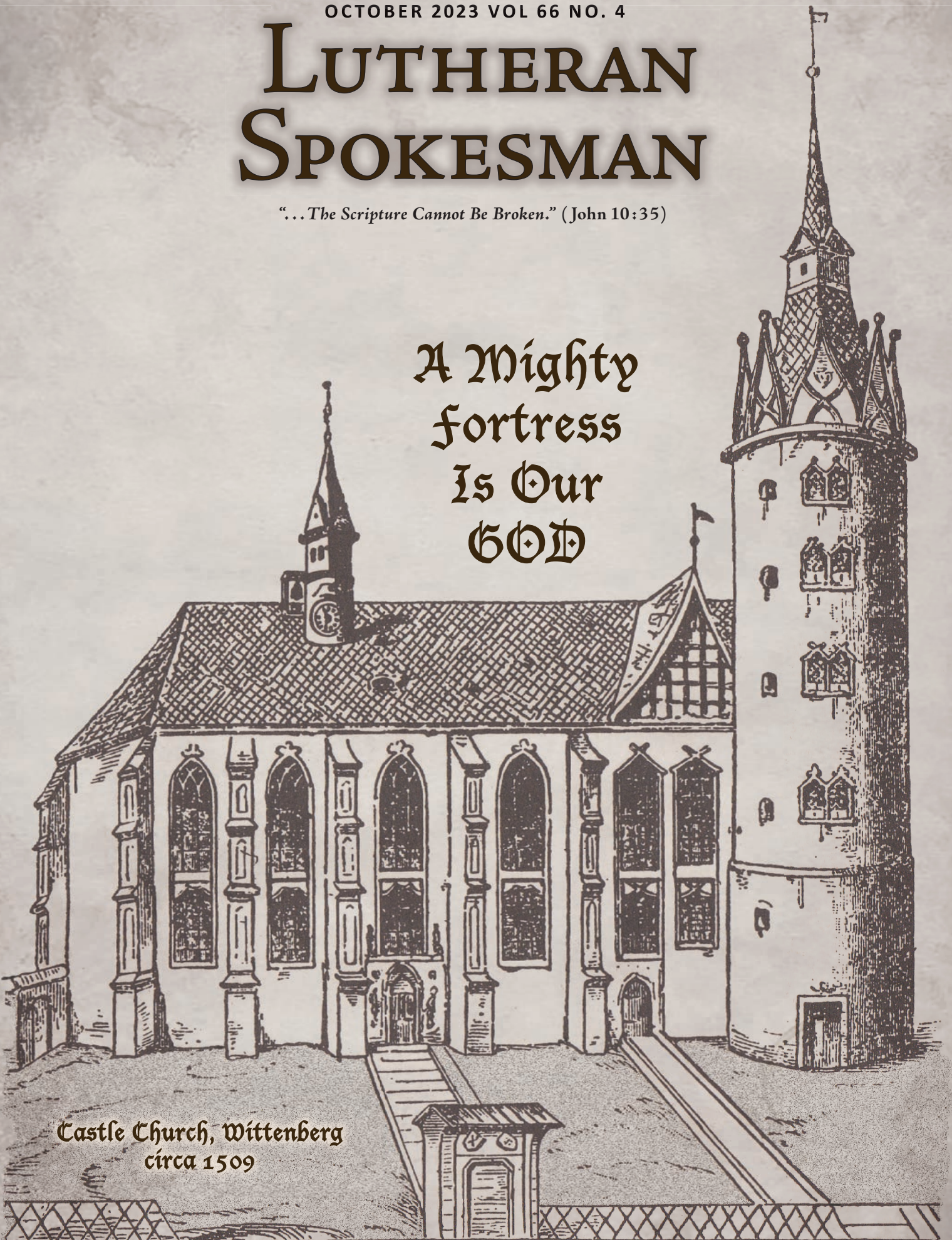


OCTOBER 2023 VOL 66 NO. 4

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

A Mighty  
fortress  
Is Our  
GOD



Castle Church, Wittenberg  
circa 1509





Pages 8-9

## IN THIS ISSUE OCTOBER 2023

### COVER STORY - REFORMATION

A Bible the People Can Understand..... 3

### DEVOTION - GOD'S GIFT OF PRINTING

Our Times Are in His Hand..... 4

### OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY

The Offertory ..... 5

### STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

How Husbands Are to Regard and Treat Their Wives ... 6

### THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD

The Good Samaritan..... 7

### NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Mission Helper Trip to Nepal ..... 8-9

### WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Zion Lutheran Church—Ipswich, South Dakota..... 10-11

### PILLARS OF FAITH

What's Next? ..... 12

### BREAD OF LIFE READINGS, OCTOBER 2023..... 13

### MISSION NEWSLETTER

Support For Myanmar Amid Crisis..... 14

### FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Reformation Confidence..... 15

### SEEN IN PASSING / ANNOUNCEMENTS..... 16

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# A Bible the People Can Understand

*“Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading? And [the Ethiopian] said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ ” (Acts 8 9 31)*

Being directed by the Holy Spirit to approach the Ethiopian’s chariot and invited by the Ethiopian into the chariot, Philip became the man’s guide. We’re told, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.” (Acts 8:35)

Martin Luther has been referred to as the Father of the Reformation and the Great Reformer. In his book *The Church of the Reformation*, Conrad Bergendoff uses the word *guide* to describe Luther’s work as a reformer. “He is not the creator of a new church but the guide to an understanding of the nature of the true church” (page 31). But Luther was also a guide on a personal level.

When the Ethiopian told Philip that he didn’t understand the Isaiah passage, Philip stepped into the chariot and “preached Jesus to him.” The preaching was understandable and effective. The Holy Spirit created faith in the man. Martin Luther, also, had an audience that he desired should know Scripture, so he “stepped into the chariot”—Germany—and preached Jesus. One thing Luther did to guide the people to a clear understanding of God’s Word was to present the Word in the vernacular—the language of the people.

Jesus tells us in the meaning of a parable the great importance of understanding Scripture: “When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.” (Matthew 13:19)

