our earnest resolve

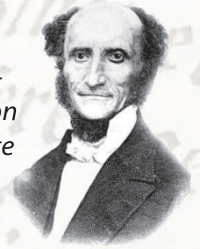
that this may not happen. We pray that the Lord will give us the grace that we may preach and teach grace and grace alone through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. As surely as the goodness and grace of God shines through and permeates our instruction, no parent will find reason to say “Give me back my child.”

On the other side, you students are to be mindful that you take to heart the Christian instruction that is brought to you and laid upon your heart and soul in order that you may be a joy to your parents and to your teachers. Penitently you will grieve over your sins daily, and joyfully embrace the forgiveness of sins so dearly bought by Jesus Christ your Savior. May the day never come that we must say to the parents, “We must send your child back to you.” We want you here. With all our heart we desire to keep you here that we may do you good, so that when the day comes when you graduate we may joyfully send you forth as messengers of the Lord and bearers of His grace to a sinful world. God grant this for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

—C. M. Gullerud



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.



## “Awakening” and “Conversion”— A False Dichotomy

**“Thesis XXII-- In the eighteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a false distinction is made between a person's being awakened and his being converted; moreover, when a person's inability to believe is mistaken for his not being permitted to believe.”**

Several years ago, some fellow church members and I attended a small-town Baptist revival as a Bible study field trip. We went to observe this thesis in action and debrief together afterwards.

The revival preacher knew his audience. Staring intently toward our pew of Lutherans, he let us have it: “You may think you believe. You may attend church every week. You may even know every Gospel detail in your head. But unless you this night feel the fire of hell, come forward to accept Jesus, and change your earthly life, you have no guarantee of eternal life.”

He used qualified nouns throughout—“true believer, genuine Christian, heart-felt faith”—instead of “believer,” “Christian,” and “faith.” He based this on a false distinction between those he considered merely awakened and those who are truly converted.

He wanted us shaking in our seats, as if God withholds true saving faith until you suffer a specific kind of spiritual struggle.

Like the priests of Baal who thought their self-mortification brought about divine intervention, and the Pharisees who doubted how Jesus could forgive, a wide spectrum of false teachers—from Catholic to Baptist—withhold the assurance of salvation from souls until they can see contrition with their eyes.

The root error, Walther diagnoses, is a denial of the simplicity of conversion. Conversion does not come because of any struggle or conflict on our part, but by the Gospel's power alone. There is no spiritual limbo; in a moment God brings the soul from darkness to light: “You He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Ephesians 2:1) Thus, once the Law was clearly communicated, the apostles refused to withhold God's unconditional forgiveness: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your

household.” (Acts 16:31)

Scripture does depict some as merely intrigued by Gospel details: Herod Antipas, Felix, Festus, Agrippa. But since no man can peer into the heart, Walther says, “We are cheerfully to proclaim the universal grace of God freely and leave it to God whether people will believe it or misapply it.” (page 377)

He rightly warns (page 371), “In every man there is hidden by nature a blind, self-righteous Pharisee.” The revival preacher deep within each of us makes us doubt one another: “How can he call himself Christian and do what he's done?”

Look no further than Peter, who openly confessed Jesus as Christ but then denied Him thrice, who welcomed Cornelius into the church but later acted as if believing Gentiles weren't genuine Christians.

To wrestle with sin and to struggle with the exercise of patience and love are part of the cross every Christian bears *after* conversion, not something that separates you from Jesus *before* it. Whenever your conduct makes you worry whether you're a true believer, the Law has done its work. It has revealed your sin so that, in the Gospel, you might treasure all the more the Savior's blood shed for you.

I no longer take Bible study groups on field trips now that the internet allows you to observe from a healthy distance. But witnessing error in action renewed our confidence in “rightly dividing the Word of truth,” and I advise you to “test all things” yourself. Learn to recognize Law/Gospel confusion in every form, especially as it festers within the other Lutheran synods today, lest you take for granted the treasure God yet preserves among us; namely, that the Gospel alone “is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” (Romans 1:16)

