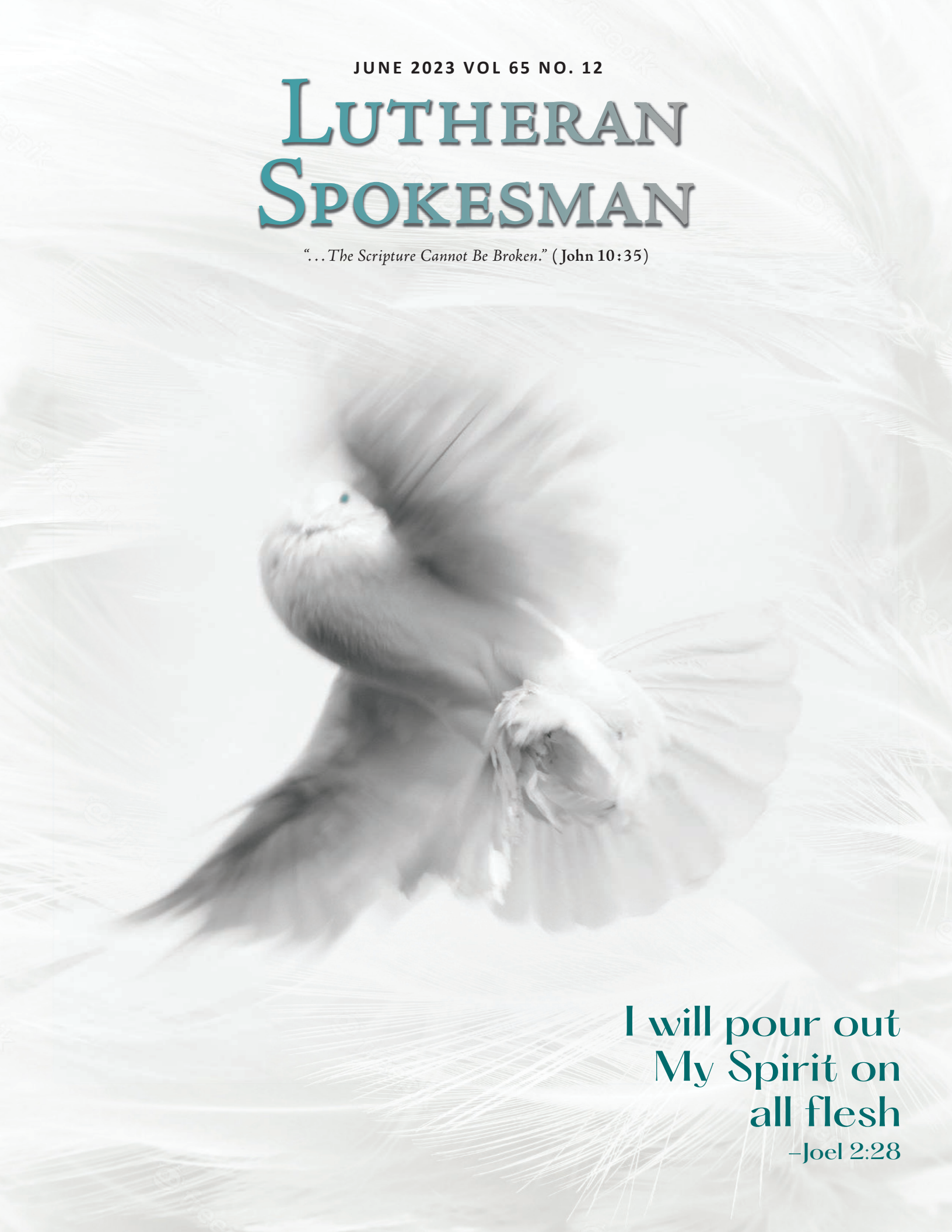


JUNE 2023 VOL 65 NO. 12

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



**I will pour out
My Spirit on
all flesh**
—Joel 2:28



Pages 10-11

IN THIS ISSUE JUNE 2023

COVER STORY - PENTECOST

The Universal Language of Pentecost..... 3

DEVOTION - GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Fruit Filled Life 4

OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY

The Gospel Lesson..... 5

STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

To Whom Do We Show Love?..... 6

GEMS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Following the Lord—Wholly!..... 7

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD

The Leaven 8

PILLARS OF FAITH

Sanctification: God's Good Work in Progress 9

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

V.S. Benjamin, 1930-2022 10-11

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Our Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church
—Conroe, Texas 12

BREAD OF LIFE READINGS, JUNE 2023..... 13

MISSION NEWSLETTER

Initial Visit to the Philippines 14-15

SEEN IN PASSING / ANNOUNCEMENTS..... 16

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The Universal Language of Pentecost

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)

There are eleven men enrolled at the Wittenberg Theological Seminary in Arusha, Tanzania. Eight of them are in the three-year seminary, with three others in the first-year, introductory level. One of the challenges for an American teaching in a foreign mission field is overcoming the language barrier. Although Tanzania has two official languages, English and Swahili, and the students are expected to be proficient in English, differing skill levels may make it necessary for the instruction to be aided by a translator. One recent “miracle” of translation that has the potential to help is computer-aided translation services. Translation to and from Swahili can be made instantly, right on a smart phone. Additionally, seminary textbooks are being prepared with English and Swahili texts on facing pages, courtesy of free online services. The translations, though imperfect, will aid those with marginal English skills and will be improved with use.

