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LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

*Follow Me, and
I will make you
fishers of men.*

-Matthew 4:19





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Making Fishers of Men

To read with detachment the accounts of the calling of Jesus' apostles is a mistake. Christians today rob themselves when they read those Bible accounts as idle spectators rather than intimate participants. How sobering for Jesus' apostles to recognize that they had been chosen by God Himself, long before they were ever born, to be those special men with whom and upon whom God would build His New Testament Church! Yet we today need to recognize our part in those dramatic events. Every Christian that followed, including every Christian today, had and has an intimate connection or bond with those chosen individuals. The Holy Spirit through Paul identified that connection in his letter to the church in Ephesus: *"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."* (Ephesians 2:19-22 ESV) It is then with heightened, personal interest that we revisit the calling of the first apostles.

Several of these men began as disciples of John the Baptist, who first pointed them to Jesus as *"the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."* (John 1:29 ESV) He repeated the same words the following day, and this time two of John's men left him to follow Jesus (one of whom was Andrew, and the other very likely John—who never names himself in his Gospel). Recall the rather confusing exchange that followed, Jesus asking them *"What are you seeking?"* to which they responded, *"Where are you staying?"* The reality was that they did not yet know exactly what they were looking for, but they had been directed to the one Who would show them. Andrew found his brother Peter and introduced him to his Savior. The next day Jesus found Phillip, who in turn introduced his brother Nathanael to Jesus. That's exactly what our mission work is supposed to look like—introducing lost, uncertain

souls to their Savior, beginning with our own family members.

Interestingly enough, although these men had been introduced to Jesus, they hadn't yet forsaken all to become fulltime followers. A separate event is recorded in Matthew 4 where Jesus again sought out Peter, Andrew, James, and John—all four having returned to their occupation as fishermen. This time Jesus issued His direct call: *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."* (Matthew 4:19 ESV) Abandoning all, they began their training and work as Jesus' apostles. Later, Jesus gathered the rest of His chosen men: Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. He would later replace Judas with Matthias and add Paul.



Take another look at that list—several fishermen, a man who collected taxes for Rome, a member of the sect of the Zealots (which advocated the violent overthrow of Roman rule), a man who would later betray Jesus, and a man who for a time violently persecuted the very Savior he later came to serve. Not exactly an outwardly impressive collection, and yet Jesus knew His men. Do we? Do we recognize both our bond and our debt? These men spent their lives establishing the Church of which we are now members. Through them, God the Holy Spirit provided the vast majority of our beloved New Testament. They were jars of clay that carried to the world the Gospel of salvation by God's grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We are descendants and heirs of their work. Every Christian is therefore intimately connected to these men even now, and each of us will be infinitely more connected to them for all eternity.



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

Power and Compassion at Cana

“When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.’ This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.” (John 2:9-11 ESV)

A rookie steps into the batter’s box for his first plate appearance in his major league debut. Nerves racing as the crowd cheers, he grips the bat, the pitch comes in, and he deposits the ball into the outfield bleachers. A homerun in his first at-bat in front of the home crowd, the type of memorable first impression of which dreams are made! And if we had the power to choose, we’d all want a first impression just like that. In a job interview, at a new school, in a new relationship—who doesn’t want to leave a memorable first impression?

Considering this, Jesus’ first miracle appears to be a strange choice. Certainly, He had the power to choose when and where to first make His glory known. But where did He choose? A small, backwater town in Galilee. The occasion? An anonymous couple’s wedding. The miracle? Changing water into wine. The witnesses? Only a few servants and Jesus’ own disciples. When we think of the other miracles that manifested His “glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), many of them would seem to fit better as a memorable first impression. Wouldn’t feeding 5,000+ people with just a small boy’s lunch be a better way to announce His glory? How about publicly raising a dead man to life—wouldn’t that be a better introduction? Why would Jesus choose to do something so seemingly insignificant as the first of His signs?

I know of one person who didn’t think this miracle was insignificant (even if he didn’t witness it)—the master of the feast. Consider his embarrassment if the wine had run out! Yet, that did not happen. For Jesus—the Son of God, full of grace—was there. And proving Himself to be God, He also showed what God is like—merciful, compassionate, caring even for the seemingly insignificant. This was just a foretaste of that same character which He would display throughout His ministry as He cleansed lepers, showed mercy to widows, befriended fishermen, and called tax collectors and sinners to Himself.

Whenever we consider our small place in the world, we ought to be struck even more by the insignificant status we deserve as sinners before a holy God. Yet we have been given great assurance of God’s care for us. When Mary approached Jesus regarding the wine, Jesus replied, “My hour has not yet come.” (John 2:4) A few years later, He’d return to the topic: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son . . . that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” (John 17:1-2) Armed with the power to choose, Jesus’ glory was that He would choose to put His power aside to save insignificant sinners like us. His first impression in Cana was a sample of that love, and it was written “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:31)



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

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 Salutation

My father was a pastor, so for many years I was there when he led the congregation in worship on Sunday mornings. As a young boy, I noticed that when Dad would conduct the liturgy, he would often speak (or sing) not only the pastor's parts but also the congregation's responses along with them. That made sense to me because I realized he was not only leading the people, but also worshipping with them. There was one place, however, where he always remained silent when the congregation spoke. It was after the pastor says to the congregation, "The Lord be with you"—where the congregation responds, "And with thy spirit."