**Conversion does not come because of any struggle or conflict on our part, but by the Gospel's power alone.**



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

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



# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS OCTOBER 2022

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
October 1	TLH 629	2 Timothy 1:1-12	Suffering scorn from unbelievers and imprisonment in Rome, Paul nonetheless is not ashamed of the Gospel. Let us also follow that example when we face the relatively inconsequential derision of today's world. We can proclaim with Paul, "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed."
October 3	WS 768	2 Timothy 2:1-13	Paul counsels Timothy to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The Greek word translated as "be strong" is literally "be invested with power." Significantly, he then points out that as soldiers for Christ, we must endure suffering. For now, we are members of the Church Militant, and as soldiers we are to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
October 4	TLH 535	Philippians 4:6-23	Here we have some of the most precious words of scriptural advice. Do we suffer anxiety? Take it to the Lord, and—believing His promises—we will have peace. What sorts of things occupy our thoughts? Here's a list of what we should think about—no, what we should meditate on! The result, again, is personal peace.
October 5	WS 781	2 Timothy 3:14-4:5	The Bible is not human religious speculation, it is God's Word. As such, it is the only sure basis for what we believe and what we do. This is especially important for us to remember in our day, when so many people have "itching ears," and choose to believe charlatans who tell them whatever they want to hear.
October 6	TLH 447	2 Timothy 4:6-22	This is Paul's valedictory statement. May God graciously grant that we too may be able to fight the good fight and keep the faith. Our eternal welfare is a matter of what Christ has done for us, not of what we do. Nonetheless, being saved by grace through faith, we are called to practice faithful discipleship unto the end.
October 7	WS 767	2 Peter 2:1-10	False prophets—those who claim to speak God's Word but in reality proclaim the devil's lies—are nothing new. Sometimes it may seem to us as if everything is going their way. But make no mistake, their doom is certain, severe, and everlasting.
October 8	TLH 261	2 Thessalonians 2:1-17	"Stand fast" in unchanging truth. God's enemies present compelling and eloquent assertions and reasoning designed to create widespread falling away from genuine Christian faith. Who is in danger of falling away? Those who "did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Continually study the saving Word of God, through which the Holy Spirit will sustain and strengthen your faith.
October 10	TLH 387	Romans 3:19-28	The first use of the Law is to show us our sins and sinful nature so that we are not deceived by the lie that we can earn salvation. It is only through Christ's perfect life and vicarious death that our sins have been blotted out. The benefit of what Jesus has done for all mankind is received only through faith, not works.
October 11	WS 783	Luke 15:1-10	Was there anything in the lost sheep or the lost piece of money that made them of greater worth than the other ninety-nine sheep or the other nine coins? No. What differentiated them was that they were lost. The Pharisees and scribes complained that Jesus ate with sinners, so He told these parables to illustrate the seeking love of God. We were lost. Jesus sought us out and saved us.
October 12	TLH 279	Luke 15:11-32	Have you ever acted as though your own ideas about how to achieve happiness were better than God's plans for you? The father in this parable represents God, and the younger son represents those who choose to go their own way. The father allowed his younger son to discover the folly of his own ideas, and to return, chastised, to his household. How blessed we are that for Jesus' sake, we are received back.
October 13	TLH 438	Luke 16:1-13	Does God commend dishonest dealing? Certainly not. Note that the commendation of the unjust servant comes from his master, not our Lord. Our Lord's exhortation begins in v. 9. It is not the steward's dishonesty that God commends, but rather only the man's prudence as an example for us to follow. As Christians, we too often fail to be "wise as serpents," as Jesus exhorts us in Matthew 10:16.
October 14	TLH 290	Luke 16:19-31	Wherein lies our hope? The hearts of unbelievers can be set only on the things of this world. The "rich man" of this parable is merely one example. His wealth is not the problem; his unbelief is. He is contrasted with the beggar Lazarus (whose name is a rendition of a Hebrew name meaning "God is my help"). Is our focus on worldly matters, or on God?
October 15	TLH 396	Luke 17:1-10	Pietists and legalists are proud of their rectitude and adherence to moral codes, as though that's praiseworthy. That's like someone who wishes to be praised because he found a lost wallet with much cash and returned it to its owner. That's not praiseworthy; a failure to do that would be theft. So also, our Christian sanctification is merely our duty which, as unprofitable servants, we fulfill only imperfectly.