Of course, on the first New Testament Day of Pentecost, Jesus’ disciples didn’t have computers or the Internet. They didn’t need them, for the Holy Spirit provided a true miracle, enabling them to speak fluently in a variety of foreign languages which they had never studied. People who had gathered from many nations to Jerusalem exclaimed *“We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God!”* (Acts 2:11)

And what was the message of the disciples? This is revealed to us in Peter’s Pentecost sermon, which culminated in a message of both Law and Gospel: *“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. . . . Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”* (Acts 2:36, 38-39)

It is here in this message that we find the greatest miracle of

all. It is more amazing than the valuable tool of computer-aided, instant translation. It is even more wonderful than the sudden acquisition of language skills on Pentecost. It is the content of the message itself that works the greatest wonders. This universal language of Pentecost speaks to the hearts of people everywhere, regardless of race, age, gender, culture, or language. The message of the Law knocks down human pride and self-righteousness, and the message of the Gospel lifts up helpless sinners to know that, because of Jesus, God the righteous Judge has become our merciful and loving Father. There are no exceptions: all have the burden of guilt before God with which they are born, and to which they daily add sin upon sin. Every person has been fully redeemed from this guilt by the promised Savior, Jesus Christ. Every person is the object of God’s earnest search with the saving message of a crucified and risen Lord Jesus. People of every language and culture are invited by God to the throne of His grace, having full confidence through Christ, and firmly trusting that the glory of heaven awaits because of His completed work on our behalf.

It is this universal language of Pentecost—the message of sin and grace through Christ—which the students at the Wittenberg Seminary will study as they prepare to proclaim it to the people whom they, as pastors, will serve in the towns and villages of Tanzania and Kenya. Please pray that the Lord will use their hearts and mouths to speak it faithfully, for the welfare of many souls, in a lifetime of dedicated service to their Lord!



Bruce Naumann is a CLC Missionary to East Africa. His home is in Arusha, Tanzania

Fruit Filled Life

Most people know the importance of fruit in their diet. It has been this way from the beginning as God told Adam and Eve at creation, *“Behold I have given you every plant yielding seed . . . and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.”* (Genesis 1:29 ESV) Even in our fallen world we would be wise to remember the health benefits of fruit that gives vitality and strength to our bodies in this life.

However, there is a fruit that is immensely more important than that which we pluck from trees. That is the fruit Jesus speaks of when He warns us about false prophets. By their fruits you will recognize them, Jesus warns (Matthew 7:16). If we are able to recognize false teachers by the fruits they bear, then, conversely, we who teach God’s Word appropriately should also be known by our fruits. One very important difference between the fruits of the unbeliever and those of a believer is that while an unbeliever’s fruit comes from within him and is produced on its own, the believer’s is not.

We by ourselves cannot produce the good works or fruit that our Holy God requires. In fact, faith in Christ itself is a blessed gift given to us from above. When the Gospel of Christ is preached or when a Baptism is conducted, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that wakes the dead soul unto life in Christ. It is the working of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures that continues to cultivate and produce fruit in our lives.

Not all Christians will produce the same fruit, in kind or quantity, but that is not our concern. Encouraging one another to remain in the Scriptures in order that we may produce fruit is what we are to be about in our congregations. We read, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”* (Galatians 5:22-23 ESV)

At times we may take inventory of our lives and we find we are sorely lacking in these blessed fruits of the Spirit. That’s a good time to gather for Christian counsel. Gather with your like-minded believers around the Word in worship services and Bible studies, in private devotions and discussions, encouraging one another to be immersed in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit will be working through these blessed means.



Some say the true test of one’s character is to observe how he behaves when alone. Whether in our private time or joined with others, we glean from the Scriptures advice on conducting ourselves properly. *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about*

these things.” (Philippians 4:8 ESV)

Just as our salvation was not something we could accomplish on our own, so also growing this fruit in our lives is not a case of “get to it,” “try harder” or “do better.” Jesus tells us just how His horticulture works: *“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”* (John 15:5 ESV)

Yes, it is important to keep an eye on our diets and to strive for physical healthiness. Far more important, however, is the feeding of our souls. May we all practice to encourage one another to bear the fruit God so graciously gives.



David W. Bernthal is a retired teacher. He lives in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

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 Gospel Lesson

The Old Testament rule for evidence was that everything had to be established by at least two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). The wisdom of this rule is obvious. It is easy for one person to invent a charge against another by claiming to have witnessed something. Testimony needs to be corroborated by at least one other witness—preferably more than one—to be believed.

The same rule is also valid for establishing the truth of any claim. One person's say-so is weak at best, especially in matters of importance.

We see that God Himself employed this rule in recording the history of His Son. He did not want the facts of Jesus' coming into this world, His life and works, His teaching, His death and resurrection to depend on the testimony of only a single witness. By His Spirit He moved several witnesses to record the facts about these things. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each independently recorded an account. Later the apostle John wrote a fourth account, in which he adds to the record much material not covered by the other three, and also serves as a fourth witness to Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection.

