


AUGUST 2023 VOL. 66 NO. 2

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



You open Your
hand and satisfy
the desire of every
living thing.

—Psalm 145:16



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The Lutheran Spokesman (USPS 825580) (ISSN 00247537) is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.clclutheran.org

Periodicals postage paid at Eau Claire, WI and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701-7134

Editor: Paul Naumann, 3732 Claymore Lane, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, E-mail to paul.naumann@ilc.edu; Assistant Editor: Craig Owings; Art Director, art direction & graphic design by Pipestone Publishing Co.; Proofreaders: David Lau and Paula Naumann; Staff: James Albrecht, David Bernthal, Timothy Daub, Wayne Eichstadt, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, Richard Kanzenbach, John Klatt, Joseph Lau, Delwyn Maas, Karl Olmanson, John Pfeiffer, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Peter Reim, Sam Rodebaugh, Michael Roehl, Robert Sauer, David Schierenbeck, Chad Seybt, Steven Sippert, Mark Weis.

Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Naumann three months before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Naumann.

Business Manager: Rev. James Sandeen, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701. E-mail to jim.sandeen@ilc.edu. Individual subscriptions {foreign-U.S. currency only}: \$18.00 {\$36.00} for one year; \$34.00 {\$50.00} for two years; \$50.00 {\$72.00} for three years; sent in bulk to congregations: \$15.00.

Send address or payment question requests to: lutheranspokesman@ilc.edu

Spokesman Online Version at: www.lutheranspokesman.org

Printed in U.S.A.

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I Will Be Their God

“Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.”
(Jeremiah 24:7)

What a blessing to hear the Lord say, “*They shall be My people, and I will be their God.*” The Bible is full of examples of what it means to have the Lord as our God and to be His people. God delivered His people from every trouble, provided for their every need, and blessed them abundantly physically and spiritually. That is what we call the providence of God!

God is in control of all things. Absolutely nothing happens without God’s knowledge and approval. If God feeds every bird and clothes the grass of the field (Matthew 6:26-29), and not even a single sparrow falls to the ground without Him (Matthew 10:29), certainly every aspect of our lives is in His hands.

Think about the comfort of God’s providence. It comes from a fatherly heart, a heart of infinite love. This is the God Who “*so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*” (John 3:16) If God “*did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?*” (Romans 8:32) You can rest secure in God’s love. Every moment of your life is under His providing care.

God’s providence is guided by His all-knowing wisdom. We might feel at times as if God must have made a mistake. Why did God let this happen? How can this be good? You call this love? Remember God’s promise in Psalm 84:11: “*The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.*”

We usually think of “good things” in terms of what is pleasant, but truly loving parents know that discipline is also good for their children. No one knows what we need and what is truly good for us better than God. Therefore, “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*” (James 1:17)

God’s providence is carried out by God’s almighty hand. Godly parents have the love to do everything that is good for their children, but not always the wisdom or understanding to know what is best. Even more, parents do not always have the strength or ability to do what is good. They are not able to protect their children from every danger, nor are they able to provide everything they would like. But remember, “*With God nothing will be impossible.*” (Luke 1:37)

It is all-encompassing. God is at work in everything. Paul says that God “*is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*” (Ephesians 3:20) That was the case for Ruth. She simply knew she had to go out and glean barley from the nearby fields in order for her and Naomi to survive. By God’s loving providence He

gave her so much more than she sought. God provided Ruth a kinsman redeemer who took her as his wife and provided a home to both her and Naomi. God also blessed her with a son, and so she became the ancestress of King David and, further, of her Savior and ours.

This is what it means to have the Lord as our God and to be His people. He sees and knows everything and always has our best interest in mind. Notice in our passage above, this is only possible because God Himself has given us a heart to know Him. The more you recognize God’s providence in your life, the more you will rejoice in His goodness, pray without ceasing, and truly “*seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,*” and marvel to see how “*all these things shall be added to you.*” (Matthew 6:33)

The more you recognize God’s providence in your life, the more you will rejoice in His goodness.



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

God Gives Bread

Have you ever stopped and looked at all the bread at the store? The vast volume and variety of bread at the store is truly remarkable. Bread is so easy to come by today that we hardly think about all that went into getting it from the fields to the store.