October 17	TLH 36	Luke 17:11-19	The blessings of Christianity are so abundant and constant that we tend to take them for granted and fail to be properly thankful to God for His unmerited benevolence. The ten lepers must certainly have been astounded by their healing, yet only one came back and thanked Jesus. Let us think daily on our blessings, and be like the one rather than the nine.
October 18	TLH 457	Luke 18:1-8	The judge, who cared not at all about God or the opinions of man, nonetheless finally granted this widow's request merely because of her persistence. If even a bad man will yield to such persistence, how much more so will our gracious God be prevailed upon by our persistent prayer! Do not fail to continue in prayer, even when the answer seems not to be forthcoming.
October 19	TLH 371	Luke 18:9-17	Self-righteousness is the antithesis of the Christian faith. This Pharisee singled himself out as better than all others on the basis of his religiosity. The publican recognized his sinfulness, and sought God's mercy. Jesus says that the sinful publican was justified (declared righteous in God's sight), and the Pharisee was not. We are to be humble, recognizing the truth about ourselves.
October 20	TLH 324	Luke 19:1-10	How many like Zacchaeus—perhaps merely curious about Jesus—end up being called by the gracious Savior into the household of faith? Zacchaeus then made open confession of his previous wrongdoings, and voluntarily promised to give half his goods to the poor and to repay to others more than what he had wrongfully taken. Contrast this with another rich man (Luke 18:22-23) who was too attached to his wealth to follow Jesus.
October 21	TLH 377	John 8:13-36	All will eventually recognize Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer of fallen mankind. Tragically, however, for many that recognition will come too late, and they will die in their sins. Others, however, will come to faith in this life. They will abide in the saving truth of the Gospel, and thus be free indeed. God grant that we abide in His Word unto the end.
October 22	TLH 381	Habakkuk 1:1-2:4	Habakkuk (630 B.C.) could be describing our world today. Wrongdoers prosper. Those in power ignore and violate the law with impunity. Wicked people hold down the righteous. But God's response then is still the same today: He is in control. He will unfailingly work things according to His good and gracious purpose, and in His time. Have faith in the Word of Him Who cannot lie, and live by that faith.
October 24	TLH 464	Ruth 1:1-19	Ruth, a Moabitess and thus not a Jew, had married a Jew from the tribe of Judah. After the death of her husband, Ruth returned from Moab with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Bethlehem, promising that Naomi's people would be her people, and Naomi's God her God. The Jews were God's Old Testament people, but even in the Old Testament, salvation by faith in the one true God was open to all.
October 25	TLH 342	Isaiah 1:1-18	Judah had rebelled against God, and their "worship" was merely empty ritual rather than genuine worship and obedience. God told them that He has no pleasure in perfunctory sacrifices, and called them once again to repentance and reformation of their lives. He promised that even though their sins were great, He would forgive. May He also grant a true revival of Christian faith throughout our nation, which has largely fallen away from Him.
October 26	TLH 283	Psalms 119:89-96	We live in turbulent times, yet we have an unailing source of stability and calm, if only we take advantage of it. God's faithfulness is certain and everlasting. No matter how the world around us rages, no matter what afflictions we may face, no matter our circumstances, He is faithful and His promises cannot fail. Let us cling to God's precepts and testimonies, and we will not be shaken.
October 27	TLH 266	2 Kings 22:1-20	Josiah became King of Judah and was one of the few who sought to do what was right in the sight of the Lord. When the re-discovered book of God's Law was read to him, he diligently sought to restore true worship to Judah. God blessed Judah while Josiah reigned, and punished the nation for its apostasy afterwards. May God graciously grant to us good and faithful leaders.
October 28	TLH 297	Revelation 14:1-13	Jehovah's Witnesses claim that the 144,000 of Revelation 14 is the literal number of all those since the time of Jesus who will be in heaven. Revelation 7:5-8 makes it clear that the 144,000 is a figurative number, representing all who are saved. That the number of those saved is not limited to the twelve tribes of Israel mentioned in chapter 7 is made clear in verse 6: the Gospel is for all people.
October 29	TLH 264	Joshua 1:1-18	After the death of Moses, God commissioned Joshua to lead His people to the land He had promised them. God told Joshua to be strong and courageous and to faithfully follow all that God had told Moses. Doing that, God promised, would result in the blessings of God and sure success. So also with us. We can be bold and confident of God's blessings in our lives as we faithfully follow His Word.
October 31	TLH 262	Psalms 46	"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," the Battle Hymn of the Reformation, is based on this Psalm. No matter how tumultuous the circumstances of our lives, no matter how strong the foes arrayed against Christ and His people, no matter how our enemies rage—God is with us, and we will not be overcome. Be still, and know that He is with us and is our refuge.