These four accounts of the person, life, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ are not second-hand reports. They are the testimony of the apostles who were with Jesus during the three years of His ministry. They were there when He healed the sick and raised the dead. They heard with their own ears as He taught with divine authority. Together their reports form a sure record of the greatest events in all of human history: the coming into the world of the very Son of God and His work to redeem the world from the curse of sin.


The four Gospels are central to the Scriptures. They reveal the fulfillment of what was foretold of Christ in the Old Testament. They are the basis of what follows them in the New Testament: the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world in the book of Acts, the exposition of Christ's doctrine in the Epistles, and the

ultimate triumph of His kingdom over Satan and the world in the book of Revelation.

It is therefore most appropriate that selections from the four Gospels are read in Christian worship services, as has been done since the early days of the Christian Church.

Holy Gospel John 7:37-39


P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the seventh chapter.



G Glo-ry be to Thee, O Lord.

³⁷On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



G Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Christians have shown their high appreciation for the Gospels in customs they have followed in their services. For example, the liturgies in *The Lutheran Hymnal* include responses of praise both after the announcement of the Gospel Lesson and after the reading: "Glory be to Thee, O Lord" and "Praise be to Thee, O Christ." These exclamations of praise express the believers' faith that the Christ of the

Gospels is living and reigning and that He is present wherever two or three are gathered in His name, as He promised (Matthew 18:20).

The Gospels read in our churches present a living message. They are not merely records of persons and events from long ago, but they reveal the Savior Who rose from the dead after offering His life as a sacrifice to cleanse of us our sins. They tell us of the Savior Who ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father with all power in heaven and on earth, and Who still intercedes for us with the Father so that our sins are forgiven and our prayers heard and answered.

What a blessed privilege we have to be able to gather in our houses of worship and listen together to the reading of the Gospel Lesson!



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

To Whom Do We Show Love?

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.” (1 Peter 2:18-20)

To whom are we to show love? To many in the world, those deserving our love are the ones near and dear to us, as well as people who are nice to us. According to the Pharisees in Jesus’ day, God does not expect us to show love for those who oppose us. However, according to God’s law of love we are to show love for everyone, including our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44).

The Apostle Peter gives us a practical application of this way of Christian living, as he speaks of our relationship with our superiors in the workplace. This section of Scripture has often been cited in the study of the Fourth Commandment. As you may recall, God commands us, “*You shall honor your father and mother . . . that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth*” (Ephesians 6:2-3). Martin Luther explains this command by writing, “We should fear and love God that we do not despise nor anger our parents or superiors; but we should honor, serve, and obey them, and give them love and respect.”

Since there can be cases where superiors in our place of work are not so kind to us, but rather are cruel and unfair, our natural inclination is to resist the notion of showing them love and respect. However, not only are superiors our neighbors whom we are to love, but they are also God’s representatives whom we are to honor, serve, and obey whether they are good or bad.

When we patiently endure ill treatment by our bosses, this is commendable before God, because we are exercising Christian love. The apostle Paul describes what this kind of love involves, “*Love is patient and kind . . . it is not irritable or resentful . . . Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all*

things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13:4,5,7 ESV)

What would motivate us to practice such love toward a harsh boss, when our fleshly nature and the world would move us to do the exact opposite? The answer, of course, is to be found in the love of God in Christ Jesus. The apostle John writes, “*We love because He first loved us.*” (1 John 4:19 ESV)

Not only are superiors our neighbors whom we are to love, but they are also God’s representatives whom we are to honor, serve, and obey whether they are good or bad.

Just think of the many ways and times Jesus showed His love for us and those who opposed Him when He suffered mistreatment by His enemies. Even though Jesus lived a perfect life, nevertheless His adversaries wrongly accused Him of disobeying God’s Word and the civil authorities (Matthew 26:63-65; Luke 23:2). Jesus patiently endured all this so that His righteousness could be credited to us and cover all our

unrighteousness. Jesus also patiently bore all the terrible treatment of His foes (Matthew 26:67) and the painful cruelties of the Romans (Matthew 27:26). He allowed Himself to be afflicted by all this so that He could suffer the penalty for all our sins on the cross, resulting in our being forgiven of all our transgressions.

Since out of love Jesus endured all this for us as our Savior, should we not also out of love patiently bear the bad behavior of our superiors, and thus glorify God?



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

Following the Lord—Wholly!

Saint Paul, Alexander the Great, Vince Lombardi, Ernest Shackleton. What did these men have in common? Was it not the focus, the whole-hearted effort they exercised to achieve their goals? While Saint Paul's call to preach the Gospel was directly from the Lord, the others seemingly followed unabated and with passion their own agenda.

Caleb, too, was a follower, and what a remarkable follower he was! He followed not his own will, but God's. Of him the Lord said, *"But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully, him I will bring into the land. . . ."* (Numbers 14:24 KJV) Five more times in Scripture we are told that Caleb *"wholly followed the Lord."* Not to say that Caleb was sinless, but as much as any mere human can, he wholly followed the Lord. No one else was ever afforded this honorable legacy.