But it wasn't always that easy. Throughout most of the world's history, people thought a great deal about a loaf of bread, because a lot more went into having a loaf of bread than simply going to the store. First there had to be a successful wheat-growing season—good soil, the right temperatures, and just enough rain. Then the wheat stalks had to be cut and stacked by hand. At the mill, the wheat kernel needed to be separated from the chaff and ground into flour. Then the flour needed to be worked into dough—using water that had to be carried by hand from the well to the kitchen. In addition, one might use yeast, oil, salt, and sugar, each of which has its own complicated, time-consuming process to be usable for baking. Then the oven had to be heated up to just the right temperature, probably using wood—wood which needed to be cut and dried months if not a year earlier. All that for ONE loaf of bread—bread which would have needed to be eaten in the next day or two before it became moldy or the mice got at it. Once that loaf of bread was eaten, then the baking started all over again.

While it has become easier for most of us to enjoy a slice of bread today, it is still dependent on the providence of God (see the previous article). As the post-Flood world dried up and things began to grow once again, God promised, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.” (Genesis 8:22) God, Who cannot lie, has kept His promise to provide seasons for growing and harvesting, and will keep that promise until the trumpet sounds on the Last Day. While floods and drought, hail and frost, war and “supply-chain” issues may interfere with getting our daily bread with ease, seedtime and harvest has remained since



Noah stepped off the ark. God created a planet capable of providing His creatures with their daily bread, and He sustains it to this day.

Knowing this, the psalmist wrote, “You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” (Psalm 145:16) The greatest desire that God has satisfied is our desire for a right relationship with Him. He opened His gracious hand and sent His Son to be

the Bread from Heaven to satisfy the hunger of our sin-starved souls (John 6:32-33). The gracious hands of Jesus were nailed to the cross to satisfy our desire for forgiveness. Forty days later, those hands were raised in blessing as the risen Lord ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us.

God, Who has satisfied our GREAT desire by sending Jesus, also satisfies our daily desires by feeding our bodies. He makes the sun to shine and the rain to fall. He is the one who “supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food.” (2 Corinthians 9:10) There may not always be an abundance of bread, and it may not always be your favorite bread, but God, Who has provided in the past, will continue to provide for His children. Aged King David observed: “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.” (Psalms 37:25)

The next time you find yourself in the bread aisle at the store, join Jesus and the psalmist who gave thanks to the Lord for His goodness and mercy that endures forever. That goodness and mercy is seen in the cross and empty tomb of Easter, as well as in that slice of bread He provided to feed your body.



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

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 Hymn of the Day

Some pastors begin their worship services by stating a worship theme for the day along with a short explanation of it. This helps people focus their thoughts on one central idea they can return to throughout the hour. The Scripture readings, sermon, and prayers will then connect in some way to this main theme. The Hymn of the Day, as it is found especially in more recent Lutheran orders of service, serves this same function.

The late Carl Schalk (1929-2021), a noted Lutheran writer on hymns and liturgy, described the Hymn of the Day in his pamphlet *The Hymn of the Day and Its Use in Lutheran Worship*:

The Hymn of the Day is “the name given to the chief hymn in the service on every Sunday and festival, so called because it fits the specific day and season in the church year. It is the hymn which responds most intimately to the dominant theme of the day, which is usually contained in the Gospel for the day.” As the chief hymn in the service, it reflects the central thrust of the proclamation for the day. . . . The Hymn of the Day is never merely a “sermon hymn” (although it certainly reinforces the message of liturgical preaching). It is never merely a poetic paraphrase of the Gospel reading (although it is certainly related to the Gospel). It is rather a “musical and poetic commentary on all of the lessons and chiefly on the meaning of the theme to be communicated by the service.”

The Hymn of the Day is a relatively modern addition to our worship services. It was introduced by Lutherans in the late 1950’s to replace the sermon hymn and it developed from the *gradual* (the “connector” between the Epistle and Gospel lessons). In American Lutheranism, the Hymn of the Day first appeared in the *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)* in 1978. The LBW was originally a collaboration between the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the American Lutheran Church

As the chief hymn in the service, it reflects the central thrust of the proclamation for the day.

(ALC), and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LC-MS), although the LC-MS withdrew from the work prior to its final publication. The Hymn of the Day is now given a place in most Lutheran hymnals, including *Worship Supplement 2000* and the *Lutheran Service Book (2006)*.

Including the Hymn of the Day in the liturgy poses a challenge to those who put hymnals together because it means at least fifty-two of the hymns

included must be tied to a specific theme for a Sunday or festival. Hymn of the Day lists are usually published as both one-year and three-year cycles, depending on the selection of readings followed. Many of the hymns are familiar and well-loved. For instance, “Savior of the Nations, Come” (Advent 1), “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” (Christmas Eve), and “Jesus, Priceless Treasure” (Lent 4).

