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LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD. Hosanna in the highest!"

--Matthew 21:9



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Our Lamb Has Become Our King

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:12)

We call it Palm Sunday, because the crowds of people waved palm branches and shouted praises to Jesus as the Son of David. But this was also a day bustling with activity and electrified with excitement and anticipation of the great Festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread. For the Jews this day was “The Day of the Lambs.”

God had commanded through Moses, “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. . . . Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.’” (Exodus 12:3,6)

We know Palm Sunday was the tenth day of the month because four days later Jesus instructed Peter and John to “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.” (Luke 22:8)

Consider the significance of Palm Sunday. On that day the shepherds of Bethlehem (possibly even some who had seen the angels and visited Jesus some thirty-three years earlier) were herding thousands of lambs to Jerusalem, parading them through the streets to the Temple where each family would buy one to be their Passover lamb. On this day when all of Israel was to take their Passover lamb, Jesus, the Lamb of God from Bethlehem, was entering Jerusalem, presenting Himself as the one, true Passover Lamb. He was the One to Whom all the millions of Passover lambs throughout the centuries had pointed; the One Whose blood would provide eternal redemption and save from eternal death.

The Passover lamb was kept until the fourteenth day to give ample time to examine it, for it had to be a perfect lamb without defect or blemish. Likewise, Jesus presented Himself at the temple each day that week allowing Himself to be tested and

scrutinized by the priests, scribes, and Pharisees, and proving Himself to truly be the perfect and holy Lamb of God.

That Thursday, on the evening after the fourteenth day of the month, as all Israel was eating their Passover lamb, Jesus gave His own body and blood for His disciples to eat and to drink for the remission of their sins. Then later that same day

(since the evening was the beginning of a new day for Israel) Jesus shed His blood and gave His body into death as the sacrifice for all the sins of the world. “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” (1 Corinthians 5:7)

God wanted us to know the exact time when Jesus was nailed to the cross and the moment He died. He was nailed to the cross the third hour (or 9:00 A.M.) and died the ninth hour (or 3:00 P.M.) These are the very moments when the morning and evening sacrifices were made every single day.

Jesus fulfilled them all and brought their purpose to an end.

All of this was in view on Palm Sunday when preparations began for the Passover celebration. On that day the people shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (Matthew 21:9) “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!” (Luke 19:38) They probably didn’t fully understand at the time, but we rejoice to know that our **Lamb has become our King**.

May we all, by faith, receive Christ into our households and into our hearts as our Passover Lamb. And may we give our hearts and entire lives in homage to Him as our King, and let Him reign over us with His grace and mercy forever.



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

We're Not Stuck on Saturday

“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.” (Matthew 28:5-6)

Have you ever wondered what the Saturday before Easter was like for the followers of Jesus? So much had happened in the last week, and especially in the last forty-eight hours, that their heads must have been spinning. Only a week earlier, Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem to cheers of “Hosanna!” and palm branches waving. On Thursday, the Master had washed their feet and celebrated the Passover.

Later that night, though, He was bound and arrested—betrayed by one of their own. Friday, He was beaten and bloodied, given a sham of a trial, and nailed to a cross. Before the sun set on Friday, He was dead and buried.

If you’ve ever been rocked by the sudden, unexpected death of a loved one, you may have an idea what the next day may have felt like. Maybe you’ve experienced the fog of trying to wrap your mind around what just happened and the sleeplessness as you replay things in your head, again and again.

But with the disciples, there was more. First of all, there was the confusion. It was their Lord Who was suddenly abused and killed. Their hope had been that this was the One Who would rescue them from their miserable lives. And now the One Who calmed the seas, and calmed them with His Word, was dead.

Secondly, there was guilt. Thirty-six hours earlier they had been arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest disciple, all while Jesus was preparing to die for them. When He was arrested, they all ran away—even though they had just promised Him they never would.

Finally, there was fear. The Bible tells us that they locked the doors where they were for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). They were afraid that what the Jews did to their Master, they would now do to His disciples, who were much weaker than He.

Not one of them was thinking about Jesus’ promise that He would rise from the dead. When the sun rose on the third day, only a small group of women went to the tomb—and they were

only there because they wanted to anoint the DEAD body of their Lord.