After the exodus from Egypt, Caleb was one of twelve spies sent to scout the Promised Land. The twelve reported back that there were giants in the land of Canaan, against whom the Israelites appeared as grasshoppers. Ten men advised that the plan of invasion was doomed. Caleb, along with Joshua, was the servant who was willing to faithfully follow the Lord. He exhorted the people: *"Let us go up at once, and possess it. . . . The Lord is with us; fear them not."* (Numbers 13:30; 14:9 KJV) But to no avail.

As a result, that whole adult generation perished in the desert. After forty years of wandering, only Caleb (and Joshua) entered Canaan. It was because he wholly followed the Lord.

And because Caleb wholly followed the Lord, he was given as his inheritance the city and mountain of Hebron.

But to possess it, Caleb had to conquer it. At age 85, strong in the Lord and still strong in body, Caleb and his family possessed Hebron, driving from it the descendants of the same fearsome giants who had so terrified Israel years earlier. What a blessing it is to wholly follow the Lord!

There was another Who wholly followed God. And that

was our precious Redeemer. Jesus followed the will of God wholly, fully, completely, and sinlessly. There was not a word He spoke that was not given to Him by His Father. There was not a miracle He performed that was not of the Father. There was not a minute of His earthly life that contained a single sin or misstep. And following His Father's will absolutely, He willingly went to the cross to redeem all mankind. Indeed, our Jesus followed the Lord God totally wholly! What a gracious salvation is ours because He did so.

**Not to say
that Caleb was
sinless, but as
much as any
mere human
can, he wholly
followed the
Lord.**

Who are we following? Our own passions, goals, will and agenda? Or are we following the Lord? Wholly?

When confronted with enemies that appear as big as giants; when we find ourselves a minority against the majority; when our trials and sufferings seem like a forty-year sentence in a parched desert; when tempted to doubt God's abiding presence, His grace, His strength and His promise of an eternal inheritance—are we following the Lord with humble trust, fully and wholly?

Caleb, God's servant did. So our Lord invites us to pick up our cross and follow Him—faithfully! Our dear Jesus instructs us: *"If any man serve Me, let him follow Me . . . if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor."* (John 12:26) That is today's challenge and privilege: to serve and follow the Lord fully in body and spirit. That means to flee sinful lusts and follow after righteousness, faith, charity and peace (2 Timothy 2:22). All this is of the Holy Spirit.

Tomorrow's glory: to possess our promised inheritance, to serve with honor, and to abide with our Savior God—eternally and completely holy.



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

The Leaven

Jesus' parable of the leaven is recorded in both the Gospels of Matthew (13:33) and Luke (13:20-21). It is one of many parables dealing with the "kingdom of heaven," God's rule in the hearts of people. As was typical of Jesus' parables, He again uses something common to His audience to teach a spiritual lesson.

Leaven was an important ingredient in the process of breadmaking. Historically, its use can be traced back 4,500 years to the ancient Egyptians. Among the Jews, bread was made daily, except for the Sabbath, and consisted of simple ingredients including flour, salt, olive oil, water, and leaven (yeast). Only at certain religious festivals and when haste was necessary did people eat unleavened bread. The Passover, sometimes referred to as "The Feast of Unleavened Bread," was the most notable (Luke 22:1). It was held to commemorate Israel's escape out of Egypt after the tenth plague.

How was leaven important to the breadmaking process? Leaven was the agent that initiated fermentation, a chemical reaction that produced carbon dioxide, making the dough rise and giving it a light, airy texture while baking. The amazing thing about leaven is that, when added to dough, it spreads throughout the whole lump when given the proper temperature. It works thoroughly, invisibly, and silently. Time is all that is needed.

References to leaven in the Bible are primarily negative. On numerous occasions, Jesus warns His disciples to "take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." (Matthew 16:6) This refers to the teachings of these "religious" groups that were filled with hypocrisy, spiritual pride, and self-righteousness. He tells His followers to "purge out the old leaven" of sin, malice, and wickedness, because even a "little" sin can leaven the whole lump (I Corinthians 5:6-7; Galatians 5:9). The parable of the leaven, however, highlights the positive characteristics of leaven.



It is interesting that Jesus told this parable after that of the mustard seed. In the mustard seed the growth of God's kingdom is evident to all. From a tiny seed a tree is born capable of housing nests for birds. This is the type of obvious growth we see in the events of Pentecost, the day on which

three thousand souls were added to the church. A contemporary example of this obvious church growth would include certain Christian missions in Africa and Asia whose growth numbers are astounding.

Leaven, however, represents a different type of kingdom growth—that which takes place hidden and often outwardly unnoticed. Do you recall Elijah thinking he was alone in following the true God until it was revealed to him that seven thousand believers still existed in his land? God's Word is like leaven; it works unseen. "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to me void,

but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11) When communism took hold in the former USSR and Christianity, "the opiate of the people," was outwardly crushed and churches closed, God's Word did not cease to have power. Millions worshiped secretly and faithfully. In Nero's Rome, did persecution of Christians prevent God's Word from prospering? Of course not. God's Word prevailed; the blood of the martyrs indeed became the seed of the church.

Therefore, let us take heart. Just like leaven, God's Word works silently, invisibly, and miraculously to expand His kingdom here on earth. We have the ingredients. We know the recipe. The oven door is open. Let's bake some bread!