Although the Hymn of the Day is a fairly new idea, it seems worthwhile. In our time of constant distractions and shortened attention spans, something that helps worshipers focus on and remember the Law and Gospel message they hear in church is valuable. The Hymn of the Day serves this purpose. Further, the selections are repeated over the years, giving congregations the opportunity to fully learn and appreciate some of the greatest Christian hymns of all time.

*Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples. (Psalm 96:1-3)*



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

Won By Her Conduct

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. (1 Peter 3:1-2)

“**W**ives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands.” Why do so many cringe upon hearing that? Could it be that people have been deceived by the world’s lies into thinking that the word *submit*, when it refers to wives, must be a mistake? Why does the man get to be the head of his wife and family? Because God says so. Why is it so difficult? Because sin changed everything. The blessing of “*be fruitful and multiply*” (Genesis 1:28) was given to Adam and Eve before sin, but after sin there is sorrow and pain in childbirth. The blessing of work was given to man before sin, but after sin there is pain, sweat, and difficulty in man’s work. Likewise, the woman was given to man as a submissive, helper wife before sin, but after sin there is this great rebellious struggle within marriage. Thankfully, God doesn’t just point out the problem; He also provides the solution.

In Ephesians 5:22, Paul writes, “*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*” That’s the key, isn’t it?

To bring Christ into view. “*As to the Lord*” does not mean, as some would like, that the wife is to treat her husband as a god; as though everything he said was to be obeyed, even things the wife knows to be against God’s Word. Rather, “*as to the Lord*” means that the wife, in view of God’s mercies, presents herself a living sacrifice to God in thanksgiving for His grace and forgiveness in Christ Jesus as she carries out her role of submissive, helper wife.

Peter says further that an unbelieving husband may notice and be blessed by the godly living of his Christian wife. Peter was addressing the situation of a married couple where the wife becomes a Christian and the husband does not. After

conversion, the change in the wife’s attitudes and actions toward her husband is so different that it can cause him to wonder and investigate.

The story is told of a wife who had converted to Christianity while her husband had not. She desperately wanted him to believe and to share her joy in the Lord, so she began listening to Christian music and a Christian podcast in his presence every day, hoping he would overhear and take notice. He didn’t care for the music and was turned off by the constant preaching of the podcast and would often walk out of the room. Distraught, the wife turned to her pastor, who pointed her to this passage in 1 Peter 3, encouraging her to focus on acts of service and love to her husband, living out her calling as a Christian wife. Eventually, the husband noticed the changes in his wife, investigated the faith more seriously, and became a believer.



Despite the world’s lies, there is nothing for a Christian wife to be ashamed of as she lives out God’s calling to be a submissive helper to her husband. In living so differently from the world’s ways, she likely will be asked, “Why do you submit to your husband and help him like that?” She then has opportunity to respond, “I do so out of love for my Lord and Savior who bought me with His own blood and bids me live this way as a wife to my husband.” What a reason for Christian living! To share about Jesus! Who cares if the world may call the Christian wife a “loser” for properly submitting to her husband. In the Lord’s eyes, Christian wives are winners!



Chad Seybt is pastor of Morning Star Lutheran Church in Fairchild, Trinity Lutheran Church in Millston, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Melrose, and Peace with God Evangelical Lutheran Church in Onalaska; all in Wisconsin.

"He Has Made Everything Beautiful in Its Time."

Ecclesiastes 3:11

The world that God created was very good! No flaws. No strife. No disappointments. No death.

Adam was given the intellect to name every animal and bird God brought before him. That suggests Adam understood their nature and was able to put into words their distinctive characteristics. He witnessed nature functioning in perfect harmony. None of the creatures were on today's menu. The Lord provided plants for the food of all His creatures. In view of this, it is said that Luther posited it may be better for their overall health if people would limit themselves to a vegetarian diet today. (And all the cattle and chickens said, "Amen!")