# Mission Helper Trip to Zambia

After a two-year COVID hiatus, the CLC Mission Helper Program was finally able to make a trip this past July. Eight volunteers (Andrea D'Onofrio, Kaylee Koenig, Henry Lau, Candy Ohlmann, Noah Ohlmann, Erica Oster, Amy Tvedt, and Kari Wales) from six CLC congregations accompanied Missionary Ohlmann on a child evangelism trip to Zambia in East Africa.

On July 11<sup>th</sup> most of the volunteers met at Messiah Lutheran Church and School in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, for lunch, devotion, and departing prayers led by Pastor Michael Eichstadt. Ted Quade and Teacher Paul Tiefel shuttled the mission helpers to O'Hare airport in Chicago for an evening departure. After two overnight flights and a long layover in Doha, Qatar, they arrived in Lusaka, Zambia early Wednesday morning.

With a good night of rest behind them, the nine individuals divided into two teams to begin teaching first thing the next morning. Each day began with a psalm and prayers, asking for the Lord's blessings on the privilege of proclaiming the truths of His saving Word. The first week was spent visiting local schools and preschools in Lusaka where the Zambia-CLC congregation is located. Long before the mission helpers had arrived, Pastor Victor, the local Zambia-CLC pastor, had made arrangements with each of these schools for the mission helpers to come teach. After the first five days they had already taught over 1,700 children.

An eight-hour drive to the southwest of Lusaka near the Zambia/Zimbabwe border took the mission helpers to Livingstone, where the Z-CLC has its headquarters and also where the Martin Luther Bible School (MLBS) for training pastors, leaders, evangelists, and teachers is located. Again, arrangements had been made prior to arrival to teach in schools and preschools in the areas near the local congregation and MLBS. More than 1,400 children heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ during the six days they were in Livingstone!

The lessons taught by the mission helpers focused on the truths of Scripture that reveal Who Jesus truly is and what He accomplished for all sinners. The children learned of our Savior's love and that He is true God through the story of the feeding of the five thousand, and that He is true man through the story of His temptation in the

wilderness. They also learned of His power over life and death as our Savior in the raising of Lazarus, and that He is a Savior for all people through the parable of the prodigal son.

In addition to the simple goal of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the opportunity to assist our brothers and sisters in Christ by helping them to make contacts and meet people in the areas where they are already working. One such opportunity came on one of the last days in Livingstone when they taught children in a newly established preschool with about fifty children in attendance. This school was



started by a young man who has a passion for helping children and for His Savior. Following the teaching program, he was eager to speak with Pastor Ibrahim. They discussed the importance of teaching the children about their Savior. They exchanged contact information so they can discuss further Scriptural training for the teacher at the MLBS and the possibility of weekly Bible lessons for the children taught by Pastor Ibrahim or a volunteer from the local Z-CLC congregation. This

was an exciting development for the team to experience!

Our Savior was faithful again in blessing this trip with growth in faith and an appreciation for the privilege of proclaiming God's saving word. In addition to those blessings, we also had the opportunity to see and stand in awe of some of God's amazing creation at Victoria Falls and the Mosi Oa Tunya National Park near Livingstone! Plans are already underway for the 2023 CLC Mission Helper Trip to Nepal next summer.

Praise the Lord for the privilege He gives to all of His children to proclaim the truths of His saving word wherever and whenever He opens the door of opportunity! You can read the 2022 Zambia Trip blog at: <https://2022clcmhtzambia.blogspot.com/>



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



# We're the "For" Church

What do others say about your church? Do you hear, "Oh, you're the church that's against abortion. Your church is against same-sex marriage. You're against praying with other Christians"? Sometimes the perception is that we are all about being "against" things, things which our world sees as perfectly fine. The conclusion drawn is that we are simply disgruntled malcontents who do nothing but complain.

It is true that we are against much of what is commonplace in the world. We are against it because God is. In His moral Law God lays out very clearly His will for human behavior. It doesn't matter what country one calls home or in what era of time one is living, sin is sin and always will be. Love for the Lord and faithfulness to His Word call for us to be against what offends the holy God and incurs His condemnation.

Martin Luther too was against much of what was going on in his day. The "Ninety-Five Theses" were written against the abuse of indulgences which people bought believing that a piece of paper could forgive sins. Luther was against the worship of Mary, prayers to the saints, and the veneration of relics. Luther and other reformers were against so much that they and their followers were labeled "protestants."