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

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

Sanctification: God's Good Work in Progress

Is it a Lutheran reflex to hear the words “good works” with a little suspicion, even a wary concern about do-it-yourself thinking when it comes to salvation? That concern may be valid, but it does not derive from the Bible’s use of the phrase “good works.” Good works in the mouth of Jesus and on the pages of Scripture are always good, even as the Lord said to all believers, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) Of course, one needs to keep the horse in front of the cart. The Lord’s command regarding good works boils down to the truth that believers do good works *because they are saved*, not in order to be saved. When God sanctifies our hearts and lives so that we do the things that are pleasing to Him, it is always the result of the fact that He has saved us from our sin, justified us in Christ, and won us over by the power of the Gospel.

Ephesians 2:8-10 lays the pattern before us: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” The sequence is clear. First we are saved by grace through faith, then the good works come to pass after that. And throughout the whole process known as sanctification, God is at work within the hearts and lives of believers so that the good works He wants us to do, He causes us to do, for “it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13)

Understood in a wider sense, sanctification is God’s work of causing people to belong to Him by giving them their saving faith in Christ. He makes them holy in His sight by washing them clean of their sins and leading them down

the path of eternal life through His Word, especially the Gospel. We know from Scripture and from experience that our own sanctification, as defined above, is a constant work in progress during our time in this world. Setbacks and detours from God’s path are inevitable because our sinful nature gets us off track time and again. Though God has made us His saints (His holy ones) in Christ, we continue to sin against Him, the One whose grace and power continue to renew us as His redeemed people, His own work in progress.

Believers do good works because they are saved, not in order to be saved.

Much more could be said about the nature and purpose of good works, with details gleaned from Scripture that lay out specifically all that we are to think, say, and do as Christians who are in the world, but not of the world. Thankfully, the bottom line holds true that God makes all good works happen

as the fruit of saving faith—faith that He rejuvenates and strengthens through the means of grace, the Gospel in Word and sacrament. In that way He causes it to be so that “we love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) As He leads us to do the right thing for the right reason and brings us back from all our wayward wandering, He has earned our thanks and praise for His good work in progress, our sanctification, which reaches completion on the last day as we join all of God’s people made 100% holy forever in His holy presence.



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

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

V.S. Benjamin

July 1, 1930—November 20, 2022

[Editor: The following is a report from Pastor Jyothi Benjamin, in his own words, about the passing of his father, V.S. Benjamin, longtime chairman of the Church of the Lutheran Confession in India (CLCI). The report is lightly edited for clarity.]

In India, millions are searching for God through false religions and not finding Him! Religion without personal encounter with the true Word of God will not save the soul and it will not bring peace. God used the life and ministry of Rev. V.S. Benjamin, the chairman of the CLCI, to impact the lives of thousands in the South India. *“He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me . . . has passed from death into life.”* (John 5:24)

Rev. V.S. Benjamin (born on July 01, 1930) was the founder of the CLCI. He was a native of Mannava village in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh State, South India. Rev. Benjamin was baptized and confirmed by a Lutheran pastor at Mannava village. Rev. Benjamin’s parents were school teachers in Andhra Evangelical



V.S. Benjamin

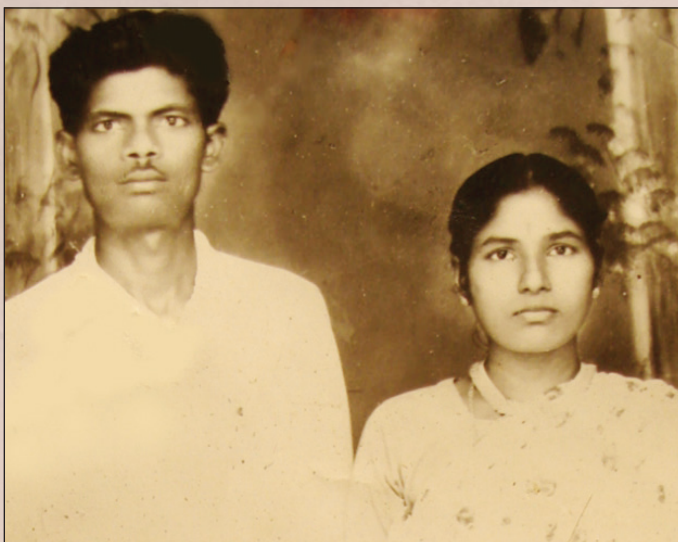
Lutheran Church mission school, so pastor Benjamin grew up with the Lutheran faith. At that time school teachers’ salaries were very low, so his childhood was spent in conditions of severe poverty.

Pastor Benjamin had his primary education in the Lutheran School at Mannava, followed by secondary education at the government high school at Doppalapudi. Pastor Benjamin was very adept in his studies. He completed his Bachelor of Arts degree from Andhra Christian College at Guntur. He also completed his teacher training course at Guntur, as well as

theological training at Rajahmundry Lutheran seminary. After completion of his training he became pastor and headmaster at Mannava Lutheran Church and Mission School.