So much of what passes for "settled science" nowadays is far from being either settled or science, especially when it comes to creation. Many of us have been blessed to hear Dr. David Menton and others shine light on the power and glory of God's design in creation. Interestingly, many who embrace evolution have recently admitted that key aspects of their theory are not holding up. One example of that is in this quote by physics Nobel laureate Robert Laughlin, who has done research on the properties of matter that make life possible: "Evolution by natural selection . . . which Darwin conceived as a great theory has lately come to function as an anti-theory called upon to cover up embarrassing experimental shortcomings and legitimize findings that are at best questionable and at worst even wrong." (Lennox, John C. *Cosmic Chemistry: Do God and Science Mix?* Lion Books, 2021, pg. 301)

It is only through the Bible's account of creation that genuine and helpful insight can be gained through scientific studies of origins, biological activity at molecular (and smaller) levels, a sense of right and wrong, geography, astronomy, and the list goes ever on.

"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17 NASB) The world and everything in it depend on God every second. Gravity, motion, thermodynamics, energy,

So much of what passes for "settled science" nowadays is far from being either settled or science, especially when it comes to creation.

and so on were initiated by God so that life in this world can thrive. Scientists have observed these things and identified them as laws, but laws, in and of themselves, can't make anything happen. God designed them, introduced them into His creation, and by His power maintains them. The slightest variation in any of them would render the planet lifeless. When some consider how these and other factors are so finely tuned to make life on earth possible, they exclaim, "Wow! What are the odds?"

In answer to that, some scientists have admitted it would take many more billions of years (than what evolutionists have previously posited) to account for all the improbable factors to come to pass and line up as they have. Others acknowledge that, since the odds are so great, it's essentially impossible for these things to have happened on their own.

"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth. . . . All things were created through Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:16)

We perceive with wonder and delight all that God has created! Even in the context of living after the Fall, God's handiwork is something at which we marvel. Sunrises and sunsets. Lady slippers and bluebonnets. Babies laughing. Puppies frolicking.

We also rejoice that the same Lord "gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)—a life that will be without sin and its effects.

"Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You." (Jeremiah 32:17)



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The Seed Growing Secretly

And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4:26-29)

They called him *Automatica*, partly because of his accuracy under pressure, and partly because of his last name. Martín Gramática was a field-goal-kicking, extra-point-scoring machine. Automatic? Not really. His attempts sometimes fell short or sailed wide.

When Jesus said, "*the earth yields crops by itself*;" He used a Greek word that is pronounced: *auto-mah-tay*—"automatically." It's "*as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.*"

An agronomist can tell us how a plant progresses through its stages. A plant geneticist can tell us which character traits have been switched on or off. A farmer can tell us when it's time for planting and when the grain is ready for harvest. But no amount of knowledge can cause a seed to germinate, grow, and reproduce. The seed does that by itself.

That's how it works in God's kingdom, too. The Spirit creates faith through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. We can see evidence of faith, but we cannot see how a person is transformed from an unbeliever into a believer. Jesus said, "*The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.*" (John 3:8)

Each spring, a farmer trusts the seed to do its job. He probably won't toss handfuls of it into the air and hope that it lands in a good place. Modern planting is a lesson in precision. Seed goes into the ground at precise depths, in precise intervals, and with precise amounts of fertilizer. Every measure is taken to give it the best chance for success. And yet, the crazy thing? The seed



still works even when it's dropped or haphazardly scattered on the ground.

Give that truth a moment to sink in. Because you, the sower, will find reasons to keep the seed of the Word to yourself. "Why should they listen to me?" "What if I say the wrong thing?" "What if I can't convince them?" God's answer? Trust the seed. It works. Paul explained, "*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.*" (1 Corinthians 3:6)

The seed itself is effective. No one knew that better than Jonah. His fear of going to Nineveh was not that he'd be run out of town or that his message would be rejected. Jonah fled because he knew that God's Word would work. It did. Jonah was arguably the most successful missionary in the Bible. An entire metro area was brought to repentance by the power of the Word he proclaimed.

Is there a time when the seed won't work? Yes. The famous basketball statistic, that you miss 100% of the shots you don't take, is also true of the seed that goes unused. Let's repent of our failures to trust the Gospel to do the Lord's work. God grant us the ability to recognize opportunities when they come, and give us the courage to let His Word work. Automatically.



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

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

The Lord's Supper

The Church of Christ lives by the power of the Gospel; through the message of the cross, the Holy Spirit works faith, enlightenment, and grace in the Church's members. When that Word is preached, He brings hearers to repentance. Through the sacrament of Baptism He gives life to those who were dead in trespasses and sins. And in the Lord's Supper He also nourishes the Church.