But there was no dead body to anoint. The tomb was empty. The Easter angels told the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.” (Matthew 28:5-6)



Let these familiar Easter words sink into your ears and your heart. Christ is risen from the dead; He is risen, indeed! No longer do you need to be locked in your rooms of confusion, guilt, and fear. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead proves that Jesus is exactly Who He said He was—the Son of God and your Savior. Since He kept His impossible promise to rise from the dead after He was

killed, He will keep ALL the promises He has made to you. Confusion, be gone! Christ is risen!

Christ was delivered up for our offenses on Good Friday. On the third day God announced in the clearest of terms that the death of His Son was a payment sufficient to earn forgiveness of sins for the entire world. Guilt be gone! Christ is risen, indeed!

By rising from the dead, Jesus announced victory over death and the grave. Just as His tomb was empty, one day yours will be too. “Because I live, you will live also.” (John 14:19) Fear be gone! Christ is risen and you shall rise too!

Dear brothers and sisters, don’t get stuck on Saturday, locked in your rooms of confusion, guilt, and fear. Your Lord is risen, as He said. He will keep all His promises. Your sins really are forgiven. One day you too will rise from the dead to inherit the kingdom your Lord died and ROSE to prepare for you.



Nathan Pfeiffer is pastor of Berea Lutheran Church in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

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 Gradual

(Note to the reader: There are many liturgical variations used in our fellowship, including some which eliminate the Gradual as part of the regular service. This article will deal with the liturgical forms found in *The Lutheran Hymnal of 1941*, which is used in many of our congregations. Nothing in this article is meant to disparage other liturgical forms used among us.)

“Have a good day at school, Billy.” Billy walks out the door without replying. “Jane, enjoy your visit, and don’t forget to call me when you get to Aunt Millie’s house.” Jane just picks up her suitcase and leaves. “Hi, Fred. Did you like the movie?” Fred simply rolls his eyes and walks away. By not responding when spoken to, Billy, Jane, and Fred were rude. Rude behavior reflects an attitude that is the opposite of reverence, and reverence for God calls for us to respond when He speaks to us.

Gradual

Ps. 117:1-2a; 96:8

Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you peoples!
For His merciful kindness is great toward us,
And the truth of the LORD endures forever.
Give to the LORD the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.

Up to that point, it has been the pastor and the congregation speaking, and not God; but in the reading of the *Epistle* lesson (or the *Old Testament* reading) God speaks directly to us in His sacred Word. What should follow that? Remember the rudeness of Billy, Jane, and Fred when they did not respond after being spoken to? Reverence calls for us to respond when God speaks to us. That is why the *Gradual* follows immediately after the *Epistle* lesson (or the *Old Testament* reading). It is our

response to God’s having just spoken to us from His Word.

Has it ever occurred to you that up until the *Epistle* (or sometimes the *Old Testament* lesson) for the day, our regular worship services involve our speaking rather than God’s speaking directly to us?

Think about it. After a hymn, we begin with the *Invocation*, in which the pastor opens the service in the name of the one true God—the only proper object of our worship. Then we have the multi-part *Confession of Sins*, in which we admit our personal sinfulness—sinfulness which requires forgiveness based on what Christ has done. After that is the *Absolution*, in which the pastor comforts us with the promise of forgiveness and adoption as God’s own children based on the finished work of Jesus. Following the *Absolution* is the *Introit*, a word which means “beginning” or “entrance.” As Pastor Klatt explained in the September article on the *Introit*, “With assurance of God’s grace in Christ we are able to enter into God’s presence and begin our service of prayer, praise, and instruction in His Word.” In the *Gloria Patri* we express our praise for God, in the *Kyrie* we ask for His mercy, and in the *Gloria in Excelsis* we praise, bless, worship, and glorify God and ask that He would hear our prayer and have mercy on us. The pastor then presents the *Salutation* and the *Collect* for the day.

Luther D. Reed, in *The Lutheran Liturgy*, defines the Gradual this way: “The Gradual is a liturgical arrangement of portions of psalms originally sung entire and from a step (*gradus*) of the altar. The first part constitutes the Gradual proper and reflects the thought of the *Epistle*.”