In Luther’s day (and well beyond), the Roman Catholic Church conducted mass in Latin, and most Bibles were in Latin. Latin was still in use, but mainly as the language of scholars—theologians and scientists—not the common man. Luther, understanding the needs of the people, spent much of his time at the Wartburg Castle translating the New Testament into German. He followed with the Old Testament. About the Bible, Luther once said, “Would that this one book were



The original *Lutherbibel*, completed 1534

in every language, in every hand, before the eyes, and in the ears and hearts of all men!”

Luther did not write the only, or even the first, vernacular Bible. Other vernacular Bibles had been produced and were being produced around this time in Germany and other European countries.

Luther’s use of the vernacular expanded. He began to preach sermons in German. He promoted congregational

singing, insisting that the hymns be in German. To this end, Luther wrote hymns for the congregation and encouraged hymn singing in the homes and in parochial schools. “His forms for baptism and marriage established an evangelical ministry in the vernacular that bound the family to the church.” (Bergendoff page 60)

Luther did not completely dispense with the use of Latin in services, using it for years in the Wittenburg church (Bergendoff page 53). Luther said, “For in no wise would I want to discontinue the service in the Latin language because the young are my chief concern. And if I could bring it to pass, and Greek and Hebrew were as familiar to us as is the Latin . . . we would hold mass, sing, and read on successive Sundays in all four languages, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. I do not at all agree with those who cling to one language and despise all others.”

Vernacular language certainly helps us understand the Bible and worship, but Luther adds this: “Entreat the Lord to grant you, of His great mercy, the true understanding of His Word. . . trust solely in God, and in the influence of His Spirit.”



Karl Olmanson is a retired teacher. He lives in Kassota, Minnesota.

# Our Times Are in His Hand

*“Printing is the ultimate gift of God and the greatest one.” —Martin Luther*

**“W**hat the world is today, good and bad, it owes to Gutenberg. Everything can be traced to this source, but we are bound to bring him homage . . . for the bad that his colossal invention has brought about is overshadowed a thousand times by the good with which mankind has been favored.” —Mark Twain

1450; 1492; and 1517—three years from the eons of human history that have shaken and shaped our world down to this very day. 1492 is easily remembered due to the “Columbus sailing the ocean blue” ditty. If your memory is still good, you may recall from your catechism days that 1517 is the year Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses on the Wittenberg church door. And in 1450, Johannes Gutenberg invented his movable type printing press in Mainz, Germany.