On June 9, 1956, Rev. V.S. was married to Mary Benjamin, who was a teacher at Phirangipuram Lutheran School. They were blessed with six children: sons Raju, Jyothi, and Nireekshana; and daughters Ammaji, Ujvala, and Prajwala. Pastor Benjamin had fourteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

V.S. Benjamin served as a pastor in the AELC (Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church) for twenty years. Due to doctrinal differences, Rev. Benjamin left the AELC in 1975 and worked independently with his own established Lutheran congregations at Nidubrolu, along with his school duties. Rev. Benjamin took voluntary retirement from his teaching job and worked fulltime to establish his own independent Lutheran churches at various villages in Andhra Pradesh State. Since 1975, Rev. V.S. Benjamin worked very hard, founding many new congregations in Andhra and Telangana States (1975 – 1981). Traveling thousands of miles as an evangelist, he spread the Word of God to tribal people in hundreds of rural



V.S. and Mary Benjamin shortly after their marriage



Above and right: V.S. Benjamin engaged in pastoral training and evangelism activities

villages. Through his efforts many thousands of souls received Jesus as their Savior.

Since Pastor Benjamin was raised in the true Lutheran faith, he was constantly searching for a true Lutheran helping hand for the spiritual feeding of his churches. The Lord answered his prayers when, in 1981, he came into contact with the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

In that year John Rohrbach, a member of Zion, Ipswich, South Dakota, came to India on a 4-H project and fell sick. Rev. V.S. Benjamin heard about him, visited him at the hospital and brought him home until he got well. Rev. Benjamin told him about his wish to partner with a truly Lutheran church body. When Brother John communicated this to the CLC Board of Missions, there was joy aplenty, which then led to action!

In 1983, a visitation team consisting of John Rohrbach and Pastors David Schierenbeck and David Koenig came to Nidubrolu to visit Pastor and Mrs. Benjamin. Lengthy discussion led to the conclusion that doctrinal agreement existed, and with much joy Pastor Benjamin started the Church of the Lutheran Confession of India (CLCI), and registered it. Soon thereafter he started an orphanage in Nidubrolu, supported by the CLC Board of Missions under Project Kinship. Through the years Rev. Benjamin served as a father to hundreds of orphaned children. In addition, he founded a seminary to train pastors for the many congregations of the CLCI.

Rev. V.S. Benjamin was a man who had a purpose, a dedication in life. His life was a mix of terrific self-discipline and

dedication with faith and trust in Jesus. He was very humble, had the power of tenderness, and had the strength of love. He never relaxed till his death in witnessing for Christ and in evangelizing the people.

At the age of 92 Pastor V.S. Benjamin went to be with the Lord. Even though the cause of Rev. V.S. Benjamin's death is listed as heart failure, here people won't say that "Daddy" died of heart failure, because it is far more accurate to say he had at long last given all his heart away to the CLCI. Surely Rev. Benjamin made a profound impact on many thousands of CLCI people's lives, and did indeed accomplish something beautiful for God here in South India. Rev. Benjamin's contribution to the CLCI is literally immeasurable.

In his prayers, Pastor Benjamin always remembered the people of the CLCI, and especially the families of the CLC USA, and prayed for their welfare. He was very thankful to the people of the CLC and for their wonderful support and prayers. We ask you to remember the family of V.S. Benjamin and the people of the CLCI in your daily prayers.



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

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Our Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church Conroe, Texas

Our Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church is located about forty miles north of downtown Houston. It is a fairly new church in the CLC, but has a long history within our church body. Many may remember Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was located in Spring, Texas, for many years and then later in Humble. After that group disbanded in 2018, some former members (as well as a few new faces) began meeting in various locations, including a member's home and a vacant store front. After much discussion and prayer, our group voted to apply for membership in the CLC. This was officially granted in 2021.

Our congregation does not currently have an official call out to any pastor, but we have enjoyed being served monthly by Pastor Matthew Hanel of Saint Matthew's in Dallas and Pastor Sam Naumann of Resurrection in Corpus Christi, as well as by Allen Durham (a layman of Resurrection). Most services are conducted by laymen, which has been a wonderful opportunity for them to exercise their Christian leadership. Over the years we have been blessed to hear from a number of guest pastors and retired pastors. If any pastors or retirees are ever in the area, we would love to have you lead a service—winter in Houston is pretty nice!

Our Shepherd is currently meeting in a conference room at the Hampton Inn in Conroe, which has worked quite well. Services are currently at 4:30 P.M. on Sunday. We have



Above and lower left: some members of Our Shepherd.

enjoyed getting to know some of the hotel staff, and have had at least one person at the hotel join us for worship.

Our congregation is small in numbers, but we are very thankful that the Lord has given us a church that is faithful to His Word, as well as beloved Christians to worship with. We currently have twenty members, as well as a handful of nonmembers who attend regularly.

We thoroughly enjoyed hosting the ILC tour choir this past spring. We are very thankful to have heard the Word from them and enjoyed their fellowship!

We pray that God would continue to bless our congregation with the wonderful opportunity to gather together in His name. He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, and we are eager to see where He will lead our group in the future!