A good number of years passed before I finally realized why my father never spoke that response along with the people. It's because there is no capital S on "spirit"! In my youth I thought this line had something to do with the Holy Spirit, but it doesn't at all. It is a reference to the pastor's own spirit (or soul). Modern hymnals eliminate the confusion by updating the English like this: **P:** "The Lord be with you." **C:** "And also with you." Suddenly my father's silence there made sense to me. In speaking that line, he would be greeting himself.

This part of the liturgy is called the *salutation* and it comes from a Latin word meaning "greeting." But there is more to this greeting than a simple "Hello" or "How are you?" This greeting is found throughout the Bible. For instance, in Ruth 2:4 (EHV) Boaz greeted the workers in his field with the words, "The LORD be with you!" and they responded, "The LORD bless you!" When the angel Gabriel appeared to the virgin Mary he said, "The Lord is with you." (Luke 1:28 EHV) Paul's last words to Timothy include this greeting: "The Lord be with your spirit." (2 Timothy 4:22 EHV)

When we greet a fellow Christian like this, it is more than just a hopeful wish that the Lord would come and be with that person. We are asking for something the Lord already promises (Matthew 18:20, 28:20)—so we use this greeting having no doubt that when we say these words our dear Savior immediately answers that prayer and is *indeed right there* with His people.

The placement of the salutation in the liturgy is significant. Notice how it leads into the part of the service where the Scripture readings and sermon are presented. Before that happens then, the pastor prays for the Lord to be with the congregation because they are about to hear and learn a Word that only the Lord can lead them to believe. The congregation likewise prays that the Lord be with the pastor, because he is going to deliver to them that all-important Word. It is just the right time and place to exchange this greeting!

Dominus
Vobiscum
May the
LORD
Be With You

The salutation comes up elsewhere too. We find it again at the beginning of the preface to Holy Communion. (You can see why that, too, is a fitting place for it.) In some liturgies it appears one more time just before the Benediction at the end of the service. It is used frequently. In fact, it would be a meaningful way for Christians to greet one another every day, wouldn't it?

So I'll say, "The Lord be with you." And you say, "_____."



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

Act Like a Baby

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” (1 Peter 2:1-3)

One of the illustrations the Bible uses to speak about our conversion is that of being “born again.” Jesus said in John 3:3, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” We were dead in our sins, but now, by God’s grace, we are born again. Peter says in his first epistle that we have “been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” (1 Peter 1:23) Now in this text, Peter says, “as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word.” (verse 1) In other words, since you are born again, act like babies.

It’s not very often that we’re told to act like babies. And Peter isn’t implying that his readers were young or immature Christians. In fact, some of the recipients of this letter had been Christians for over thirty years. What Peter wants is for these Christians to have the same longing for the Word that babies have for milk.

When it comes to milk, babies don’t have an attitude that says, “I don’t care whether I get it or not. I can get along just fine without it.” No! When babies want to be fed, they want to be fed now. They cry for milk, and they will not be satisfied by anything else. You might try to distract them by giving them a toy, but it won’t work for very long. Babies want to be fed, and only when they are fed are they content. That’s how Peter wants us to crave the Word.

Babies crave milk because they have experienced that it is good for them. We have tasted the Word and know how good it is for us. But how easily we forget! And so, just as we might develop a taste for a physical food that is not good for us, our sinful nature craves all sorts of worldly pleasures more than it craves the Word. We often have a greater desire for things that ultimately do not satisfy. We chase after things that we think

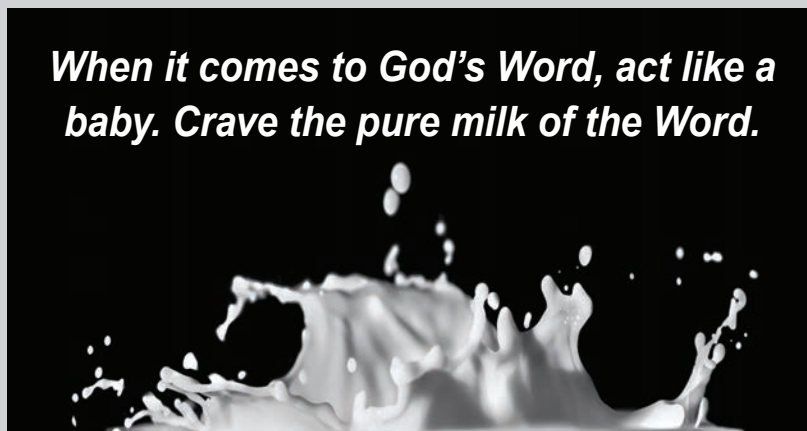
will fulfill us, but in the end they leave us spiritually empty.

Peter urges us back to the pure milk of the Word. Thanks be to God that in His grace, He doesn’t take His Word away from us. As Peter reminds us in the previous chapter, “the word of the LORD endures forever.” (1 Peter 1:25) We have tasted that

pure Word in the past. We have tasted the Word when our sins have terrified us and weighed us down. The Word has shown us a God Who loves us and has paid for our sins so that we would not be punished. We have tasted the Word when there have been troubles in our lives, when everything seemed to go against us. In those moments,

the Word tell us, “Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10) When the future looks bleak, the Word tells us not to worry about the future because “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28) We have tasted that the Lord is gracious. We have been taken care of by Jesus, Who has paid for all our sins. When we devour the pure milk of the Word, we lack nothing that is truly good.