“My times are in Your hand,” we read in Psalm 31:15. What a comfort it is to know the Lord is watching out and caring for us. But the Lord’s care and protection does not end there. God controls the world, commands the universe, and writes man’s history for the good of His Church.

Before Gutenberg began printing on his press, a monk could take up to fifteen months to copy a Bible by hand. The first printing run of the Bible in Latin on his press took Gutenberg three years, but produced around two hundred copies. The new printing methods began to catch on quickly and spread throughout Europe. As a result, books and information (think early newspapers) became readily available and at a steadily declining cost. Many historians agree that without Gutenberg’s gift, the following period of the Renaissance would have been impossible.

We know there were several religious reformers who came before Luther. Yet, while their teachings smoldered and sputtered, the reformation at Luther’s time burst into flames and continued. One difference was the printed word. When Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses in Wittenberg in 1517, broadsheet copies of this document were being printed seventeen days later in London. Luther’s tracts, books, and sermons were being printed at a frenzied rate, and the people clamored for more. While the



Roman Catholic Church lauded the use of the press for the printing of Scriptures, they also decried the fact that their erstwhile monk, Martin Luther, had become the world’s first best-selling author. Luther’s translation of the New Testament into German sold five thousand copies in just two weeks. From 1518 to 1525, Luther’s writings accounted for a third of all the books sold in Germany. Religious scholars agree that Gutenberg’s press played a major part in helping the Reformation to take hold.

Even though Columbus’s 1492 “discovery” of the New World was surely preceded by the native

Americans, Vikings, and others, it was his landing that led to the eventual exploration and settling of the land. After a few short decades, the Catholic French were safely ensconced in Canada. The Catholic Spanish were entrenched in South America and spreading northward into the North American continent. The Protestants of England and other countries sought religious refuge in the lands between—the future United States of America. These Christian outcasts came to the New World with their printed Bibles and tracts, books of sermons and theology. They built schools to teach the same to the ensuing generations. It is estimated that at the time of our American Revolution, 90% of the American colonists were literate, compared to some 50% of their English brethren. This was surely an example of adhering to the Lord’s directive to “Teach them [God’s Words] diligently to your children. . . .” (Deuteronomy 6:7) Where would our Lutheran heritage be in this country if it were not for the faithful resolve of Luther and our forefathers, and the inventive genius of Gutenberg?

Thanks be to God for His intervening hand in our history!



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 Offertory

What are your thoughts when the offering plate is passed during the church service or—in some of our churches—when you place your offering in a plate or box in the narthex upon entering the church? Oftentimes, we don't consciously think about the significance of the offering at all. Placing an envelope in the offering plate becomes an automatic action, somewhat like operating our car without consciously thinking about steering, accelerator, brake, turn signals, and so forth. We just get in the car and go somewhere, without actually thinking about those various components of driving. Our financial offerings, a part of the Offertory, can also quite easily become one of those "unconscious components" of what we do.

If we do actually think about our offerings, it's very easy to view them as simply an economic necessity to support the expenses of a church: facility costs, salaries, mission work, publication of the bulletins or other materials, and so forth. But if that were all there is to the Offertory, there would be no real reason for including it as part of our liturgical worship. Our offerings do, of course, provide for all those and more economic needs, but that view of "economic necessity" is blind to a more important and more personal aspect of the Offertory: it is essentially *spiritual*, not economic. Our offerings are acts of worship; they are part of the liturgical element called the *Offertory*. In the words of Luther D. Reed, "The Offertory as a whole includes the Offering, the Offertory sentences [now typically the sung "Create in me a clean heart, O God, . . ."] and the Prayer of the Church [the General Prayer]; as such it begins a new and prevailingly sacrificial part of the Service." Believing in the one true God, we are in the Offertory worshipping Him and offering to Him sacrifices from our sustenance—not just writing out checks to pay the bills.