Matthew Hanel is pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Dallas, Texas. Nathan and Abby Noeldner, members of Our Shepherd, contributed to this article.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JUNE 2023

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
June 1	TLH 43	Genesis 1:1-2:3	The Lord creates the universe in six days. On the seventh day He rests.
June 2	TLH 236/LSB 500	Acts 2:42-3:26	After Pentecost, the followers of Christ devote themselves to the Word and sacraments. Peter heals a lame beggar and preaches Christ in the temple.
June 3	TLH 191/LSB 463	Matthew 28	The Marys visit Jesus' tomb early on Easter morning. An angel announces to them that Jesus has risen from the dead. The Jewish leaders pay the Roman soldiers to say that Jesus' disciples have stolen His body. In Galilee Jesus commissions His church to baptize and to teach.
June 5	TLH 381/LSB 587	2 Timothy 1	Paul begins a personal letter to Timothy. He urges Timothy not to be ashamed of his faith, but to guard and to treasure it.
June 6	TLH 349/LSB 683	John 14	Jesus teaches and comforts His disciples on Maundy Thursday. He promises to prepare places for them in His Father's house. He promises to give them the Holy Spirit.
June 7	TLH 35	Job 38	The Lord, who created and still preserves all things, responds to Job. Truly His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)
June 8	TLH 39/LSB 790	Job 39	The Lord continues to list examples of His almighty power over the natural world.
June 9	WS 797/LSB 936	Romans 4	Abraham believed the promise of the Lord and was justified by faith. He looked ahead to the coming of the Messiah. As we look back at the fulfillment of the promise in Christ, we are justified by faith along with our father Abraham.
June 10	TLH 502	Matthew 9	Jesus raises a girl from the dead and heals a paralytic, a woman suffering a discharge of blood, a mute, and two blind men. Jesus calls Matthew. Jesus explains why His disciples do not fast. Jesus teaches that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.
June 12	TLH 535/LSB 737	Job 40	Job silences himself before the Lord. The Lord continues to challenge Job, pointing to Behemoth as evidence of His almighty power.
June 13	WS 744/LSB 801	Job 41	The Lord continues to challenge Job, pointing to Leviathan as evidence of His almighty power.
June 14	TLH 166/LSB 419	Job 42	Job repents. The Lord rebukes the friends of Job. The Lord restores to Job his worldly blessings, <i>"twice as much as he had before."</i> (Job 42:10)
June 15	TLH 171/LSB 453	Exodus 19	The people of Israel encounter the Lord at Mount Sinai. It is a terrifying experience—thunder, lightning, thick cloud, and a trumpet blast. As sinners we cannot stand before holy God. However, just as the Lord appointed Moses to serve as a mediator between Himself and the people, the Lord has appointed His Son to serve as Mediator between God and man.
June 16	TLH 369/LSB 562	Romans 5	Through faith in Jesus Christ all believers enjoy peace with God. Adam brought condemnation and death to all people, but Jesus has accomplished justification and life for all people.
June 17	LSB 856	Matthew 10	Jesus sends out the twelve apostles to proclaim to the Israelites that <i>"The kingdom of heaven is at hand."</i> (Matthew 10:7) The proclamation of the gospel will result in persecution for those who proclaim it. Even so, the Lord protects His faithful people and promises them His gracious reward.
June 19	TLH 157	Exodus 4	The Lord gives Moses powerful signs so that the children of Israel will listen to him. The Lord appoints Aaron to serve as a spokesman for Moses. Moses takes his wife and his children and returns to Egypt.
June 20	TLH 27/LSB 814	Exodus 5	Pharaoh rejects the command of the Lord to let the Israelites go. Instead Pharaoh commands the Israelites to gather their own straw for making bricks. The Israelites blame Moses and Aaron. Moses complains to the Lord.
June 21	LSB 487	Exodus 6	The Lord responds to Moses that He will deliver the Israelites out of Egypt and will give them the land of Canaan, as He has promised. Moses records the genealogy of Moses and Aaron.
June 22	TLH 235/LSB 913	Jeremiah 20	Pashhur the priest persecutes Jeremiah. Jeremiah prophesies against Pashhur and against Judah, predicting the Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah cries out to the Lord in grief.
June 23	TLH 334/LSB 689	Romans 6	Salvation is not a license to continue sinning. In our Baptism, the Lord has raised us to a new life of faithfulness. We are dead to sin and alive to God. No longer slaves to sin, now we are privileged to live as slaves to righteousness.
June 24	LSB 583	Hebrews 1	The Lord speaks to us by His Son. Jesus Christ is superior to the angels of God.
June 26	TLH 219/LSB 532	Hebrews 2	We are in danger of drifting away from saving faith if we neglect the salvation of Christ. Jesus has redeemed us by becoming one of us. He knows from experience our pain and our suffering and the temptation that we experience.
June 27	TLH 279	Hebrews 3	Jesus Christ is greater than Moses. For now we wander through the wilderness of this fallen world. However, all who remain faithful unto death will enter eternal rest.
June 28	TLH 220	Hebrews 4	Each of us must give account to the Lord before entering His rest. Thanks be to God, we have a great high priest who has sacrificed Himself to redeem us. Therefore we may approach the Lord with joyful confidence.
June 29	TLH 429/LSB 708	Jeremiah 28	The prophet Hananiah falsely prophesies deliverance from Babylon. Jeremiah prophesies against Hananiah and predicts his death.
June 30	TLH 379	Romans 7	Believers in Christ are free to serve the Lord out of faith and love, not out of fear of the Law. The Law is good, but it brings death to those who transgress it. The new man of faith within the believer struggles constantly against the sinful flesh. We must endure this battle until the Lord calls us to our eternal rest.