Sometimes the connection between the *Epistle* and the Gradual is not obvious. Ideally, however, the Gradual expresses our response to the thoughts of the *Epistle*. Don’t be like Billy, Jane, and Fred. Whether the Gradual is sung by the choir, spoken by the pastor, recited by the congregation, or some variation of those, make it your personal and reverential response to God having spoken to you, His child.



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

Begging to Care

“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:11-12)

A pastor was deep in thought and prayer as he went to visit a member who was caught up in sin. The first two times the pastor had visited the woman, she'd shown no remorse for her sin. The pastor was praying that he would be given the words to speak and that the woman would be given the ears to listen this time. The conversation began much like the previous two with the pastor explaining from Scripture how the woman's actions were sinful, and the woman shrugging it off. As the conversation progressed, the woman, growing irritated, bluntly asked the pastor, "Why do you keep coming to me with this? What do you want from me?!" To which the pastor replied, "I want you to care about your own soul as much as I do. Better yet, I want you to care about your own soul as much as your Savior does."

In verses 11-12 above, Peter reveals a loving, pastoral heart toward the Christians he addresses with his epistle. He writes, "Beloved, I beg you." There is a great sense of care and urgency in that word as Peter lovingly begs his Christian readers to "abstain from fleshly lusts." Why? In satisfying those fleshly lusts the Christian wars against his own soul. Such warring against the soul can only wear away a person's faith. Throw in impenitence, and the ultimate result is eternal ruin.

Therefore, Peter begs the Christian to care about his own soul, along with his own witness to the unbelieving world around him. And there are other places in Scripture where such begging to care is found. For example, "We then, as workers together with Him also *plead* with you not to receive the grace of God in vain." (2 Corinthians 6:1). See also Romans 12:1 and 2 John 1:5.

All such urgent begging and pleading reminds us of what else Peter says. Christians are all "pilgrims and sojourners." We're all just passing through. How sad it would be to lose out on eternity

by impenitently giving in to one's lust for sinful pleasures here on earth! God certainly does not want that for you! Neither did Peter want that for his readers; therefore, he begged them to fight the good fight against their fleshly lusts and to be mindful of their true home in heaven and their true calling in life.

What great love God showed in sending His only Son to love us and to live and die for us! And what a loving God we have that He would love us stubborn, unworthy sinners so much that He also sends caring pastors and fellow Christians who care for our souls, even in those times when we are so angry or hurt, so depressed or indifferent that we are not properly caring for our own souls ourselves! May we always

listen to God's urgent calls to repentance and run to His Son for mercy and forgiveness.

**Christians are
all "pilgrims and
sojourners."
We're all just
passing through.**

*A pilgrim and a stranger, I journey here below;
Far distant is my country, The home to which I go.
Here I must toil and travail, Oft weary and opprest;
But there my God shall lead me To everlasting rest.*

*So I must hasten forward – Thank God, the end will come!
This land of passing shadows Is not my destined home.
The everlasting city, Jerusalem above,
This evermore abideth, The home of light and love.
TLH 586: 1,5*



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For a Lifetime

Read Psalm 139

How involved is God in our lives? According to Psalm 139, God knows us completely, is always with us, constantly exercises His power in our lives, and loves us eternally. So how involved is that?

God knows us completely

God knows everything about us. And His knowledge encompasses every detail of our lives: when we sit and stand, wake and sleep. He even knows what we are going to say before we say it. And God has known all these details about us from eternity.

That God knows us so well is both sobering and comforting. Sobering, because God knows our every thought, word, and deed. Comforting, because God knows our needs before we present them, and He never confuses our needs with our wants.

And God's knowledge of us is not merely intellectual, it is also *experiential*. When Jesus Christ, God the Son, came to be one of us, He also became one with us in our human experiences—yet without our sin. Consequently, we can never rightly say, "God doesn't know what I'm going through." He does know, because He Himself went through it.