Dear Christian, when it comes to God’s Word, act like a baby. Crave the pure milk of the Word so that you will grow in the assurance that you are forgiven of your sins, and eternal life is yours!



Robert Sauers is pastor of Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions

"BY FAITH"

"But the righteous will live by his faith."
(Habakkuk 2:4 NASB)

Amid the turmoil and complexities of his world, nation, life, and calling, Habakkuk brought his questions to God. God answered them, and God's answer was "by faith." God says the same to us today. "Trust Me. Have faith in Me. You know Who I am, what I am like, and what I have done to redeem you."

Saved By Faith

People ask important questions every day: "What time is it?" "When will you be home?" "Is your seatbelt fastened?" "Is dinner ready?" "Do you love me?" Yet, the most important question we can ever ask is "How am I saved?" And if this seems like a trivial question, imagine asking it on your deathbed. Or imagine asking it apart from the Word of God.

Some days we feel wonderful, skipping along with joy in our hearts and Amazing Grace on our lips. But on other days we feel like the tax collector in the parable who said, "God have mercy on me, the sinner." (Luke 18:13 NASB) Or like the Apostle Paul who said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst." (1 Timothy 1:15 NIV)

If you have never experienced the crushing weight of sin or guilt, you will. And when you do, what would you like to hear from God? "Sorry, but I'm all out of forgiveness. Come back tomorrow." Or "Keep the Ten Commandments perfectly, and then we'll talk."

If God's plan for our salvation were human works, the only certainty we could have would be the certainty of being lost and condemned. The Psalmist wrote: "If You, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared." (Psalm 130:3-4 ESV)

The Bible repeatedly teaches that salvation is not by doing but by believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1 ESV) And, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV) So, the biblical way to salvation is, as God told Habakkuk, "by faith."

Living By Faith

However, the great truth of "by faith" applies not only to eternal life but also to daily life. When suffering illness, we live by faith that God will take care of us. When struggling with finances, we live by faith that God will provide for us.

When endeavoring to repair a troubled marriage or find the strength to forgive another person, we live by faith that God will empower us.

"Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?" Habakkuk asked God (1:3 NIV). We ask the same question, don't we? Who is in charge of the world, our national affairs, our lives? Anyone? Yet Someone is in charge. His name is Jesus Christ. And He has all power in heaven and on earth. And everything happening in the world today is under His complete control.

We don't see this with our eyes. But we do see it clearly by faith.

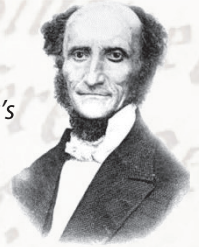
**The great truth of
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life but also
to daily life.**



Mark Weis is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

WALTHER'S LAW AND GOSPEL

One of the hallmarks of the Lutheran Church is its proper understanding and application of the Bible's two main teachings—Law and Gospel. This article concludes our series on Dr. C.F.W. Walther's seminal work, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*.



Let the Gospel Predominate!

“Thesis XXV-- In the twenty-first place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the person teaching it does not allow the Gospel to have a general predominance in his teaching.”

Especially among our well-educated CLC membership, it can be tempting to think that the more-familiar doctrines “go without saying.” Add to that anyone’s self-conscious fear of repeating himself, and Gospel preachers can too easily end up becoming Gospel mentioners instead. In his concluding thesis, Walther warns against this most subtle form of Law/Gospel confusion: “When the Gospel is preached along with the Law, but is not the predominating element in the sermon.” (page 406)

Preaching means making a persuasive oral argument. Thus, Gospel preaching means presenting an irrefutable case that the hearers may put their faith in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God: “Whoever is engaged in this preaching of the pure Gospel and thus directs men to Christ, the only Mediator between God and men, he, as a preacher, is doing the will of God.” (page 413)

Week after week, the preacher’s chief task is to explain the merits of Christ as both true God and true man, to proclaim His all-atoning sacrifice, and to tell his hearers, “The forgiveness of sins is now yours by means of His cross and empty tomb. *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*” (I Corinthians 15:3)

Walther reminds preachers that the most eloquent three-point theological theme can fall far short: “It is not sufficient for you to be conscious of your orthodoxy and your ability to present the pure doctrine correctly.” (page 406)

Mentioning the Gospel is likewise insufficient, “for there are many who . . . know how to talk a great deal about it, but . . . glorifying Christ, or believing in Him, is nothing else than being assured that whosoever has Him has the Father and all grace, divine blessings, and life eternal.” (page 409).

When the Gospel “goes without saying,” the preacher invariably ends up confusing the Gospel with its results—how the Christian should feel or strive to be. This is nothing other than Law preaching

with a smile: “The preacher may think that he has proclaimed the evangelical truth quite often, [but] your hearers will be spiritually starved to death if you do not allow the Gospel to predominate in your preaching . . . because the bread of life is not the Law, but the Gospel.” (pages 406-7)

“Your hearers will be spiritually starved to death if you do not allow the Gospel to predominate in your preaching . . . because the bread of life is not the Law, but the Gospel.”