Initial Visit to the Philippines

In April of this year, I had the privilege of joining Missionary Todd Ohlmann on an initial in-person visit with a contact in the Philippines. For about a week, we had the opportunity to meet with Pastor Jordan Palangyos and the members of the Lutheran Autonomous Mission in the Philippines (LAMP).

The formation of LAMP dates back to 2008 when Pastor Palangyos resigned from the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP, an LC-MS mission) following his seminary graduation. The reason behind his resignation was due to his concern that the leadership of the LCP appeared to be driven by greed and power, and that they had little interest in spreading the Gospel and teaching God's Word to the remote areas of the Philippines. Additionally, he noticed an increased tolerance of liberal theology.

Pastor Palangyos first came into contact with the CLC



Left to right: Pastor Robert Sauers, Pastor Jordan Palangyos, Missionary Todd Ohlmann

through Pastor Tim Daub's Facebook page in early 2021. Pastor Daub was encouraged by their correspondence and introduced him to Missionary Ohlmann, who has been taking him through the Online Theological Studies



Beautiful landscape in the Philippines.



A LAMP church in the remote hills of the Philippines.



Worshippers at a LAMP church service.

curriculum. Throughout their study, Pastor Palangyos has exhibited a sound comprehension of Biblical doctrine and has expressed his appreciation and agreement with everything he has read and studied concerning the CLC. Therefore, the Board of Missions authorized an initial face-to-face visit.

The primary purpose of an initial visit is to observe the ministry first-hand in a particular area. We spent most of our time teaching God's Word in the two villages where LAMP has congregations and preaching stations. It was also an opportunity for discussions about expectations and the next steps in the process that we pray will lead to a formal declaration of fellowship. We emphasized that

the primary support we provide for our foreign mission fields is through the training of faithful preachers and teachers to proclaim the truth of God's saving Word.

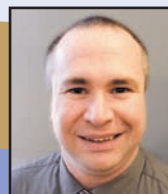
Pastor Palangyos is the sole ordained pastor of LAMP. There are two laymen who serve as evangelists, and two young men that he is currently training to be evangelists. He serves two congregations and two preaching stations, with approximately seventy adult members and twenty youth members.

The visit confirmed that we have a solid foundation on which to build. The next step is a doctrinal colloquy. Missionary Ohlmann and I will be requesting President Wilke to appoint a representative of the CLC (typically a member of the Board of Doctrine) to work with Missionary Ohlmann on a comprehensive study of the teachings of the CLC and LAMP. If everything goes well over the next few months, a second face-to-face visit will be arranged, during which there will be an oral review of our doctrinal unity.

We pray for Pastor Palangyos, LAMP, and for the Lord's blessings upon our ongoing discussions and study of God's Word.



Pastor and Mrs. Jordan Palangyos



Robert Sauers is pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Winter Haven, Florida, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2023 CLC General Pastoral Conference

June 20-22

Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis: Amos 1:1ff—Pastor Joseph Naumann
 - New Testament Exegesis: 2 Thessalonians 2:13ff—Pastor Michael Roehl
 - Pornography—The Secret Sin No One Wants to Talk About—Pastor Caleb Schaller
 - An Evaluation of Bible Translations—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
 - Scriptural Study of In Vitro Fertilization—Pastor James Albrecht
 - Devotional Study of Isaiah 55—Pastor Terrel Kesterson
 - “Close Communion and Selective Fellowship - A Study”—Pastor Emeritus John Schierenbeck
 - The BoD Theses and Antitheses: “What Scripture Teaches Regarding Admonition And Termination Of Fellowship”—Pastor Emeritus David Schierenbeck
 - Part I of the BoD/Joint Committee Report to Convention—Pastor Paul Nolting
 - Communion Service Speaker—Pastor Frank Gantt
 - Communion Service Liturgist—Pastor Terrel Kesterson
 - Chaplain—Pastor Aaron Ude
 - Music Coordinator—Pastor Paul Krause
- Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, CLC Secretary

ANNIVERSARY. All CLC members are invited to a special worship service observing the fiftieth anniversary of Mount Zion Lutheran Church of Madison Heights (Detroit), Michigan, on Sunday, August 6, 2023, at 4:00pm. The three-part service will thank and praise God for His grace upon Mount Zion’s past, present, and future; with special guest preaching from Pastor Emeritus Walter Schaller, who served as pastor of Mt. Zion from 2000-17, and Pastor David Naumann, chairman of the CLC Board of Education and Publications. A catered meal will be provided following the service. Please RSVP to Pastor Tom Naumann at 920-266-5387 or tomnaumann.pastor@gmail.com.



INSTALLATION In accord with our usage and order, **Andrew Schaller**, who was called by Luther Memorial Church of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, to be its pastor, was installed on April 16, 2023. Also participating in the service were (photo, left to right) Pastor Emeritus Walter Schaller, Pastors Sam Rodebaugh, Terrel Kesterson, David Ude, [Andrew Schaller], Michael Eichstadt, Chad Seybt, Mark Tiefel, Caleb Schaller, and Michael Schierenbeck (not pictured).
—Pastor Caleb Schaller.