God is always with us

Remember the story of Joseph? Here was a young man who was resented by his own brothers, cast into an empty cistern, and sold into slavery. When he refused to sleep with Potiphar's wife, he was placed in prison. And yet we read, "*But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy.*" (Genesis 39:21) Throughout Joseph's lifetime, God was with him. And throughout our lifetime, God is with us too.

When facing problems, we're often tempted to think, "God has forsaken me." But as David wrote in Psalm 139, God is always there for us. "*Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,*

even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me." (verses 7-10)

But God's power is always mightily at work in our lives—the very same power with which He created the universe and raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

God's power is at work in our lives

Psalm 139 alludes to the infinite power of God, especially as revealed in creation, whether the birth of the universe or the birth of a human being. "*For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*" (verses 13-14) I've seen God's power revealed in the vast, starry heavens; in the grandeur of mountains; in the myriad and complex forms of life on Earth. But I've never been more awed by that creative power than when watching the birth of my two sons.

We may be sick or suffering. We may be struggling to save a marriage. We may be worried about finances or our sins and failings. But God's power is always mightily at work in our lives—the very same power with which He created the universe and raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

God's love for us is eternal

But why would God want to know us or be with us or help us? Because He loves us. As David wrote in Psalm 139: "*How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them. If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.*" (verses 17-18)

It is the eternal love of God for us—the undeserved love that moved Him to sacrifice His own Son, Jesus Christ, for our sins—that fills our lifetimes with peace, hope, joy, and the certainty of salvation.



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The Tares

The parable of the tares (Matthew 13:24-30) should be like nails on a chalkboard to any good home gardener. The landowner's advice to leave the weeds untouched frustrates the compulsion to pluck them out as soon as they break the soil's surface: "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them." (verse 29)

Gardening is not the parable's main point. Rather, as Jesus explains, the main point concerns the kingdom perspective toward evil in the world. Far more complex than any six-by-eight-foot garden plot, this fallen creation is a mess, which the sinner's best efforts to clean up can only make worse.

At first, the servants express the common accusation against God—how He could let evil run rampant? "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?" (verse 27)

The master's answer is straightforward: "An enemy has done this." And the fact that it happened "while men slept" teaches that this is a spiritual conflict far above the pay grade of mortal man.

Yet the servants' impulse "to go and gather them up" speaks to the temptation to take matters into your own hands. You risk uprooting wheat with the tares when you take the place of God and presume to judge your neighbor's heart. More harm is done than good whenever you become a busybody in other men's matters.

Whenever you endeavor to rid the world of its weeds, you take on an impossible task which inevitably leads you into some form of the very evil you seek to uproot.

As with all of Jesus' parables, the Wheat and the Tares is a word puzzle contrary to the natural man's first instinct, meant to turn the tables on the way you think of spiritual matters. And as is the case with each parable, the missing piece to the puzzle is the cross.

The avid home gardener may object, "If you don't do a thing, you'll be overrun by weeds!" But Jesus put up no objection when evil men choked in upon Him. Though He could have called upon twelve legions of angels to scour Gethsemane clean (Matthew 26:53), Jesus followed His own advice, so that in His bitter suffering and death you could see the sin which infests your soul burned up in His boundless love. And in His resurrection, He gathers His blood-bought own into a righteous crop of His own making.

The Gospel is the key which unlocks this parable's tension. Only through faith in Christ's saving power can you agree with the landowner to "let both grow together until the harvest" (verse 30), and leave every wicked thing in His wise and perfect care.

The parable teaches you to refrain from tearing up evil according to your own flawed standards. Rather, the Savior replaces that misplaced zeal with the true remedy for this world's woes. Sons of the kingdom still sprout forth today through the good seed placed in our care: "Go therefore and make disciples of all

the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

With spiritual eyes fixed on the wheat-blossoms of faithful Gospel preaching, your weed-pulling itch becomes transformed into the fervent prayer for Christ to send forth His angels and set us eternally free.

Wait on Him to clean it up. He knows what He's doing.



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

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

Conversion

Simply put, it is a miracle that you believe in Jesus as your Savior.

The same can rightly be said about every single child of God. God Himself declares that this is a miracle on par with calling light into existence at creation. *“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 4:6)

God uses a number of word pictures to illustrate the miraculous change from the unbelief in which we are born to a living, active faith in Jesus our Savior. Each picture teaches us that we are helpless to help ourselves. Each picture teaches us that God has done everything to accomplish this miraculous change.