The Lord's Supper (also known as Holy Communion, the Sacrament of the Altar, or in some denominations, the Eucharist), is simple to define, but difficult to comprehend. Jesus instituted it on the night in which He was betrayed. In the presence of His disciples, He *"took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'"* (Matthew 26:26-28) So, as with Baptism, it is a sacrament, being instituted by Christ, employing earthly elements (bread and wine) used with the Lord's words, and promising the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation.

Simple to define, but hard to comprehend how it can truly be Jesus' body and blood present when we commune. But with His own words, Jesus assures us that as we eat the bread and drink the wine, we are receiving His own body and blood; His life, *"delivered up"* for our sins (Romans 4.25), is now delivered to us for our life. It is Jesus' way of coming to us wherever we are in our turbulent lives to say, "I am here as you eat this bread and drink this wine; with this body and blood I have redeemed you; in this precious food you are forgiven; with this heavenly token, you are redeemed and safe.

The benefit of the Supper is not a matter of proteins and

carbohydrates; it is spirit-renewing Gospel. It is not a matter of mere ritual; it calls for a sincere faith. Luke and the Apostle Paul add to their account of the first Lord's Supper the words *"do this in remembrance of me."* (Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24). One must approach the Lord's table prepared in the heart—while Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the institution of the Lord's Supper, the

Apostle Paul talks about it in terms of pastoral theology: *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."* (1 Corinthians 11:28) He is interested in how it is practiced in the churches. He warns that the Lord's Supper can be harmful to those who receive it with hardened, impenitent hearts. So he urges Christians to approach the Sacrament first with a measure of self-examination. As Luther states, "a person is truly worthy and well-prepared who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.' Whoever does not believe these words or

doubts them is unworthy and unprepared. The words, 'For you,' require nothing but believing hearts." (Lord's Supper, Part 4, Luther's *Small Catechism*).

"What is this bread? Christ's body risen from the dead: This bread we break / This life we take / Was crushed to pay for our release / Oh, taste and see—the Lord is peace.

"What is this wine? The blood of Jesus shed for mine; The cup of grace / Brings His embrace / Of life and love, and so I sing / Oh, taste and see—The Lord is King." (Worship Supplement 755:1-2)

The Lord's Supper is simple to define, but difficult to comprehend.



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

General Pastoral Conference 2023

Sometimes losing something, at least for a while, reawakens an appreciation of the blessing that God has given through what was lost. When the pastors of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) gathered in Eau Claire, Wisconsin for their General Pastoral Conference on June 20-22, it was the first time in four years that such a conference had taken place. After the four-year break due to COVID rescheduling, the benefits of gathering together for study, growth, and encouragement in the Word of God were great. They came with renewed appreciation for what we had missed, and thanksgiving to the Lord for what He grants, whenever two or three are gathered together in His name.

The purpose of the General Pastoral Conferences is shared study of the Word of God and mutual encouragement. At times, the study is directed to a particular doctrinal concern—to wrestle with God’s Truth and its application in our teaching and in our lives. At other times, it is simply study in the Word to nurture faith. The chaplain of the conference provides devotions each day, the speaker and liturgist provide



ABOVE: Board of Doctrine member
Pastor Emeritus David Schierenbeck
BELOW: Pastors of the CLC





Recently-ordained Pastors (l-r) Zachary Sippert and Jonah Albrecht



Pastoral spouses (l-r) Mrs. Collette Krause, Mrs. Gloria Wilke and Mrs. Peggy Kesterson

the Word through the conference communion service, and the various essayists share the results of their work in the Word for the benefit of all. The purpose for all of this is characterized by the writer to the Hebrews, *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works . . . exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”* (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Each pastoral conference features an in-depth study of an Old and New Testament text. This year’s studies were in Amos chapter 1 and 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Additional essays this year were an evaluation of Bible translations, a devotional study of Revelation chapter 1, and “Pornography—the Secret Sin No One Wants to Talk About.” The conference also undertook a study of what Scripture teaches regarding admonition and termination of fellowship, as directed by the 2021 and 2022 synod conventions.

It is the prayer of each pastoral conference that the participants return home nurtured and recharged for the work they do in the kingdom. We pray that your pastor returned home that way this year. Yet this blessing is not just for pastors gathered in a conference every other year, it is a goal and blessing for each child of God every time we go to draw water from the wells of salvation and seek to bless one another within the bonds of fellowship in Christ Jesus. *“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ*

dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (Colossians 3:15-18).



Missionary—and parliamentarian—Pastor Peter Evensen



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.

