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# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

*"Come, for all things  
are now ready."*

*--Matthew 14:17*



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# Hit the Jackpot This Thanksgiving!

*That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:7)*

If you were suddenly incredibly rich, what would you do with your new-found wealth? You've thought about it, haven't you? Even if you recognize the intrinsic selfishness of gambling, you've probably run the lottery numbers in your imagination. "What if?" you think. "What if I suddenly hit the jackpot and found myself with \$250 million? Even if I took the reduced lump sum and subtracted 30% for taxes, I'd still have more than \$100 million in the clear. Of course, I'd be very generous to the church and other charities. Then, after I'd set up large trust funds for my children and grandchildren, there would still be plenty to buy everything my heart desires, and I'd spend the rest of my life in luxurious ease!"

The Bible tells us that these flights of fancy are not just harmless musings; in fact, they pose a trap: "Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Timothy 6:9)

What, then, is the cure for the "what if" temptation for earthly wealth? This Thanksgiving, turn your heart and mind to a different jackpot, that is, to the real treasures which God freely gives. For a fresh and thankful outlook, give some thought to a different set of "what ifs":

- **What if** I had someone who was both qualified and willing to become guilty of all my sins and pay the full price for them?
- **What if** I didn't have to wonder about what God thinks of me, but could know for certain that He receives me as His own dear child?
- **What if** I had someone to stand by my side throughout all of life's troubles, giving me strength for each day and guiding me till my dying day and beyond?
- **What if** I could be absolutely confident that when I leave this world I will be with God in the glories of heaven?

- **What if** I had a reliable source to find out what God Himself actually says about these things, instead of having to take someone else's word for it?
- **What if** I could make many others equally wealthy, both loved ones and strangers, while keeping my own riches?

*Because of Jesus we  
don't have to play  
"what if."*

Oh, that's right—we HAVE all those things! Because of Jesus we don't have to play "what if." In Him we have a qualified and willing Savior. In Him we are certain of God's love, His abiding care for us each day, and our own glorious future in heaven. In the Bible we have His own Word, true and reliable, about all these precious promises. With that same Word we can share these "exceeding riches" with our loved ones and all people. This

jackpot is real, it is permanent, and it is yours as God's free gift in Christ!

Those of us who know Jesus as our only Savior are truly the richest people in the world. This Thanksgiving, instead of hankering after the trivial things of this world that we *don't* have, let's ponder and appreciate the most expensive gifts, those which were purchased with the lifeblood of our Savior, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)

I lay in fetters, groaning, You came to set me free.

I stood, my shame bemoaning, You came to honor me.

A glorious crown You give me, A treasure safe on high,

That will not fail or leave me, As earthly riches fly.

(LSB 334:3)



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

# The Last Chapter

**A**rmageddon. *I Am Legend*. *The Day After Tomorrow*. *Wall-E*. The apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre of film has performed very well for Hollywood over the past several decades, and it's no wonder! Imaginations run rampant when considering what the end of the world might look like. If only the end of the world fiction was restricted to Hollywood! The sad truth is that many Christians also have become too preoccupied with theorizing about the end times.

Some say that Christ's return has already occurred, and that this world is in its eternal, restored state. Others theorize that Jesus will come again and reign from an earthly throne for one thousand years. Others suggest that Jesus will only return once the Church has established worldwide rule through conquest. Others say that Christ cannot return until the Church has successfully stopped sinning. And still others say that the Bible doesn't even speak about any end times.

The Bible does, in fact, speak plainly about that final day when our Savior will return. Approximately one out of every twenty-five verses of the New Testament refers in some way to the end times. In those verses, we learn that Jesus is indeed coming back, though at an hour we do not know (Mark 13:32). He will return for the purpose of judgment, handing some over to eternal punishment while reserving eternal life for those who believe in Him (Matthew 25:32-46). This accounting will include all people, both the living and the dead (John 5:28-29). And yet, the Lord's desire is that all people be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), so He is delaying His return with patience (2 Peter 3:8-9).

So, the ending is really very simple, not at all resembling the works of fantasy portrayed on the big screen or proclaimed from many pulpits. Yet, many Christians who don't subscribe to the theories about the end times still might find themselves

watching the news headlines, looking for signs of the end. After all, the Bible speaks about "wars and rumors of wars," and that does almost seem like the stuff of Hollywood! Except, in that section of Scripture, Jesus' point is that these are not, in fact, signs of the end. "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains." (Matthew 24:6-8 ESV)



Jesus is denying that these troubles have any significance as historical markers. Even when they do happen, "the end is not yet." The troubles that we see in the world are simply reminders that we live in a sinful world, and this is not our home. Just as a woman goes through birth

pains before bringing forth new life, so the world goes through pain as it awaits something better.