We are all born in sin (Psalm 51:5) so we begin our life’s journey walking down a path that leads to eternal destruction. **Conversion** is the 180-degree turn from that deadly path to walking with our Savior by faith. *“You were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”* (1 Peter 2:25)

God tells us that, spiritually speaking, we are naturally dead. *“You He **made alive**, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”* (Ephesians 2:1)

Jesus told Nicodemus, *“Unless one is **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3)

Scripture frequently refers to sin and unbelief as darkness (for example, Isaiah 9:2; 1 John 1:5-7). The change from unbelief to saving faith is therefore described as **illumination**. *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”* (Ephesians 5:8)

God could not be clearer that we are not the agents of change. Walking the wrong direction will not take you to your destination. A corpse cannot breathe life into his own dead

body. We have nothing to do with our first birth, how can we accomplish a second one? Without an outside light coming into a dark room, those in the room remain in darkness.

Many churches today teach that the individual sinner chooses Jesus as his Savior. This leads to familiar calls to action such as, *“All you need to do is accept the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart.”* However, we are incapable of making a decision for Christ in this way because *“There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.”* (Romans 3:11) Jesus adds, *“You did not choose Me, but I chose you.”* (John 15:16)

Conversion is the 180-degree turn from that deadly path to walking with our Savior by faith.

The Gospel, the means of grace (see Romans 1:16, *Lutheran Spokesman March 2023*), is the power behind the miraculous change that transforms our hearts’ natural stone cold unbelief to a living saving faith that bears fruits of faith. The Holy Spirit uses the Gospel to create, nurture, sustain, and preserve

such a faith through which the forgiveness of sins flows. Only the power and working of God in the Gospel can call the spiritually dead to life, illuminate the darkness of their hearts, and give them rebirth.

Through the power of His Gospel Word, God has converted us from unbelievers to believers, made us His own, and given us life. *“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* (1 Peter 2:9)



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

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

Gospel Outreach Among the Maasai

In December 2022, I spent three weeks in Tanzania working with the pastors and leaders of the Tanzania-CLC (TZ-CLC). My time was spent teaching at the Wittenberg Lutheran Theological Seminary, attending the TZ-CLC pastoral conference, and visiting several developing congregations and preaching stations of the TZ-CLC. On my last full day in Tanzania, Pastor Jeremia, Pastor Solomon (a 2021 seminary graduate), and I made the trek to some Maasai lands that are located just to the east of the Lake Manyara National Park. It's about a three-and-a-half-hour drive from Arusha, where the TZ-CLC has its headquarters and seminary.

The journey began with an hour-and-a-half drive on highway A104 that heads west out of Arusha. This is a busy road that carries thousands and thousands of tourists annually to four of the major national parks and conservation areas in the northern Tanzania safari circuit (Tarangire, Manyara, Serengeti, and Ngorongoro). We then pulled off of the highway onto a gravel road, and it became quite obvious by the lack of traffic that we were not tourists. We stayed on this gravel road for about ten miles until we were flagged down by two men waiting for us under a shade tree.

These Maasai men would ride with us and direct us to the village of Esilalei. We followed what seemed to be footpaths or donkey-train trails through the savannah for the next couple of hours. We drove through dry river and lake beds, small Maasai villages called *bomas*, over hills, and through valleys, until finally we could see a gathering of people off in the distance on a small hill overlooking Lake Manyara. As we approached, you could hear the very distinctive rhythmic sound of Maasai singing and ululation as they welcomed us to their newly minted worship area under a tree.

Pastor Solomon had been invited by one of his relatives who had married into this clan to come and start a TZ-CLC congregation in the area. From what I have been told, the lands surrounding the national parks are owned by the government and purposely not developed. The Maasai are allowed to live and graze their cattle in these areas as a type of unofficial buffer zone around the parks. Most of the land is not useful for farming, and there is always the possibility and very real danger of animals from the parks making their way into these buffer zones.