Christ’s victory over sin, death, and the devil is the greatest divine truth revealed to man. Never to be taken for granted, it is imperative to preach the Gospel with absolute explicitness: “*And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*” (John 6:40)

Every sermon is a golden opportunity to present God’s saving truth as if being heard for the first time: “It should be the preacher’s aim to proclaim the Gospel to his hearers till their hearts are melted, till they . . . confess that the Lord has been too strong for them, and hence forth they wish to abide with Jesus.” (page 406)

In dire terms Walther warns how easily a well-meaning Lutheran pastor can become a mere Gospel mentioner. Such empty preaching runs rampant in Reformed churches and is increasingly tolerated even among Lutherans. The fatal consequence of thinking that “the Gospel goes without saying” is just that—when it’s not said, it goes.

So, if your preacher doesn’t say it, talk to him about it! He will thank you for the advice, because only by faithfully proclaiming the Gospel will he hear his members say, “Our minister has given us what we could not get anywhere else. He is a true Lutheran minister and pours out a great treasure for us every Sunday!” (page 409)



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[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/]

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

Predestination

“We know that all things work together for good.” (Romans 8:28) Many Christians have applied these words in many situations and to many hearts, including their own, because this passage is incredibly reassuring.

Paul continues, “. . . to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” This promise that buoys our spirits as waves of uncertainty and sorrow buffet our souls is for believers only and is built upon the truth of God’s predestination.

Paul continues in the following verses, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. . . . Moreover, whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” (Romans 8:29-30)

Step by step, Paul explains the pathway to a believer’s confidence. It begins with God eternally foreknowing the believers. This is not simply God’s omniscience, but rather knowing all things with gracious purpose, leading to the predestination of those souls so that they will be brought to faith. To accomplish this eternal predestination, in time God calls these souls with the Gospel, through faith brings them to trust the justification Jesus earned for all sinners, and then glorifies them with Himself eternally.

At any given time and in any particular situation, a believer knows that all things work together for good to him because God foreknew him from eternity; and He has done and will continue to do everything that is necessary to bring him to a glorious end.

Paul wrote similarly to the Ephesians, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . has blessed us with every spiritual blessing . . . **in Christ**, just as He chose us **in Him**” (read more following Ephesians 1:3-4). Paul emphasized that every spiritual blessing originates from God’s choosing us before the world began, and it all depends upon and flows from Christ. Simply put, our eternal salvation is not a matter of chance, but God has purposed and planned it from eternity, all in connection with Christ.

One may ask, “Am I one of the elect?” However, that is the wrong question. The better question is, “Do I have faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior?” If so, then rejoice and take confidence in the fact that God chose you from eternity and has done everything to bring to you into that faith; therefore, you know that all things work together for your good.

One may ask, “Am I one of the elect?” However, that is the wrong question. The better question is, “Do I have faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior?” If so, then rejoice.

One might reason, “I believe in Jesus, I’m one of the elect, and therefore I can live a life of sin and indulge in selfish pursuits and still inherit eternal life.” This is not faith speaking, for “how shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Romans 6:2)

Human reason also suggests, “If God chose some for faith, that means He also chose, or at least left, some to be damned eternally.” God’s predestination does not explain why some and not others are saved eternally, and to use this doctrine in that way is a misapplication of Scripture. God clearly says that He “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4; see also 2 Peter 3:9)

“Well, then, there must be some difference that God sees in the ones whom He chooses.” No, we are all equally dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1). We were not chosen in view of faith or in view of anything we would do. Faith is the result of God’s eternal election, not the cause of it (2 Timothy 1:9).

This truth is pure Gospel, which God reveals to us so “that through the encouragement of Scripture we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4) It is the assurance that while God blesses us with spiritual blessings during our lives on earth, He is carrying out what He purposed in eternity to do for us; and that is why we know and are confident that all things work together for good by His grace.



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

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Saint Peter's Lutheran Church Iron River, Michigan

Saint Peter's has not celebrated its anniversaries because we don't know exactly when we started. The earliest services were held in the late 1880's and were conducted in homes. We shared buildings and pastors for a time. Our own church building was erected in 1907 on top of Stambaugh Hill overlooking the Iron River valley. But exact dates are forgotten.

We may not know precisely when we started, but we are not confused about where we stand. Our church sign proclaims our stand to the community: *By Grace Are Ye Saved, through Faith.* A banner is also often displayed in the sanctuary proclaiming this same message—the heart of the Gospel message and of our confession.

An important part of every congregation's mission is perpetuating this truth through its Sunday school. But what do you do when work schedules and other circumstances result in classes being held only once or twice a month? When all the students attend the same school, and that school is only a few blocks away, the answer is easy. Instead

of Sunday school, we have Wednesday school and much-improved attendance. Of course, an after-school snack is a very necessary prelude to the actual lesson.

After a few years of canceled and deferred activities due to COVID, we are resuming our traditional schedule, and even adding a few additional items. To help highlight the festival nature of the Reformation celebration, the Ladies of Saint Peter's decided to hold a fellowship meal following the service. We hadn't done this for a while, and it felt good to linger together in fellowship, remembering our precious heritage.