This means you don't need to try to interpret the signs of the times beyond understanding that what God has in store for you is much more glorious than what this world has to offer. Your Savior is returning to take you to Himself. Whether that comes for you at the world's end or your personal end, you've already read the last chapter of the book. Just as God has assured you of forgiveness, the day is coming when He will look at you again and say, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34 ESV)



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

## 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 Lutheran worship service.

# The Kyrie

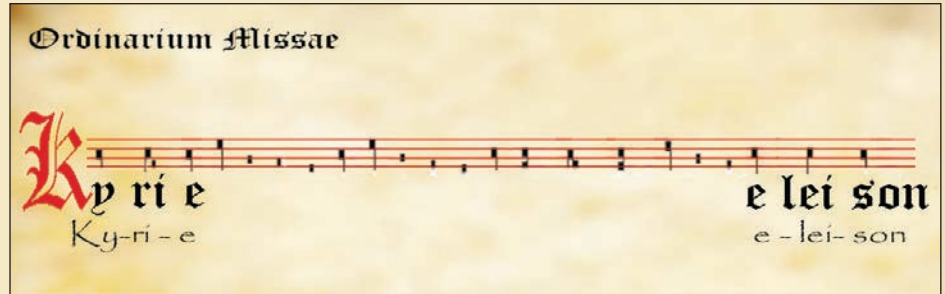
In many of our churches, the customary order of worship includes a section known as the *Kyrie* (pronounced KEER-ee-eh). In *The Lutheran Hymnal*, it can be found on page 7 (also pages 17, 39, 44).

The *Kyrie* as used in the liturgy has a rather interesting history. It comes from a Greek clause (Κύριε ἐλέησον “*kyrie eleison*”) meaning “Lord, have mercy.” Before it was ever used in the church, the phrase had become a common expression of praise and acclamation as well as a way to ask for help from one’s king or master. In the New Testament, it appears in verses such as Matthew 15:22 (Christian Standard Bible (CSB): “Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came and kept crying out, ‘Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely tormented by a demon.’” Also in Matthew 20:30 (CSB): “There were two blind men sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, ‘Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!’”

It wasn’t until the fourth century A.D. that Christians began to use it in their litany prayers. A litany is a prayer which calls for a repeated response from the congregation (see *The Lutheran Hymnal*, pages 110-111). In the church, as the deacon prayed, the people responded, “Lord, have mercy.”

Over the centuries the *Kyrie* took on a penitential aspect, a prayer for forgiveness of sins. Perhaps when you pray it you even think first of the forgiveness of sins. But this was not the original usage of the phrase nor its original intent in worship services. As it is used in the New Testament and in early Christian litanies, it is a prayer asking God to have mercy on our bodies, supplying us with our earthly needs. Twentieth-century Lutheran hymnals made an effort to return the *Kyrie* to its original function. Notice how *The Lutheran Hymnal* places it after the confession and absolution so that we first approach God with our great spiritual need (the forgiveness of sins) and then with our request for Him to support our bodies and lives.

The three-fold *Kyrie* (with the addition of the lines “Christ,



have mercy” and another “Lord, have mercy”) is a later liturgical development that dates, as near as we can tell, to sixth-century Rome during the time of Pope Gregory the Great, when the original text of the *Kyrie* was expanded. In our services, the three-fold *Kyrie* is generally chanted, spoken, or sung in an adapted hymn form. In the Christian church, composers have written countless musical settings of these words, and new settings are always being written.

When we pray the *Kyrie*, we can be reminded of the fourth petition of the Lord’s Prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread.” Without God’s powerful hand working in and with our daily bread, none of it would be able to sustain our bodies—for “*man does not live on bread alone.*” (Deuteronomy 8:3 CSB) Therefore, it is fitting and proper for us to turn to Him asking for this kind of help. Lord, have mercy in our sicknesses; Lord, have mercy when we are persecuted for our faith; Lord, have mercy that we are able to feed and clothe ourselves and our families, and so on.

God surely answers our *Kyrie* for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! He strengthens and preserves us bodily so that we can proclaim the praises of Him who died on the cross, rose again from death, forgave us our sins, and Who promises us eternal life.



**David Schaller** is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

# God's Amazing Redemption Center

*"And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." (1 Peter 1:17-21)*

Do any of you recall, under mom's direction, licking "green stamps," filling the pages of a small stamp book, and "redeeming" them for items at the local S & H Redemption Center? Today many of us still participate in various card and online "reward" programs. What is easily forgotten is the initial cost of items to achieve these rewards.