Yet it is wrong to think of Luther as someone who was anti-everything. Why was he such a popular preacher and professor? It wasn't because of a prickly demeanor and an angry message. Not at all! People flocked to hear him because he communicated news of freedom, hope, joy, and peace to people beaten down by life. It wasn't an inspirational, "you-can-do-it if you follow my plan" message. Luther simply proclaimed God's truth as revealed in the Spirit-breathed Scriptures. To people who had been taught that God was against them and would send them to hell unless they made things right by doing enough good works, Luther preached God's unconditional love for all. He assured the fearful and troubled that God is not willing that any should perish. His

love is so great that He sent His Son Jesus to fulfill the Law for all humankind. He laid on His Son the iniquity of us all. "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them." (2 Corinthians 5:19 NIV84) There is not a single sin which has not been fully paid for on the cross. Jesus promises, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." (Mark 17:16 NIV84)

Justification by faith in Christ filled Luther with heartfelt joy and determination to spend his life proclaiming the good news. He lived by Paul's bold statement: "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32 NIV84)

When someone says, "Aren't you the church that is against . . .?" be ready to answer, "No, we are the church that is 'for.'" We are for telling the news of freedom from guilt and fear, a blessing which Jesus earned for all by His life, death, and resurrection. We are for comforting all people with the truth that "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1 NIV84)

It is the news which people in Luther's day needed more than anything else. It is just as essential today. In this time of crumbling morals and economic and political upheaval when nothing seems stable, there is still one place of safety. "God is our refuge and strength!" (Psalm 46:1 NIV84)

We're all "for" that!

*To people who had been taught that God was against them and would send them to hell unless they made things right by doing enough good works, Luther preached God's unconditional love for all.*



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



## SEEN IN PASSING

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

**Jim Harbaugh's Courage and Compassion on Abortion.** In the midst of a contentious public debate on abortion in the wake of the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, University of Michigan football coach Jim Harbaugh has taken a stand of conscience, and of compassion. In a July interview with *ESPN*, Harbaugh said that he has told players and family members that he would help with an unwanted pregnancy. "I've told (them) the same thing I tell my kids, boys, the girls, same thing I tell our players, our staff members. I encourage them if they have a pregnancy that wasn't planned, to go through with it, go through with it. . . . And if at that time, you don't feel like you can care for it, you don't have the means or the wherewithal, then Sarah and I will take that baby." As might be expected, criticism from the media and abortion advocates was immediate. But Harbaugh, far from backpedaling, doubled down on his view at a media day a week later: "In my opinion, it needs communication," he said. "We need to talk about it. It's too big an issue to not give real, serious consideration. What kind of person would you be if you didn't stand up for what you believe in? And didn't fight tooth and nail for it? I believe in letting the unborn be born." Garcia, Tony. "Jim Harbaugh's abortion stance." *Wolverines*. Freep.com (Detroit Free Press), 26 Jul. 2022. Web. 27 Jul. 2022.

**"Police Radar Fallacy" in Aging the Universe.** In early July, astronomers published the first breathtaking photographs taken by the new James Webb Space Telescope. According to NASA administrator Bill Nelson, the new telescope will allow scientists to look back into the past to when the lights were first turned on in the universe. "We will look back to 13.5 billion years ago, only a few hundred million years after the beginning." But in an article for the *Christian Post*, retired professor F. LaGard Smith points out that when it comes to calculating distance and time, get the starting point wrong and wrong conclusions will follow. "Suppose a traffic cop radars a car going 90 miles per hour. One quite logically might conclude that an hour earlier the car was 90 miles away, but it's far more likely that the driver pulled onto the highway a few miles down the road and kicked it up to 90. In such a case, extrapolating from the 90 mph observed by radar to the conclusion that the car was 90 miles away an hour previously is logical enough, but wrong. So, when did the expansion of the universe begin, and when did light first start hurtling away at the speed of light? Was it billions of years ago at some 'Big Bang' moment when an unguided, unpurposed process of cosmic evolution first began?

Or was there suddenly and instantaneously an up-and-running universe all at once—expanding from the word 'go,' complete with light in motion from one end of the universe to the other? As in, 'Let there be light!'" Smith, F. LaGard. "Has the Webb Telescope found God?" *Voices*. 20 Jul. 2022. Web. 27 Jul. 2022.



Children of the vacation Bible school of St. John's Lutheran Church, Clarkston Washington.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Southeast Pastoral Conference

Gift of God Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia  
September 27-29, 2022

#### Agenda:

- Our Youth and Future—Professor Daniel Schierenbeck
  - "The Gospel"—Pastor Matthew Hanel
  - Homiletics—Pastor Samuel Naumann
  - "Pornography, Desertion and Divorce"
  - "Pastoral Refreshment"—Pastor David Pfeiffer
  - "Wrestling With God"—Pastor Dennis Rieken
  - Chaplain—Pastor Dennis Oster
- Submitted by Pastor Dennis Rieken