Every December, the Ladies of Saint Peter's also gather for a Christmas party. They invite a guest or two to share the festivities, which involve a shared meal and a gift exchange— whoever is holding the gift when the music stops gets that gift. But most anticipated, enjoyed, and remarked upon is the singing of carols and hymns, because this gets closest to the





heart of the Christmas season and gives expression to its joy and meaning.

Each week we go to the Iron River Care Center and have a brief service there. The attendance varies from week to week, but we are getting to know some of the regulars. Highlights from these weekly visits include a sweet lady insisting that I take a quarter from her as her offering,



Guest book stand, constructed of wood salvaged from Saint Peter's first organ.

and another woman commenting that this was the only church that she had.

High tech is not much in evidence at Saint Peter's. But one use of modern technology has become a regular part of the Sunday routine. I carry around a cell phone from altar to lectern to pulpit. In this way one member at a distance is able to participate each week in her home service. This has come to mean quite a lot to her.

We are a small group, and growth has been slow. But there have been some recent hopeful signs. We do have occasional visitors who continue to find us. Several are now repeat visitors and even regular visitors. In one recent service we had as many as six non-members in attendance. For this we thank God with hearts filled with awe. May God continue to use Saint Peter's as a blessing and beacon in the community far into the future as He has for the past 120 years!



Children of the Sunday School



Norman Greve is pastor of Saint Peter's Lutheran Church in Iron River, Michigan.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

In Nepal, the Monsoon Ends and Outreach Begins

[Editor: The following is a report about current activities in the Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession in Nepal (HCLCN). It is written, in his own words, by the indigenous pastor who is our main contact in Nepal. Names of people and places are being withheld because of the risk of persecution. The report is lightly edited for clarity.]

The HCLCN is working to equip leaders from the rural and remote areas of the country. The Himalayan Bible Institute is producing workers for the harvest field. The work of the kingdom was slowed down last year due to the construction of the HCLCN and Himalayan Bible Institute (HBI) building. Our regular pastoral training suffered as well. Now the construction work, which took us a little over eighteen months, is done. We are blessed with the new CLC center. Now we are planning to focus on the mission work, reaching the unreached people and communities in the rural and remote areas of the country.

Monsoon season runs from mid-June to mid-September. This year there was more rain and flooding than last year. The monsoon season hinders our travel and work as there are many mountains and many of them get mudslides and road blocks. This year our churches in the Chepang villages were unreachable. We really wanted to go to the villages that were affected by floods and landslides. However, we are planning to go to visit them soon. We pray that the Lord provides resources to travel and work in more communities. Transportation and fuel costs have nearly doubled since last year, which makes it more challenging.

We had some meetings and programs for youth and women at Eternal Life Church around the time of the holidays. We had a youth program on October 26 and a women's program on October 27. We plan to continue the work of encouraging our brothers and sisters in the churches affiliated with the HCLCN.

We are praying to go to new places that need nourishment from the Word of God. We pray that the Lord provides the opportunity to serve the people that are in darkness. We want to bring them to

the marvelous light of God. Our pastors and leaders are traveling to surrounding districts in Dang, Salyan, Rolpa, and Surkhet in western Nepal.

In Makwanpur district a new church building has been built with the help from the CLC Board of Missions and the partnership with the local congregation. By Christmas of 2022 the building will be dedicated to the Lord.

We are planning to do some mobile camps and vacation Bible programs to reach children who do not hear much about Christ at their school or homes. We would like to share with them the Word of God. During Christmas season we plan to organize

several conferences and seminars to lift them in the knowledge of the Scriptures.

In the rural villages we also need to distribute Bibles to people who cannot afford them. It is a big deal for the people in the villages to purchase the Bible. What little income they have is often insufficient to feed their families. Many people have requested Bibles, and we would like to supply these to them as the Lord provides us resources.

We are also looking forward to welcoming the CLC Mission Helpers next summer, who will work with us to spread the message of salvation to the children of Nepal. A huge number of children need to hear the Gospel to be saved. Previously we were blessed by visits from Mission Helpers in 2011, 2014 and 2017. The Lord has always blessed our work together.

This country needs the Savior Lord Who can deliver them from the bondage of sin and death. Please pray that the people in this country can come to know Jesus Christ and be saved.



Kathmandu street during the monsoons.

IN THE PIPELINE

Want to meet the person who may be your next pastor or Christian day school teacher? This series profiles the men and women who are in their final year of preparation for the public teaching or preaching ministry at our Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Levi Schaller



Age: 22

Program: Education

Year in School: Senior

Where were you born?

Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Where did you grow up?

Same place!

Married? Unmarried? Tell us about your family.

I got married this last summer on June 11 to Nicole Schierenbeck. We currently live in a very small apartment in Eau Claire.

What hobbies, sports, or extracurriculars interest you?

I enjoy fishing, hunting, and baseball, among other things.

Tell us one thing about yourself that most people don't know.

At one point a couple years ago, I owned five vehicles at the same time—one motorcycle, one truck, and three cars. Believe it or not, all of them worked (mostly)!

Which academic subjects especially interest you?

History and English are my favorite subjects; I've always enjoyed them.

How did you first come to consider the public teaching ministry as a career?

Growing up, it never crossed my mind. Not once, if I'm honest. I think the first time I seriously considered it was my first stint as a counselor at God's Kids Bible Camp.