There are obvious limits to what silver and gold or the corruptible rewards of this world can do for us. While they may gain for us fleeting earthly treasures, they cannot buy love, happiness, or contentment; they cannot purchase integrity, respect, or peace of mind; they cannot guarantee earthly health or well-being. Most importantly, they cannot secure forgiveness, peace with God, salvation, or eternal life for ourselves or anyone else. *"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him—For the redemption of their souls is costly."* (Psalm 49:7-8a)

Only the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish or spot (verse 19) can redeem lost souls. Only Jesus could pay the full price rightfully demanded by God's holiness and justice. Only the foreordained holy Son of God becoming Man—living, dying, rising to redeem us, revealing Himself to us in the Word, and moving our hearts to believe through the Gospel—only this Jesus could be our Savior (Acts 4:12).

Likely the Apostle's words were on Luther's mind and heart as he penned his Second Article gem so dear to all of us: "He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil—not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."

Yet neither Peter nor Luther stopped there. "All this He did that I should be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him . . . thank and praise Him." As Peter reminds us, Christ also redeemed us from a meaningless, hopeless, sin-driven life in order that we might love and thank and serve Him. We are called and empowered to live in holy awe and prayerful trust of our heavenly Judge and Father.



Our world places great emphasis on motivation. Parents, teachers, counselors, coaches, and employers all utilize various tools to improve the attitude and maximize the performance of those they lead. Internal drive and inspiration are well recognized as

vital to achieving many earthly goals. How blessed we are as Christ's redeemed to be given the ultimate Gospel motivation! In every life moment, situation, and opportunity, *"the love of Christ compels us"*—impels us, drives us, moves us, motivates us (2 Corinthians 5:14).

What a treasure chest of grace, rewards, and blessings are found at God's amazing "Gospel Redemption Center"—found wherever His Word is near (Romans 10:8). Visit that redemption center often. No purchase necessary—for Christ has already redeemed us and secured these rewards for all who put their faith and hope in God.



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

# Everlasting Meaning Is Found Only in Jesus

*“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” (Ecclesiastes 1:2)*

In the first two chapters of Ecclesiastes, Solomon relates how he examined the best that life had to offer, especially if one has unlimited resources. His conclusion? Nothing “under the sun” brings lasting contentment and a meaningful life. Worldly accomplishments, wealth, fame, and pleasures leave everyone empty in the end.

One reason for this is mortality. No number of digits in a bank account can lift the spirits of those facing their own death or the imminent death of a loved one. Leo Tolstoy, for example, regarded by many as one of the world’s greatest writers, is reported to have said near the end of his life, “Why go on? Whether I do this or that or nothing at all, it doesn’t matter. It’s all empty.”

Kings, philosophers, and nearly everyone else all arrive at the same conclusion when they stop and think about it, which is why so many try hard not to think about it. Stay busy! Focus on pleasure! Make money! Regardless of how hard people try not to think about how vulnerable they are and how empty life in this world is, repressing those thoughts won’t change reality. Everyone is going to die, no matter how good their diet is, no matter how much exercise they get, no matter how good their genes are.

The world God made was very good. He gave men and women the great privilege of being caretakers of this marvelous world. But then they decided to serve their desires rather than God. That was the moment when pain, emptiness, and death became the human experience. Ironically, humans now were unable to rule even themselves well, let alone the world.

Many people fear that their life will not turn out to be as good as they hope. They can become nearly hysterical when it comes to things like climate and politics. Sin is the reason for so much unsettledness. Death is reality for those created in God’s image. They desperately need to be saved from this mess.

Hebrews 2:10 says that God sent Jesus to be the source and leader of our salvation. In order to do that, Jesus became flesh and blood. Satan attempted to push Jesus into the category of sinner, to make Him exactly like everyone else—unable to do anything about sin and death. But Jesus, our authentic Substitute, defeated every temptation.

*When the angel rolled away the stone from Jesus’ tomb, it became clear that death had finally met its match.*

Death had defeated all comers. Kings and princes, as well as the crippled and the homeless, succumbed to death. The fear of death held everyone in a tight grip.

To defeat death, Jesus Himself had to die. When the angel rolled away the stone from Jesus’ tomb, it became clear that death had finally met its match. The tomb was empty! Jesus had risen and thereby rescued us from the fear and power of death!

Is the moral and spiritual condition of the world getting worse every day? It certainly seems that way. Will we continue to experience disappointment, sickness, and pain in this world? Yes, we will. But God tells us not to dwell long on those things! Instead, fix your eyes on Jesus! (Hebrews 12:2)

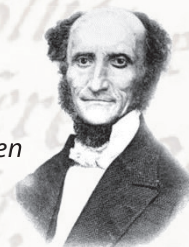
Thanks to Jesus, everything we’re ashamed of has been washed away, everything we’re afraid of has been defeated by Him, and He is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters. (Hebrews 2:11-12) That is more important than today’s headlines and longer lasting than today’s troubles. It guarantees to us a blessed meaning and an eternal reality above and beyond everything else!