The Maginot Line

Prior to World War II, the series of fortifications known as the Maginot Line was considered by the French to be impregnable. Later, however, they proved to be meaningless as the Germans simply went around them, attacking with tanks through the Ardennes Forest, where they were least expected. There the defense was light and totally inadequate against panzers. Despite all the time, effort, and money spent on the splendid Maginot Line of forts, they stood as a hollow monument to the failings of a static defense.

We Are at War

Against us are arrayed far worse foes. *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* (Ephesians 6:12) In this war there is no compromise, and the sides are clearly drawn. *“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.”* (Matthew 12:30)

Are we sometimes guilty of offering a “static defense” in our mission work, instead of a mobile warfare that sweeps courageously forward? There are a variety of risks in such an approach. The terrain is rugged. The territory is unfamiliar. The risks to life and limb are ever present.

The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail

It would be a daunting task were it not for the fact that our commander is no worldly-wise Rommel or Guderian. Ours is the *“Commander of the army of the LORD.”* (Joshua 5:14) He has already won! We are to be mobile and forward moving as our Lord taught. *“I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”* (Matthew 16:18) It is important to note that He is building His church. We are His instruments. He builds His mobile expanding force in our hearts, rather than in stationary brick and mortar.

We are not really in a fortress with the enemy battering our walls. We are assailing the devil’s strongholds in order to bring out the captives into the glorious light of His Gospel of grace and love. Our weapons are more powerful than any division of panzers. *“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV)



A ruined fortress of the ill-fated Maginot Line in France

Think of that Samaritan town that was breached

not by a vast military host bearing siege weapons and battering rams, but by a single woman entering with the Good News in her heart and on her tongue. After the Lord spoke to the woman at Jacob’s well (John 4), she with joy went to tell others. Then even more results were forthcoming as the people came out to see and hear Him. And the multiplication continues.

Whether as a missionary, a board, or a synod, if we fail to take note and go where He points, we run the risk of falling back on a static defense. But when we sweep forward with courage, the impregnable is overcome and the impossible becomes possible. *“For with God nothing will be impossible.”* (Luke 1:37)

Our prayer—“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”



David Koenig has served as a foreign missionary in Africa, India, and elsewhere. Though officially retired, he continues to be active in the synod’s mission endeavors.