What have you appreciated most about your time at ILC?

Practice teaching, because I got to meet current teachers in the CLC. I learned a lot from them and got valuable experience doing actual teaching in a classroom. While doing so I found a few of my methods classes at Immanuel invaluable to me.

What qualities do you think will most be needed by the future leaders of the church?

Steadfastness in the Word and willingness to discuss questions of Scripture with those postulating them.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JANUARY 2023

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
January 2	TLH 409	Psalm 1	Success is not about having worldly fame and fortune. It's about staying in the Word of God, by which we receive God's promises of forgiveness and salvation, along with perfect guidance for our daily lives. Let's dedicate ourselves to meditating on God's Word in the year to come, and throughout our lives.
January 3	TLH 339	Psalm 2	To this very day, the unbelieving enemies of the Lord join hands against His Anointed, Jesus Christ. The Almighty laughs at such attempts to dethrone His Son, warning them to wise up before it's too late. The year ahead will be filled with many troubles, yet Jesus still sits on His throne ruling all things for His people.
January 4	TLH 519	Psalm 4	Many of us have trouble sleeping at night. Some of that lack of sleep may be because of worries and fears racing through our minds. The psalm encourages us to stop worrying and start praying, promising the Lord will listen to those who believe in Him. Give all your fears to God. Then <i>"lie down in peace, and sleep."</i>
January 5	TLH 522	Psalm 6	David knew he deserved his many troubles. Yet, with confidence in God's steadfast mercy, he asks the Lord not to rebuke him in anger. Let's remember that none of us deserve God's help in any way. Nevertheless, because of His unfailing love, God will not fail to see us through the coming year and all our days to come.
January 6	TLH 114	Psalm 8	On Epiphany Day we remember that Jesus has been revealed to the world as Savior of all. Psalm 8 finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, Whose name is excellent in all the earth. Today, when the unbelieving big shots of this world refuse to give Him glory, the Lord still receives praise from little children and infants.
January 7	TLH 369	Psalm 14	When the Lord looks down from heaven, He doesn't see anyone who does good, not even one. What this tells us is that every one of us desperately needs a Savior. Only in the Lord does the sinner find a refuge from sin, death, and hell. In His merciful grace we can rejoice, despite our many sins.
January 9	TLH 193	Psalm 16	This psalm prophecies Christ's resurrection from the dead: <i>"My flesh will also rest in hope. . . You will show me the path of life."</i> Through faith in the risen Christ, we apply the words of the psalm to ourselves. One day, with risen and glorified bodies, we will live in God's presence in fullness of joy!
January 10	TLH 15	Psalm 19	The natural knowledge of God is what we know about God from creation: <i>"The heavens declare the glory of God."</i> The revealed knowledge of God is what we know about God from the Bible: <i>"The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."</i> We marvel over God's creation, but only His Word can make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ.
January 11	TLH 153	Psalm 22	Psalm 22 prophecies the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ a thousand years before His birth. The end of the psalm speaks of how future generations will be told of the suffering and exaltation of our Savior. To this very day people all over the world find joy in the words: <i>"He has done it!"</i> Mission accomplished! Sinners saved!
January 12	TLH 436	Psalm 23	David's shepherd psalm is the most beloved of all psalms. With the Lord as our shepherd we lack nothing. With Him by our side we need not fear. His goodness and mercy will follow us through time into eternity. Jesus is that shepherd so good, that He even laid down His life for His sheep!
January 13	TLH 73	Psalm 24	<i>"Lift up your heads, O you gates!"</i> The King of Glory, Jesus the Savior, calls to one and all to lift up the gates of their hearts. He is the Lord of hosts, coming in glory through the Gospel, intent on entering our hearts with kingly riches of forgiveness, peace, and salvation.
January 14	TLH 371	Psalm 32	This psalm begins with a triple assurance: Our transgressions are forgiven, our sins are covered, the Lord does not count our sin against us. When burdened with a sense of guilt, don't hold on to it. Confess it to the Lord right away. He will forgive. How blessed is the sinner who has this confidence in his Savior.
January 16	TLH 370	Psalm 40	The Old Testament ("the scroll") wrote of Jesus the Messiah. In verses 7 and 8 we prophetically hear of His ardent desire to do the will of His Father. He would do His Father's will by keeping the law for us, by preaching the goodness and faithfulness of God, and finally by suffering and dying for us.
January 17	TLH 651	Psalm 42 & 43	In these psalms there is hope for the depressed. Three times the writer asks: <i>"Why are you cast down, O my soul?"</i> Each time the writer responds: <i>"Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."</i> Ask yourself, "Why am I so down?" Then, right away, speak God's promises to yourself. This will help you in times of excessive sorrow.
January 18	TLH 266	Psalm 46	The city of God - the Holy Christian Church - is planted by the river of God's precious Word and Sacraments. Built up in God's grace-filled promises, the Church looks confidently to God for refuge and strength. In a chaotic world, the Church knows God is in control. He speaks peace to His people, saying: <i>"Be still, and know that I am God."</i>
January 19	TLH 212	Psalm 47	Our Savior God is the King of all the earth. The words <i>"God has gone up with a shout"</i> point ahead to Christ's triumphant ascension and exaltation. His Gospel now goes out into all lands. In joyful response we clap our hands! We sing praises to God! We sing praises to our King! We sing to Him a psalm of praise!
January 20	TLH 342	Psalm 51	David expresses his repentance for the sin of adultery. The psalm, however, holds universal truths of God's grace for all sinners. Though we are sinful from birth, and daily sin much, God speaks joy to our guilty hearts. For Jesus' sake He blots out our iniquity. In thankful response we pray for a clean heart and a steadfast spirit.
January 21	TLH 437	Psalm 56	David had enemies. We have enemies because we hold to Christ and His Word. In foreign countries many Christians are put to death. In our country Christians are ridiculed for their faith. The hatred of the world will only become more vicious the closer we get to the end, but with David we say, <i>"When I am afraid, I will trust in You."</i>
January 23	TLH 20	Psalm 67	The writer prays that the same blessings of grace and peace which God pronounced upon Israel will be experienced by all nations. Jesus paid for the sins of all and wants all to be saved. Let's pray for the salvation of all and also pray He opens our mouths to speak of our Savior to those who do not know Him by faith.
January 24	TLH 629	Psalm 78	It is the God-given responsibility of every generation to pass down the faith to their children, <i>"telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord."</i> Soon after they are born we bring our children to Jesus through Baptism. We follow that up by teaching them of their Savior's love from the Bible. We pray that our children remain in the faith to life everlasting!
January 25	TLH 2	Psalm 84	This psalm tells of the joy of being in God's house. <i>"My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord!"</i> It is a true blessing to join our fellow like-minded believers in God's house. There we have opportunity to hear His Word, to be assured of God's forgiveness, to praise His saving Name, and to encourage one another in our faith.
January 26	TLH 329	Psalm 88	Is your life full of troubles? Does it maybe even seem as if God has abandoned you? <i>"Why do You hide Your face from me?"</i> While the psalm seems to offer little hope, we latch on to the first verse: <i>"O Lord, God of my salvation."</i> Since God is our salvation, we can be confident of His help even in the darkest of times.
January 27	TLH 123	Psalm 90	Our time in this world passes by quickly. <i>"It is soon cut off, and we fly away."</i> Soon eternity will dawn. So we pray: <i>"Teach us to number our days."</i> Help us, dear Lord, to use our time wisely and to Your glory; and keep us in our Savior's grace to life everlasting.
January 28	TLH 370	Psalm 91	We can be confident that we will find peace and protection in the shelter of the Most High. <i>"He is my refuge and my fortress."</i> We are further comforted knowing that, <i>"He shall give His angels charge over you."</i> Finally, we are assured that God will bring us safely though death to life eternal. He will show us His salvation!
January 30	TLH 14	Psalm 100	We have reason to shout for joy! The Lord is our Creator and our Shepherd. So let us <i>"enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations."</i>
January 31	TLH 27	Psalm 103	We end our psalm readings this month with a wonderful reminder of our many blessings as God's children. The psalm especially focuses our attention on that most wonderful blessing of God's forgiveness: <i>"As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."</i>