Fix your eyes on Jesus!



**Delwyn Maas** is pastor of Gift of God Lutheran Church in Mapleton, North Dakota, and St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Ponsford, Minnesota.

One of the hallmarks of the Lutheran Church is its proper understanding and application of the Bible's two main teachings—Law and Gospel. Dr. C.F.W. Walther's seminal work, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, is the basis for this two-year series. Note: page numbers given are accurate for the 1929 and 1986 editions of the book.



## The Right Tool For The Job

**“*T*hesis XXIII--In the nineteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when an attempt is made by means of the demands or the threats or the promise of the Law to induce the unregenerate to put away their sins and engage in good works and thus become godly; on the other hand, when an endeavor is made, by means of the commands of the Law rather than by the admonitions of the Gospel, to urge the regenerate to do good.”**

A barstool is not a ladder even though it is sometimes used as one. A key is not a prying tool, nor is a screwdriver a punch. They get used that way, but that's not really their purpose.

Law and Gospel are tools that the Lord has given to His Church. Each has its own purpose. Using Law when Gospel is needed, or vice versa, can yield disastrous results, not just in soul care, but in an incorrect understanding of Scripture.

The Law threatens, condemns, and coerces, but doesn't produce faith. It can be used to browbeat people into submission. They may look more like Christians when it's done with them, but their hearts remain unchanged (Luke 18:9-14). Only the Gospel can produce faith and new life, because only the Gospel can take away our fear of being condemned. John writes, *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.”* (1 John 4:18) Do you have perfect love for God (Law)? Or does God have perfect love for you (Gospel)? The message of His love, the Gospel, is the difference maker. It frees me from my sins through the work of my Savior. It takes away my fear of being condemned.

When asked by the jailer at Philippi, *“What must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16:30), Paul did not hand him a punch list of things to do before God would save him. He didn't ask the jailer how sincere he was or what he promised to do in return. Paul pointed him away from self to Christ, away from Law to Gospel. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”* (Acts 16:31)

**Jesus does not commend an adultlike faith. He commends a childlike one**

What about the Sacraments? Are they Law or Gospel? Are they ordinances to fulfill or simply grace to receive? Is Baptism the sign of my commitment to God? Or is it God's commitment to me? The Scriptures are clear: Baptism is a gift from God that brings the forgiveness of our sins and creates the new life of faith in our hearts. *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”* (Acts 2:38)

The doctrine of infant Baptism also stands or falls depending on whether it is Law or Gospel. If Baptism is something I do for God, then how can infants possibly do what they don't yet understand? But if it is Christ coming to me to clothe me with His righteousness, then it is Gospel that creates faith in the youngest of babies. If Baptism is Law, a child must first become adultlike in his ability to reason and confess. But Jesus does not commend an adultlike faith. He commends a childlike one (Mark 10:15).

As for fruits of faith, there are none apart from the Gospel. The Law can be used to shake people down and pressure them to change. It gets used as a bartering tool with which sinners try to cut deals with God, as in, *“Lord, if You solve my problem, I will never touch the bottle again.”* But the sanctified life is the result of the Gospel, not the Law. It is not what we do to BE saved, but what happens naturally when we ARE saved. The danger of confusing the two is worse than falling off the barstool you're standing on. Walther: *“Not only do they mingle Law and Gospel, they substitute Law for Gospel.”*



**James Albrecht** is pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Okabena, Minnesota.

[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)]



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

# The Vicarious Atonement:

*"The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)*

When I was young, I saw a choir program that featured a woodcut by Reformation-era artist Albrecht Dürer. The stark black-and-white panel featured only Jesus' head, bearing the crown of thorns. His face was deeply lined, His mane of hair tortured. Drops of blood drawn by the thorns stood out on His forehead. The locks of His hair and strands of His beard were curled, spiraling inward in such a way that my attention was relentlessly drawn in to His weary, tender eyes—eyes telling of an unfathomable sorrow within.

This is Jesus at the point when Pontius Pilate stands Him before the crowd and says, "Behold the Man." (John 19:5) This is also Isaiah's "Suffering Servant" of Chapter 53, vividly depicting the biblical doctrine often termed *vicarious atonement*. Recall just a few sample phrases from Isaiah: "Surely, He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows" (v. 4); "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6); "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (v. 5). With the concept of vicarious atonement, the mechanics, so to speak, of salvation come into view.

The word *atonement* quite literally means "to be at one," to be in harmony, as of enemies reconciled and peace reigning between them. It has been God's will from eternity that humans, though corrupted by sin and separated from Him by their own unrighteousness, should somehow be reconciled to Him. Atonement is the means by which that would happen. A price would have to be paid; a terrible offense would have to be taken out of the equation, so the parties could be at one again.