“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS AUGUST 2023

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
August 1	TLH 220	Hebrews 9	Jesus Christ is a greater Priest than those of the Old Testament, and His covenant also is greater than theirs. He has redeemed us by His own blood.
August 2	TLH 156 / LSB 431	Hebrews 10	Christ offered one sacrifice for all the sins of the world. By faith in Him we receive the free gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.
August 3	TLH 396	Hebrews 11	What is faith? The writer to the Hebrews points to well-known figures of the Old Testament as examples of faithfulness.
August 4	TLH 373 / LSB 566	Romans 9	Some sinners are saved purely by the grace of the Lord. Others are damned as a result of their own rejection of His grace. We cannot rationalize this paradox. We simply stand in awe of the Lord, trusting His infinite wisdom, justice, and love.
August 5	TLH 370 / LSB 575	Matthew 14	Herod has John the Baptist beheaded. Jesus feeds five thousand. Jesus walks on water. Jesus heals the sick.
August 7	TLH 402 / LSB 731	Hebrews 12	We trust in Jesus Christ alone. By faith in Him we are equipped to endure whatever crosses or trials may come our way. We belong to the unshakable kingdom of the Lord!
August 8	TLH 464 / LSB 649	Hebrews 13	The writer to the Hebrews exhorts his readers to holy living before closing his letter with a benediction and personal greetings.
August 9	TLH 99	Galatians 4	At the appointed time, God sent His Son to redeem us. We are no longer slaves, but sons and heirs of our heavenly Father. Paul urges the Galatians not to return to the slavery of their former paganism.
August 10	TLH 140 / LSB 440	Galatians 5	Believers in Christ are free from the curse of the law, free to stop gratifying the desires of the sinful flesh, and free to live according to the desires of the Spirit.
August 11	TLH 175 / LSB 425	Galatians 6	Paul encourages the Galatians to admonish and to restore one another in gentleness and to do good toward one another. Paul closes his letter with a blessing.
August 12	TLH 19 / LSB 819	Romans 10	The Lord has accomplished salvation for all people through His life, death, and resurrection. Individual sinners receive this salvation as the Holy Spirit gives them the gift of faith through the gospel.
August 14	LSB 659	Genesis 7	The Lord commands Noah to gather his family and the animals into the ark. Rain falls for forty days and forty nights. The flood water remains on the earth for 150 days.
August 15	LSB 809	Genesis 8	The Lord ends the flood and the waters subside. Noah and his family and the animals come out of the ark. Noah offers sacrifices to the Lord. The Lord makes a covenant with Noah.
August 16	TLH 605	Genesis 19	The Lord rescues Lot and his family from Sodom before destroying the city.
August 17	WS 741 / LSB 807	Isaiah 56	All the faithful will receive salvation from the Lord—even Gentiles. The leaders of Israel, however, have failed to remain faithful to the Lord.
August 18	TLH 342 / LSB 611	Romans 11	Though the Israelites by and large have rejected their Messiah, some believe and are saved. The Lord reveals His grace also to Gentiles.
August 19	TLH 387 / LSB 556	Matthew 15	Jesus opposes the Pharisees, who insist on upholding human traditions while neglecting the commands of God. A Canaanite woman believes in Jesus and her daughter is delivered from demonic possession. Jesus heals many people and feeds four thousand.
August 21	WS 793 / LSB 893	Job 36	Elihu attempts to defend the goodness and justice of God. While he is more sympathetic than the other three friends of Job, he concludes, wrongly, that the afflictions of Job are results of unrighteousness on the part of Job.
August 22	TLH 243	Job 37	Elihu continues to declare the majesty of the Lord.
August 23	WS 763 / LSB 512	Isaiah 45	The Lord has chosen Cyrus as an instrument to carry out His holy will. The Lord alone is the Savior of mankind.
August 24	TLH 278	Isaiah 63	The Lord destroys His enemies in vengeance. Yet He has mercy on His chosen people. We join Isaiah each day in praying for mercy from the Lord. He grants us mercy for the sake of Christ.
August 25	TLH 399 / LSB 694	Isaiah 51	The Lord comforts, reassures, and encourages His faithful people.
August 26	TLH 409 / LSB 685	Matthew 16	<i>“For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”</i> (Matthew 12:40, ESV) Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ. Jesus predicts His death and resurrection. Jesus teaches that his followers also must bear their own crosses.
August 28	LSB 739	Isaiah 42	The Lord promises to send the Messiah, Who will accomplish salvation. In response to this salvation, we praise the Lord. Many, however, remain deaf and blind to the Gospel.
August 29	TLH 338 / LSB 687	Isaiah 43	The Lord is the only Redeemer of His chosen people.
August 30	TLH 32	Isaiah 66	The faithful people of the Lord humbly listen to His Word; great rejoicing results! Isaiah concludes his prophecy with a description of the final judgment and the eternal glory of the Lord.
August 31	TLH 518 / LSB 750	Psalms 138	The Lord preserves and protects His faithful people. Truly He is worthy of our thanks and our praise!

Mission News, Foreign and Domestic

In this month's newsletter, we want to share with you some brief updates from various fields where our mission work is taking place.

The Philippines

Pastor Jordan Palangyos of The Lutheran Autonomous Mission in the Philippines (LAMP) has expressed his desire to be in fellowship with the CLC. Based on our recommendation after our visit with him in April, CLC President Mike Wilke has appointed Pastor Andrew Schaller, a member of the CLC Board of Doctrine, to work with Missionary Ohlmann to conduct a formal colloquy. This will be a time of instruction and study in God's Word to examine whether or not doctrinal agreement exists between LAMP and the CLC. We pray that God will bless this process and lead to God-pleasing fellowship with LAMP.

East Africa

Missionary Bruce Naumann has begun his work at the Wittenberg Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tanzania. He is the main instructor for the four seminary and three evangelism students currently attending the school. He reports that the students are eager and receptive, and he is pleased with the teaching environment and their progress.



ABOVE: Wittenberg Faculty Tanzania
BELOW: Members of LAMP Congregation in Philippines





Nepal mission trip helpers



Collapsed wall at the Church of the Lutheran Confession, India

Missionary Naumann has also been asked to make occasional visits to the CLC-Kenya. He made a six-day trip to Kenya in June, visiting fellow believers in Etago and Moi's Bridge. To follow Missionary Naumann's activities, visit <https://clc-tz.blogspot.com/>.

2023 Mission Helper Trip to Nepal

Thirteen mission helpers went on a three week trip to the Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession of Nepal (HCLCN) where they had the opportunity to share the simple Gospel message with about 1,500 children. We thank the Lord for those who volunteered to spread the Gospel in Nepal.