ILC NEWSLETTER

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.

The College AA Program

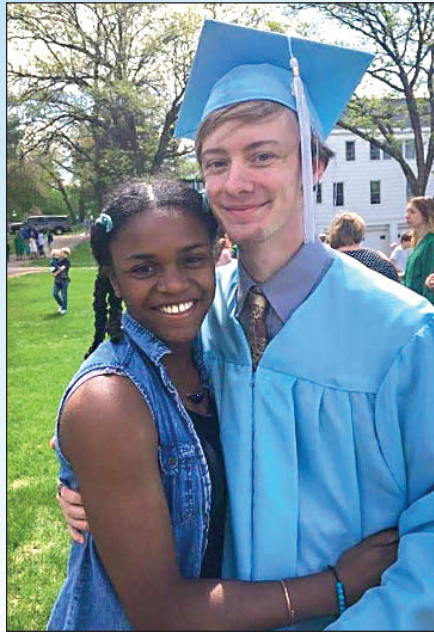
It's no secret that one of the main purposes of Immanuel Lutheran College is to train young Christians for the public pastoral and teaching ministries. By far the majority of our college students are enrolled in the two top programs, the Bachelor of Arts in Pre-Theological Studies, or the Bachelor of Science in Education. The first results in graduates who are ready to enter our seminary, the second in graduates who are ready to enter the teaching ministry.

What is less well known is that ILC offers a two-year Associate of Arts degree as well. From the college catalog description: "The Associate of Arts program involves two years of training in the liberal arts. It serves not only those individuals who complete their college education at the end of two years, but also those who transfer to other institutions of higher learning. By taking their first two years at ILC, such students receive the benefit of a Christ-centered education in the critical early years of their college career. Moreover, the smaller class sizes at ILC promote student involvement and help to enhance learning."