The term *vicarious* means "substitutionary," "taking another's place." In this case, the offending party (humankind) could not do the work of atonement, for "none of them can by any means redeem his brother." (Psalm 49:7) The price of peace would have to come through the Prince of Peace, as theologian John Schaller explains: "God [demands] perfect compliance [with



His law] . . . Christ, putting Himself in our place, had to supply the deficiency by keeping the law with flawless observance." (*Biblical Christology*, page 117)

While the concept is found throughout the Old Testament through the offering of sacrifices, it is explained explicitly in many New Testament passages. For instance, Galatians 4:4 explains that Jesus' mission was to fulfill the divine law for all sinners: "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." In Romans 5:19, Paul makes clear that Jesus' one sacrificial act is sufficient to reverse the carnage initiated by Adam's godless act: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,

so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." And in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, Paul makes it clear that this was God's plan all along: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (5:21)

As one views Dürer's drawing of Christ, the spiral locks and tragic eyes seem to swallow the viewer up; to draw him into something limitless and profound. Jesus, the Son of God and Child of Mary, offering His innocent life and divine soul, does indeed swallow up all our sin; all that of which we are ashamed; every particle of offense that can in any way separate us from our (yes, our) Lord and God. "The chastisement for our peace was upon Him." (Isaiah 53:5) In Him we are free.



**Peter Reim** is a former pastor who now teaches English at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He makes his home in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

# Student Profile: Yawo Galé

**M**eet Yawo Galé. He is one of the eight new seminary students here in Togo, West Africa, who started the three-year program at the end of March 2022. He is thirty-nine years old and married to Assiki Afi. They have two boys, Atsu and Etsè, twins who are ten years old, and a daughter, Amenuveve (which means “Grace”), who is four years old. He currently works as a farmer on his mother’s land, raising corn, peanuts, and cassava (or manioc, a common staple here) to feed his family. He sells any extra for income.

Yawo’s life has not been easy. He was very sick as a child and did not walk until he was five years old. Not long after that, his father divorced his mother, who returned to her home village of Koudassi. He continued to live with his father, but his father mistreated him to the point that he tried to end his life by drinking poison. God did not let him succeed, of course.



While living with his father, Yawo started going to catechism class at a Roman Catholic church with his younger sister, but his father, who is not a believer, would let him attend some Sundays but not others. Because he was not allowed to go to every class, he decided to stop going. Later his uncle invited him to an Assembly of God church where he came to believe in Jesus. His father did not want him to continue going to church and said he would disinherit him if he continued and even refused to give him food on Sunday if he went to church. Because he did not want to give up church, Yawo stopped going to school after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade so he could work and earn money, so he could flee his father and go to his mother’s home in Koudassi.

During the twenty-some years Yawo lived with his mother, he was active in various churches. Toward the end of this time, he studied to become a weaver, but shortly



**Above:** interior and exterior views of the seminary building in Togo, West Africa.



**Above and right:** a worship shelter near the seminary.

after completing his apprenticeship, his church sent him to Adidogome (a suburb of Lomé, the capital of Togo) to help with the congregation there. The church then asked him to study theology in their seminary. He attended Saturday classes for two years. He then eventually went to the Jesus the Light prayer center just outside of Lomé to serve as an assistant pastor to the founder. After about three years, his first wife died. Because their daughter was only about six months old, he returned to Koudassi to his mother's home so she could help raise his daughter. There he became involved again with the local Assembly of God church as an active layman.

Koudassi is about a mile and a half from our new seminary in Togo. Yawo heard that we were building a seminary and church in the area, and he walked over to learn more. After meeting several times with our EELC president Pastor Blewu and other prospective students, he decided to enroll in our classes. He has since left his previous church and has been serving a preaching station at the seminary with another student, the brother of Pastor Blewu. Around nine people attend each Sunday. Since the seminary building is set up for classes, they have built a palm shelter outside for larger meetings when the enclosed classroom/church is too small.

I asked Yawo what difference he has seen between his previous study and our classes. He said that he is receiving a much deeper instruction in the Bible in our classes than he did in his previous instruction. He also sees that we do not teach anything other than the Bible.



When asked about his future goals, he said that after seeing how we teach classes, he would like to become a seminary teacher at our seminary.

Yawo asks you to pray for him and all the students. He also thanks you for the love shown by the CLC in the monthly support given through the Project Kinship program. Normally students must pay tuition and purchase their own books, but because of Kinship sponsorships we are able to provide everything and teach God's Word free of charge. This is something that he has never seen before, and he prays that God would richly bless you all for your generous support.