Church of the Lutheran Confession—India

In June, heavy winds caused a part of the wall around the CLCI compound to collapse, damaging a drain pipe and electric wires for the water motor. The Board of Missions sent \$2,500 from the Mission Development Fund to pay for the repairs.

Zion Lutheran Church, Loganville (Atlanta Area), Georgia

At a May voters' meeting, the members of Zion resolved to become a self-supporting congregation. It is our hope and prayer that the Lord will continue to bless the congregation with His rich grace and mercy, enabling the members to continue growing in the faith and to reach out to others in the area with the gospel of Christ.

CDF Evangelism Seminar

The Committee of Domestic Fields (CDF) is tasked by the CLC Mission Board "to make outreach ideas and material available to CLC congregations and to encourage them in carrying out the Great Commission of our Savior, Jesus Christ." With that goal in mind, the CDF is offering a complete evangelism seminar to CLC congregations. The seminar is titled "Acts of Evangelism" and consists of three parts on evangelism based on accounts in Acts. The seminar is designed to assist congregations as they reach out to their communities. If you are interested in hosting a seminar, contact CDF member Jeff Aymond at jeff.aymond@gmail.com.

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. For the most up-to-date information on our mission fields, look for Missionary Ohlmann's monthly CLC Missions Prayer List in your church bulletin or at Missionary Ohlmann's blog: missionaryohlmann.blogspot.com.



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

SEEN IN PASSING

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

State of Wisconsin Tries to Strip Catholic Charity of Its Religious Exemption. For over a century, the Catholic Charities Bureau of Superior, Wisconsin, has aided people of all faiths: serving the developmentally disabled, seniors, and children; many of them low income. Earlier this year, however, the state of Wisconsin's labor division ruled that the charity is not eligible for a religious exemption from contributing to the state's unemployment insurance system, because it offers its services free of proselytizing, regardless of clients' religious background. As a result, Wisconsin's Labor and Industry Review Commission determined it was essentially a secular organization, not operated for "primarily religious purposes." The charity appealed, contending that the state is determining for itself which activities are and are not within the scope of religious obligation. The appeal looms as a possible watershed for religious liberty. "Saying Catholic Charities Bureau is not religious is like saying the Milwaukee Bucks is not a basketball team," said Daniel Vitagliano of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. "It's as absurd as it sounds. The Wisconsin Supreme Court should intervene and correct the lower court's error." Phillips, Maggie. "Is the Pope Catholic? Yes, but Wisconsin Rules This Catholic Charity Is Not 'Primarily' Religious." *Articles*. RealClearInvestigations.com, 11 May 2023. Web. 10 Jun. 2023.

"Angry Atheist" More Than a Stereotype. According to a recent Pew Research Center survey on religion in America, Mormons genuinely have the friendliest attitudes toward other groups, including atheists, supporting the stereotype of the "friendly Mormon." Likewise, the typecast "angry atheist" also turns out to be largely based in fact. When gauged on their warmth toward other religious groups, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gave the most positive

ratings. Atheists gave by far the most negative ratings. Atheists had strongly negative views of every other group except Jews, toward whom atheists were moderately positive. What's more, atheists harbor far more negative opinions of Christians than Christians harbor toward atheists. The single greatest net negative was the atheists' minus-76-point rating of evangelicals. The study also uncovered an interesting correlation with family formation: the religious group in the U.S. with the highest birth rate is the Mormons, and the group with the fewest babies is the atheists. Carney, Timothy. "Mormons probably like you. Atheists probably don't." *Opinion*. WashingtonExaminer.com, 30 Mar. 2023. Web. 10 Jun. 2023.

Most American Churches Rely On Armed Members for Security. Active shooter attacks against churches have been in the news in recent years. In a June survey by *Lifeway Research*, four out of five Protestant pastors in the U.S. said that their church has some kind of security plan in place. Over half of them—54%—rely on armed congregation members to counter the threat. 20% hire armed private security, 5% utilize off-duty uniformed police officers, and 1% have metal detectors at their entrances. In the South, where most attacks have occurred, an even greater percentage (65%) of churches rely on members carrying firearms to provide security. Overall, 26% of churches also utilize radio communications as part of their security plan. Earls, Aaron. "Most US Pastors Use Armed Congregants as Church Security." *News & Reporting*. ChristianityToday.com, 7 Jun. 2023. Web. 10 Jun. 2023.