Sometimes Christian young people graduate from high school without having made a firm decision about their future education or career. Often they just need some "space" to make up their minds. We would like to suggest that ILC is just such a space. You will find many advantages to the AA Program at Immanuel:

- **It's economical.** The costs to attend Immanuel are very modest compared with most other schools. Currently, college tuition is \$3,000 per semester—less even than most community colleges and tech schools. A variety of student aid is available to make the costs even more manageable.
- **It's practical.** Others recognize that ILC offers a high-quality college education, and that has led to success in negotiating credit-transfer agreements with three area schools—the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire, the University of Wisconsin—Stout, and Chippewa Valley Technical College. These have all agreed to transfer up to 73 core credits (in subjects such as English, history and science) from ILC. Immanuel is not

regionally accredited, so credit transfers to other institutions is not automatic, but in the past many colleges have been willing to transfer ILC credits on a case-by-case basis. It is part of the Academic Dean's job to support, in any way possible, students wishing to transfer ILC credits to other institutions, and we have had good success in doing so.



Zach and Suraya Strike. Zach graduated from ILC's AA program last May. He and Suraya were married in October.

- **It keeps you connected to Christ and His Word.** At Immanuel, all your professors and fellow-students have one thing in common—faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives, and an absolute commitment to His inerrant Word! At ILC, every class on every subject is taught from a Christian perspective. Morning and evening chapel services, as well as weekly worship at nearby Messiah Lutheran Church, will help deepen and enrich your faith and your knowledge of the Word.

- **It prepares you for whatever is next in your life.** If you're going on to a job or trade, the two years you spend in Immanuel's AA program will give you not only an academic credential, but also a deeper knowledge of God's Word and its application to life. ILC graduates often

become active in their home congregations and contribute to their churches' spiritual life. For those students going on to a public university—your time at Immanuel will prepare you to survive in an environment that is invariably hostile to the Christian faith, and that in some individual cases has succeeded in destroying it.

So if you're considering college, give some thought to the Associate of Arts Program at ILC! It's one of the best choices you could make if you want to stay connected to the Word and keep putting on "the whole armor of God." (Ephesians 6:11)



Paul Naumann is Academic Dean at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and editor of the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

SEEN IN PASSING

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

Bugs are People, Too. Climate change adherents have long been critical of the beef industry, claiming that it contributes to global warming. One suggested solution has been the industrial farming of insects to provide a high-protein food to replace beef. But in an article for the online newsletter *Aeon*, bioethicist Jeff Sebo of New York University argues that insects may be sentient. Says Sebo, "Insects engage in some behaviors that suggest a capacity for positive and negative experiences." Fruit flies, for example, sometimes get depressed: "Fruit flies seem to be capable of anhedonia, a loss of interest in activities previously found to be rewarding, and a common symptom of human depression. If you expose flies to aversive vibrations over several days, their activity begins to change in predictable ways. The shaken flies show reductions in various voluntary actions, though their reflexive behavior remains unchanged. In particular, shaken flies consume much less glycerol (commonly used as a reward in fruit-fly studies) than non-shaken controls, suggesting that the shaken flies have lost their taste for sweets." Part of the argument seems to be that, since insects may be capable of feeling irritation or pain, therefore it is immoral to kill them. One wonders why the same argument wouldn't apply to unborn human beings. But I guess that must be different (?) Sebo, Jeff. "Don't farm bugs." *Essays*. *Aeon.co*, 27 Jul. 2021. Web. 25 Nov. 2022.

Turns Out Amos Wasn't Kidding About That Earthquake.

"Archaeologists in Jerusalem have found evidence of damage to buildings and pottery that may have been caused by a huge, eighth-century B.C.E. earthquake mentioned in the biblical books of Amos and Zechariah. Excavations led by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and the *Ir David* Foundation unearthed a layer containing the ruins in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan, reports Nir Hasson for *Haaretz*. The findings add to evidence of the earthquake previously discovered elsewhere in Israel and in the seabed of the Dead Sea. The researchers say they considered other possible explanations for the damage, including fire, but found no ash or other evidence suggesting the city was burned at that time. They also looked at the possibility that the destruction was isolated to one spot. '[T]o prove that this doesn't involve one building that sustained an isolated trauma, we compared it to other sites, both in Jerusalem and at other places where we also see this layer, so that we can make the connection and say that this isn't an isolated event but rather something more

widespread,' said Joe Uziel, an archaeologist with the IAA." Gershon, Livia. "Researchers Find Physical Evidence of Earthquake Described in Old Testament." *Smart News*. *Smithsonianmag.org*, 6 Aug. 2021. Web. 25 Nov. 2022.

Heresy is Alive and Well Among Americans. In a joint study released in September by Ligonier Ministries and Lifeway Research, researchers found that a number of ancient heresies, long rejected by official church teaching, are nevertheless widely held by Americans—including those who consider themselves Christians. "Overall, adults in the US are moving away from orthodox understandings of God and his Word year after year." The survey found, for example, that over half of U.S. evangelicals believe that God changes, a denial of the doctrine of immutability. Two-thirds believe that children are born innocent, a denial of original sin. 53% deny Scriptural inerrancy, agreeing with the statement that "The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true." Well over half of Evangelicals agree with the statement, "God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam." 43% of Evangelicals say that "Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God." Ligonier Ministries founder R.C. Sproul has long said that "Everyone is a theologian." But this survey proves that not everyone is a *good* theologian. N.a. "The State of Theology." *Key Findings*. *Thestateoftheology.com*, 19 Sep. 2022. Web. 25 Nov. 2022.



Organists at Grace Lutheran Church in Fridley, Minnesota, on October 30, 2022, when their new church organ was dedicated.