A few years ago, this clan migrated from the area where Pastor Solomon is a TZ-CLC pastor to find more land





Left: Pastor Solomon addresses the people at the new Maasai preaching station.

Below: The Esilalei village elders meeting.

for their cattle. There are still acquaintances, relatives, and marriages between the two clans. Pastor Solomon had been told that there was no other Christian outreach in this desolate and isolated area. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) and Catholics had visited a few times over the years but no ongoing ministry had been established. The Maasai (in general) do not agree with Catholic doctrine and have little time for the liberal teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. When they heard about the TZ-CLC, they were eager to learn more.



Much work had been done before we arrived. Rocks had been removed and arranged into a low wall around a small tree on a hill. This area would serve as a shaded meeting and worship area. After we were introduced, Pastor Solomon addressed the large crowd and explained that he had been invited and was eager to come and teach the Bible. He commended them for their work in preparing the worship area and promised to come back regularly to preach and teach.

Pastor Jeremia and I were also given the opportunity to speak. I encouraged them in their faith with Jesus' words from Matthew Chapter 9, where we're told that Jesus looked out on the crowds of people and was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. I reminded them that Jesus encouraged His disciples to pray that the Lord would send more workers into the harvest, and that we can rejoice on this day because Jesus has heard their prayer and sent them a pastor to feed them with God's saving Word! They erupted in applause when I concluded with "Amen." What a joy to share the truths of God's saving

Word with these brothers and sisters in Christ who are so excited to have a pastor!

The rest of the afternoon was spent drinking tea and eating bread with the elders of the clan gathered near a large baobab tree to discuss plans to build a church. Pastor Jeremia encouraged them to construct a temporary shelter with poles and tarps soon because of the heavy rains that would be coming soon. He also pointed to all the rocks that are in abundance in this area and commented that the Lord had already provided the building materials and that he would bring a work crew from Arusha after the rainy season to help begin construction of the church building. We concluded the meeting of the elders with a prayer and the blessing and began the long trip back to Arusha. It was another day of blessings to witness the Lord and His love at work in the hearts of His Maasai children! What a privilege to be a part of it!



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

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church Watertown, South Dakota

Since we were last highlighted in the February 2018 issue of the Lutheran Spokesman, there are a few things that are new with us here at Trinity that we'd like to share with you!

In 2019 we replaced our church organ. Our old organ had been showing its age for some time, with certain notes not playing and other issues. We had a new one custom-made through Arnold Organs. Now, instead of having "stops" to press or pull as on a conventional organ, the new organ has all the stops displayed on touch screens. It has taken some getting used to, but with the cost being very affordable it was a worthwhile update for us. We have enjoyed the actual pipe organ sound it produces, as well as the various pipe organs that are saved on the onboard computer, available for use at the touch of an icon.

For many years we had a church sign out along the main street that runs past Trinity. In 2019 we were able to purchase a new Daktronics digital display



board. It has been a real treat to change the message from the warmth of a car using a cell phone app instead of having to do so by changing plastic letters in the freezing cold of winter!

Along with everyone else across the country, Trinity weathered the COVID storm that swept across our nation starting in 2020. We had been

in the process of updating our audio and video equipment, and those plans were kicked into high gear when we found it necessary to worship "virtually" via the internet for a couple



Improved church sign



New church organ



Children of the VBS

months. Trinity member Ethan Dummann stepped up and got us up and running in short order. Since then we have resumed most of our in-person customs, but we have continued to make our services available online, and encourage our shut-ins, as well as those who are traveling or who are sick, to make use of the YouTube option for “attending” our services.

Another thing that is new on our church property has to do with our parking lot. For many years most of the lot has been gravel, with one portion paved with blacktop and another with cement. In the fall of 2022 we finally enacted long-desired plans to pave the whole lot with concrete. We hired out for the paving, and then took care of the back-filling around the lot ourselves. Yes, our parking availability was limited for a few weeks, but



New concrete parking lot going in



A new addition to the Dumman family--and the kingdom of God

the end result is wonderful and makes our property much more attractive. Besides, now we have no more plowed gravel on the lawn and no more mud in the spring!