**Peter Evensen** is a full-time foreign missionary for the CLC.

## WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

*Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession*

# Saint Paul Lutheran Church— Vernon, British Columbia

**T**he Apostle Paul was known as the “Apostle to the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13). What a fitting namesake for our congregation in Vernon, British Columbia! Christianity is not as widely accepted along the West Coast as it is in the Midwestern states and provinces. Therefore, like the Apostle Paul, we seek to bring the Gospel to the unbelievers.

Being surrounded by unbelieving influences poses many challenges and dangers in our life as God’s witnesses. Therefore, God gives us this warning and encouragement through the Apostle Peter: *“Beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* (2 Peter 3:17-18)

This past year, by the grace of God, Saint Paul congregation has enjoyed evidence of this spiritual growth. Last spring, four young people had grown in their faith through their study of God’s Word in Luther’s Small Catechism to the point that they were ready to confess their faith publicly before the congregation, and they were confirmed. What a joy to witness their growth in faith and to hear them testify of their faith! We also currently have a young man who is finding great joy and strength as he grows in his faith through an adult instruction class.

This growth in the grace and knowledge of our Savior does not end when one is confirmed. In the 2 Peter passage above, the Greek word for “grow” is a present imperative,



which indicates an ongoing command. Literally we are to continue to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” We should never think that we know it all or have nothing more to learn.

Saint Paul congregation offers opportunities for this continued growth at all age levels.

A youth retreat this past summer brought growth to our elementary and high school children through a study of several Proverbs. The young adults enjoyed the beauty of the mountains in Jasper National Park while they discussed the challenges faced in a public university. They plan to continue a discussion of how a Christian may survive the university experience with his faith intact.

As we grow in our own knowledge and faith, we become better equipped to witness to the unbelieving world around us. Our Sunday Bible class this fall is focused on the physical evidence for the reliability and truth of

Scripture so that we can “*always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.*” (1 Peter 3:15) It is our prayer that this will be not only a source of strength and growth for our faith which helps to keep us from being misled and deceived by the unbelieving world around us, but also that it will be effective preparation for us to give a meaningful defense to those who challenge or question our faith. In that way we seek to reach the unbelieving around us. We are also exploring ways to use various forms of social media to proclaim the message of life and salvation through Jesus Christ alone.



**Above:** some of the women of the congregation on Mother's Day.  
**Below:** young adult camp-out.

Most importantly, as our namesake did, we continue to grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ by focusing all our teaching on the cross. The Law points us daily to our sin and the Gospel points us to the cross of Jesus Christ for our forgiveness and relief. There, at the cross, God's grace fills us with joy and confidence in Christ.

It would appear that God is granting an answer to our long-held prayer for another form of growth. Up to this point we have not been able to obtain our own church building to worship in. We have always worshiped in a rented room in a community building. This past summer Resurrection Lutheran Church in Calgary, Alberta, has sadly come to its final chapter. With only five members remaining and no resident pastor, they made the decision to sell their church and disband their congregation. They very generously decided to donate the proceeds from the sale of their property to Saint Paul in Vernon to help make it possible for us to finally obtain our own church building. We thank the Lord for this overwhelming gift and pray that the Lord will bless those remaining members in Calgary that they too may continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of their Savior. We also pray for God's guidance and blessing to utilize this gift in a God-pleasing way and lead us to a suitable property where His Word may



be proclaimed for many years to come and where His people may continue to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*” (2 Peter 3:18-19)



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

# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS NOVEMBER 2022

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
November 1	TLH 537	Exodus 1	Fearful of the increasing numbers of the Israelites, Pharaoh orders the killing of all newborn baby boys. The Lord protects these little ones through the brave actions of two midwives. May God give His people today courage to defend the lives of all those who cannot defend themselves.
November 2	TLH 514	Exodus 2	The Lord blesses a daring plan to protect the future leader of God's people. Too impatient to await God's timing, grown Moses takes matters into his own murderous hands. He has a ways to go before becoming the Lord's humble servant. Though fully forgiven, God's believing people are always a work in progress.
November 3	TLH 40	Exodus 3	Moses tries to wiggle out of God's assignment. True, setting a whole nation free is a big job. Yet the Lord assures Moses that He will be with him. When I AM is with us, success is guaranteed! Remember, the Lord never gives us a task without first giving us Himself.
November 4	TLH 424	Exodus 4	Why would the Lord choose a reluctant sinner like Moses for such a huge job? God's patience is amazing! Certainly it's God's grace and power that shines through when clay vessels like you and me finally get moving in the direction that He wants us to go.
November 5	TLH 450	Exodus 5	The God-hating world will always meet God's message and His messengers with cold-blooded hostility. Yet Moses has learned at least one thing: when confronted with obstacles, return to the Lord in prayer. It's a lesson that seems slow to sink in for most of us.
November 7	TLH 453	Exodus 6	After what looks like a huge setback, the Lord sends Moses to the people with an encouraging message: "I am the LORD . . . I will redeem you." Today the Lord sends His servants out with an uplifting message of spiritual redemption centered in the cross of Christ.
November 8	TLH 238	Exodus 7	Through Moses and Aaron, God sent plagues to move Pharaoh to free the Israelites, but Pharaoh hardened his heart.
November 9	TLH 237	Exodus 8	The Lord strikes Egypt with three devastating plagues! But Pharaoh still won't let God's people go! The sinful human heart is foolishly proud. Only the miracle-working power of God's Word can break inside and work repentance.
November 10	TLH 244	Exodus 9	Pharaoh claims He will let God's people go. But once the plague of hail is lifted, he hardens his heart again, refusing to let the people go. Pray that God would give us tender hearts of faith, always willing to hear His Word and receive His forgiveness.
November 11	TLH 239	Exodus 10	A plague of locusts is followed by total darkness. After all the wonders he saw, how sad that Pharaoh remained in the darkness of unbelief! Like Pharaoh, many today are in spiritual darkness. Stir us up, Lord, so we will bring the saving light of Jesus to those lost in the dark.
November 12	TLH 43	Exodus 11	The last of ten plagues will bring about the death of every firstborn son in Egypt. Noteworthy is the fact that the Lord hardens Pharaoh's heart. When a person perpetually hardens his heart against the Lord, it may lead to the terrible judgment of the Lord hardening that person's heart. "Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word!"
November 14	TLH 146	Exodus 12	Lamb's blood painted on the frame of the door saves the life of the firstborn within that house. As firstborn Egyptians die throughout the land, Pharaoh relents. God's people are finally free. Yet the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, has won a far greater freedom for sinful man.
November 15	TLH 410	Exodus 13	The Passover is to be a yearly celebration. When future generations ask about its meaning, fathers will tell how the Lord's mighty hand brought the people out of bondage. Let Christian fathers today earnestly pass down the great and liberating truths of God's Word to their children.
November 16	LSB 717	Exodus 14	"Do not be afraid . . . The LORD will fight for you." After speaking these words through Moses, the Lord follows through, rescuing His people by the incredible parting of the Red Sea. The Lord always keeps His promises. So don't be afraid. Sit back and watch the Lord fight for you.
November 17	WS 744	Exodus 15	The Lord gives a complete victory to Israel over the Egyptians. Through Jesus, He's given us a full and final victory over sin, death, and Satan. With Israel of old, how can we not sing a song of praise for all the marvelous things the Lord has done for us, and continues to do for us?
November 18	TLH 659	Exodus 16	Whenever things get hard for the Israelites, it's complain, complain, complain. Even so, the Lord, in His mercy, provides for His grumbling people. The Lord never fails to provide for His people. May He replace our complaining with trusting hearts filled with thanksgiving.
November 19	TLH 496	Exodus 17	Moses holding up His arms over the battlefield was a way to show how necessary it is to have God's blessing and help. In whatever endeavor, let us rely on the Lord to see us through. Also, don't forget to hold up your pastor's arms. He's only a man, and your encouragement is invaluable.
November 21	TLH 464	Exodus 18	Moses' father-in-law advises him to delegate some of the work. Called workers are saved from burnout when others step up to play an active role in the work of the church. More importantly, when the talents of God's people are put to use in service of the Lord, God's Church is blessed.
November 22	LSB 727	Exodus 19	"I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself." These are words of grace spoken by the Lord before the giving of His Law. We are saved entirely by grace and not in the least by our works. Yet grace produces a desire to walk in the ways of God's commands.
November 23	TLH 289	Exodus 20	It was a day of thunder, lightning, smoke, and a shrill trumpet blast! From the mountain the Lord spells out, in no uncertain terms, His holy demands! Mount Sinai fills the sinful heart with terror. Our only hope? Run to Mount Calvary, where is found God's infinite mercy!
November 24	TLH 295	Exodus 21	The Lord establishes a civil code by which Israelite society was to be governed. The undergirding foundation for this code is the timeless law of "love your neighbor." May the love of Christ move us to follow the laws of our land. By doing so, we honor God and show love to our neighbor.
November 25	TLH 157	Exodus 25	The Lord gives instructions for the building of the Ark of the Covenant. Later we learn how once yearly the High Priest was to sprinkle animal blood on the covering of the Ark. This blood prefigures the blood of Christ. His cleansing blood is the only way we sinners can get near to God.
November 26	TLH 4	Exodus 32	How could the Israelites turn from God so quickly to worship an idol? But wait! Shouldn't we identify the idols in our own lives first? By the power of the Spirit and Word, let us daily grind our personal idols to powder, thanking God for His great mercy for sinners like you and me.
November 28	TLH 176	Exodus 33	Moses wanted to know how the Lord would lead His people. The Lord said, "My presence will go with you...." The Lord's Presence is the Son of God. With His sure guidance the people would reach the Promised Land. Only by the perfect care of Christ can we reach the Promised Land of Heaven.
November 29	TLH 402	Exodus 34	The Lord's Name is the revelation of His identity. His Name reveals that He is a wondrous God of forgiveness and mercy. "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . ."
November 30	TLH 54	Exodus 37	The furniture to be placed in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle are pictures of Christ. The table upon which showbread was placed calls to mind that Christ is the Bread of Life. The lampstand tells how He is the Light of the World. The altar of incense reminds us that only by His sacrifice are our prayers acceptable to God.