For the past couple of years Trinity member Rebecca Larson has spearheaded a new venture for us. On a December Saturday we offer a one day “VBS” program in which the children hear of the newborn Savior, sing Christmas carols, make holiday crafts, and have some Christmas sweets, too!

We have also had new faces at Trinity. Since our last article the Lord has blessed us with internal growth in the form of a handful of infant baptisms. And as a result, our small Christian day school at Trinity is seeing slow but steady growth. During this current school year we also had a new instructor in the classroom. Stephen Krause spent several weeks at Trinity practice teaching as part of his final year in the Education Program at Immanuel Lutheran College.

But no matter whether we have new video equipment, or new pavement in the parking lot, or a new church sign, or a new organ, new students or new VBS program, we are glad to continue offering at Trinity the never-changing (but always new!) message of salvation and eternal life in our Savior Jesus Christ!



Paul Krause is pastor of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Watertown, South Dakota, and Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hidewood Township, South Dakota.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS APRIL 2023

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
April 1	TLH 162	John 12:12-19	In lowly pomp, the Savior of mankind rides on to die. Hosannah to the Son of David!
April 3	TLH 154	John 12:20-26	<i>“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”</i> So said the Greeks at the Passover in Jerusalem. May we say the same!
April 4	TLH 390	John 12:27-36	Jesus could not avoid the hour of His arrest, trial, and execution. It was for our salvation that He came to this hour.
April 5	TLH 209	Isaiah 62:11-63:7	<i>“Who is this who comes from Edom in crimsoned garments?”</i> It is our Savior, Who comes to ransom us with His own blood.
April 6	TLH 304	1 Corinthians 11:23-32	Our gracious Lord vouchsafes to us His very body and blood, given and shed for the forgiveness of our sin.
April 7	TLH 167	2 Corinthians 5:14-21	One died for all. All our sins died with our Lord on the cursed tree—now we live with Him!
April 8	TLH 195	Matthew 27:57-66	The bands of death held our Savior fast, but only briefly. The preparations made by Joseph and the women were, after all, not needed.
April 10	LSB 463	Luke 24:13-35	<i>“Did not our heart burn within us?”</i> The Word of the Son of God reveals divine truth.
April 11	TLH 204	1 John 5:4-10	The Father has borne testimony about His Son—and His Son’s work—by raising Him from the dead.
April 12	TLH 331	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Can dry bones live again? Yes! God promises a resurrection to life in Jesus Christ.
April 13	TLH 271	John 20:19-23	Following his triumphant resurrection, Jesus bestows the Ministry of the Keys on His believers.
April 14	LSB 472	John 20:24-31	Thomas demanded visible proof of the resurrection, but blessed are those who, not seeing, yet believe.
April 15	TLH 31	Psalms 33:1-22	<i>“Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous!”</i> Believers are righteous by faith in their resurrected Lord.
April 17	TLH 213	Acts 5:12-28	The apostles were commanded by God to <i>“speak to the people all the words of this life.”</i> So are we.
April 18	TLH 451	Acts 5:29-42	<i>“God raised up Jesus Whom you murdered.”</i> The apostles spoke truth to the powerful Jewish council in Jerusalem.
April 19	LSB 711	Ezekiel 34:11-16	Even in the darkest days of Israel’s apostasy, God promised to gather the scattered sheep of His flock.
April 20	TLH 436	Psalms 23:1-6	Those who graze in the pleasant pasture of God’s Word will find that goodness and mercy follow them always.
April 21	TLH 433	2 Peter 2:21-25	Like straying sheep, we had all wandered far from God. But now, in faith, we have returned to our Shepherd.
April 22	TLH 431	John 10:11-16	Jesus is an unimaginably good Shepherd—One willing even to give His life for His sheep.
April 24	TLH 464	Acts 2:42-47	Let us, like the early Christians, continue daily in doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers.
April 25	WS 785	1 John 3:1-3	By faith in the risen Christ, we become children of God. What an exalted status!
April 26	WS 747	Isaiah 40:25-31	Does God not see and understand you? He created the myriad of stars! He knows how to protect and provide for you.
April 27	TLH 43	Psalms 147:1-11	Again, the God Who knows the name of every star has an infinite understanding of all things, including you.
April 28	TLH 287	1 Peter 2:11-20	How shall we resurrection believers then live? Let us have our conduct <i>“honorable among the Gentiles.”</i>
April 29	TLH 357	John 16:16-22	Jesus would soon take physical leave of His disciples, but He promised them a lasting joy that no one could take from them!