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

## Meet the RAs

Coming to Immanuel last year as the newly hired dorm parents was a wonderful, yet daunting experience. Though my wife and I had had several years' experience supervising a dorm at the college level, coming into a high school setting had its definite nuances and challenges. Courtney and I appreciate all the support and prayers that we received from the faculty and staff at Immanuel, but especially from the parents of the young men and women that we are now absorbing into our family here in the dorms. What an awesome privilege and responsibility it is for us to care for and be role models to these young people! We know how precious they are to you, and to our heavenly Father above!

One of the blessings of being dorm parents is that often the same young men and women who live under our roof here at Immanuel end up applying for and becoming extremely helpful and effective resident assistants (RAs). Last year was our first year as dorm supervisors, and we were blessed to have had Kari Wales, Suraya Williams, Zachary Strike, and Sam Radermacher take on that role. They were ready, willing, and capable of assisting us in what was a very memorable year among this wonderful fellowship of believers at Immanuel.

This year, the four RAs who were hired to assist the dorm supervisors in the boys' and girls' dorms are almost a completely fresh crop of young men and women, but they are equally ready and able. Our single returning veteran is Suraya Williams, who brings with her a wealth of knowledge, having previously lived in the dorm at Immanuel for all four years of high school and being familiar with the duties of an RA from her service in the previous academic year. Kaylee Koenig was selected to the

other position in South Hall and has already proven to be an invaluable addition to the loving, family-like culture that we strive to instill in the dorms here. Both

Suraya and Kaylee are students in the college's education program and plan to be teachers in one of our many Christian day schools around the country.

In the boys' dorm (North Hall), Joel Bernthal and Daniel Hein were selected as RAs. Both young men are attending Immanuel Lutheran College. Joel is enrolled in the education program and Daniel in pre-theology. Some of the RAs' duties, like stocking cleaning supplies and making sure the students' jobs are getting done and rooms are being cleaned, may not sound too glamorous. But there are also behind-the-scenes roles, like saying goodnight at bed checks,

being a solid Christian example, leading evening devotions, or listening to a fellow student who is struggling. This is what really makes a difference. What a blessing it is to have four responsible Christian men and women stepping forward into this role right on the heels of the excellent outgoing RAs from last year! Joel, Daniel, Kaylee, and Suraya all love the Lord and are willing to serve their fellow-believers in this capacity as they prepare for the public preaching and teaching ministry. God bless these RAs as they continue to grow in this role, and God bless the body of believers here at Immanuel and throughout the CLC.



**Paul Agenten** and his wife Courtney are dormitory supervisors at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Rededication Anniversary** This year Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota will be honoring and praising God for the fiftieth anniversary of the rededication of our sanctuary. After the church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground on July 4, 1971, it took over a year for the structure to be restored. Worship resumed on November 19, 1972. We plan to give thanks to God for His wonderful work among us in our regular worship services held on November 12-13, 2022. We plan to have historical displays of the events of that year of rebuilding and other memorabilia from the old church. All are invited and welcome to join us for this event as we thank God for being with us through fifty years of faithful proclamation of His Word and Sacraments in our “new” church!  
—Pastor Joseph Naumann



**Left:** the church sign of Immanuel of Winter Haven, blown over by Hurricane Ian. **Right:** Immanuel member Katrina Bernthal selling avocados that were blown off the tree by the hurricane.



Vacation Bible school at Mount Zion Lutheran Church in Madison Heights (Detroit area), Michigan.



Attendees at the 2022 Minnesota Pastoral Conference, October 9-11, Annandale Minnesota.



Attendees of the Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference, September 13-15, Saint John's Lutheran Church, Clarkston, Washington.



Attendees of the West Central Pastoral Conference, September 13-15, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Hecla, South Dakota.