Every other month our CLC Board of Missions updates us with recent news from various mission fields.

Many Thanks from Mount Zion!

Detroit Congregation Goes Self-Supporting

On October 16, 2022, the voters of Mount Zion Lutheran Church, Madison Heights, Michigan, voted unanimously to become a self-supporting congregation beginning in 2023, ending almost twenty years' status as a domestic mission subsidized by the synod. After a great deal of prayer and a thorough examination of our finances, it has become clear that God has grown our congregation to the point where we no longer require the financial assistance of our brothers and sisters in the CLC.

All of this is cause for great celebration and praise to our gracious Lord! We can only stand in awe and proclaim with the Psalmist, "The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad." (Psalm 126:3 ESV) It is truly an awesome privilege to behold the effective work of God's saving Word, both in the hearts of new believers and also upon the growth of a small congregation in a large metro area. The Apostle John was right, "And from his [Christ's] fullness we have all received, grace upon grace." (John 1:16 ESV) Not only have the people of Mount Zion received the redeeming grace given through God's own Son Jesus Christ, but in recent years we've also received the grace of a growing congregation. Grace upon grace—it's all grace!

Another wondrous aspect of God's grace is how He often uses other Christians to dispense it. Mount Zion congregation would not be here today if not for the domestic mission program of the CLC Board of Missions, and the generous mission dollars of the people of our synod. All

of which gives us great reason to say, "Many thanks from Mount Zion!" We are truly grateful for the bond of Christian fellowship and love found in the Church of the Lutheran Confession. In this group of like-minded believers, God has provided us with not only faithful preaching and teaching of His Word, but also a family of fellow Christians who have supported and prayed for us year after year. Grace upon grace! Where else can such truth and love exist except within



Members of Mount Zion at Christmastime

a spiritual family bonded together by the blood of Christ? The members of the CLC have been to Mount Zion a living embodiment of Paul's Christian encouragement in Galatians 6:10, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." (ESV) Sincerely, many thanks from Mount Zion!

May God continue to bless the people of the Church of the Lutheran Confession with His rich grace and mercy, enabling us to grow in faith in Jesus Christ and love toward one another!

Joyfully serving our Savior with you,
Your Brothers and Sisters at Mount Zion



Thomas Naumann is pastor of Mount Zion Lutheran Church of Madison Heights, Michigan.

Lutheran Spokesman

501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anniversary. Holy Trinity Lutheran School, West Columbia, South Carolina, invites all current and former students, parents, teachers, pastors, CLC members and friends to our Fiftieth Anniversary Festival. This celebration of God's grace will be held May 26, 27 and 28 (Memorial Day weekend) with various activities each day. Visit www.LexingtonLutheranSchool.org for information or to receive email updates. Please contact principal Josh Ohlmann (HolyTrinityKidsSC@gmail.com) with questions. Schedule your vacation to join us during this time of thanksgiving and fun!
--Rev. Glenn Oster, Congregational President



COMMISSIONING. In accord with our usage and order, **Bruce Naumann**, who was called by the CLC Board of Missions as our fellowship's third full-time foreign missionary, was commissioned on March 12, 2023, as part of the morning service at Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Also participating in the service were (front row, left to right:) Pastor Caleb Schaller, Professor Paul Naumann, Missionary Bruce Naumann, Pastor James Naumann, Pastor Frank Gantt, Missionary Todd Ohlmann; (back row, left to right:) Pastor Emeritus James Sandeen, Pastor Paul Krause, Pastor Paul Tiefel, Board of Missions member Jeff Radichel, Pastor Nathanael Mayhew, and Board of Missions Chairman Joel Krafft.
—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew, CLC Board of Missions.



Children and teachers of Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Columbia, South Carolina



Pacific Coast Teachers' Conference, held February 18-20 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Clarkston, Washington