The overall Offertory is, indeed, a sacrifice; but it is a sacrifice of *homage*, not *propitiation*. That's a critical distinction. What that means is that it is not, as some have erroneously taught, comparable



to the Old Testament sin offering to atone for sins. Christ's perfect life and sacrificial death has atoned for sins once and for all (Hebrews 7:26-28, 9:11-12, 10:10). Jesus was and is and always will be the only and the complete sacrifice for the sins of all mankind of all times. Our offerings, therefore, are not a matter of some foolish attempts to somehow offset our sins by paying money as though we were trying to buy indulgences from the Roman Catholic Treasury of

Merit. The very idea that we could in any way purchase forgiveness of our sins is offensive to the truth of the Gospel.

Not propitiation, but homage. That means that instead of foolishly thinking that we can in some degree purchase forgiveness, the entire Offertory is a matter of reverence (homage) that we render to God in response to His abundant blessings—both material and spiritual—bestowed upon us. We remind ourselves of that truth, and also of the proper perspective on our material abundance, when we sing the first two verses of Hymn 441 (TLH):

*"We give Thee but Thine own.  
Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.*

*May we Thy bounties thus  
As stewards true receive  
And gladly, as Thou blessest us,  
To Thee our first fruits give!"*

Let us, then, in the Offertory, joyfully worship our God and Savior.



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



# How Husbands Are to Regard and Treat Their Wives

*“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)*

In this mixed-up world, there are developments in current times that are upside down. For example, there are biological males who believe they are women, and biological females who regard themselves as men. The Word of God is clear when it reveals that from the beginning of time God made us either male or female from the moment we entered this world (see Genesis 1:27; Mark 10:6). Nothing that people do can change this.

Another development that reaches back a number of years is the belief that women and men possess identical strengths and abilities. Again, Holy Scripture settles this matter by revealing that God made males and females differently, equipping them with differing physical and emotional strengths. In the Bible verse under study in this article, the apostle Peter speaks of the wife as the “weaker vessel.” She is generally weaker than her husband physically and emotionally.

Since the husband possesses these strengths, he is called upon to guard against the temptation of looking down upon his wife as if she were somehow inferior to him. Instead, the husband is instructed to show the utmost respect for his wife. He is also not to use his leadership position in the family to be selfish, domineering, or abusive in any way. Rather than allowing his fleshly nature to have its way in treating his spouse in such sinful ways, the husband is to show his wife tender, loving care, and unselfishly sacrifice his own interests in order to do things that are for her benefit. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, amplifies this Christian manner of treatment of a husband toward his wife when he says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

(Ephesians 5:25) Jesus unselfishly gave Himself for the church so that we could be eternally redeemed. Husbands are likewise to love their wives and sacrifice for them!

**The husband is to show his wife tender, loving care, and unselfishly sacrifice his own interests in order to do things that are for her benefit.**

Husbands are also to dwell with their wives with the understanding that they are fellow heirs with them of the undeserved gift of eternal life in heaven. Since a Christian wife shares this inheritance equally with her Christian husband, he is to take great care in how he regards and treats his wife, so that nothing that he says or does jeopardizes his wife’s eternal inheritance. Instead of spiritually harming her, a Christian husband will want to spiritually build up his wife in the faith. This is a very serious matter in the eyes of the Lord. And God will hold husbands accountable for the way they dwell with their wives.

As husbands hear the divine instruction given them in this Bible text, all husbands will have to confess that they have often failed to regard and treat their wives in a God-pleasing way. But as Christians we are thankful for having a forgiving God who absolves us of all our transgressions. And we look to Him to create in us a clean heart and to renew a right spirit within us. Even as our Savior Jesus unselfishly loved us, so also we strive with God’s help to honor our wives as the weaker vessels, and to treat them with loving care as fellow heirs of heaven.



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



# The Good Samaritan

Jesus' parables are timeless. But when a story becomes too familiar, you can lose your focus on its original intent. The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) serves as a good example of how divine wisdom can be taken for granted.

Jesus speaks the parable to a lawyer. Every daily interaction of Jewish society was governed by Moses' laws. With priests and Levites overworked with their specific duties, there were often more questions than experts available to answer. The lawyer's livelihood was to bridge that gap, counseling souls troubled over where they had fallen short in life.

With this in mind, the lawyer is not testing Jesus as did others. Genuinely honored by a tête-à-tête encounter with an obvious scholar, he goes for the big one: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (verse 25)

Good Teacher that Jesus is, He draws out the lawyer's own shorthand summary of God's Word: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart . . . and your neighbor as yourself." (verse 27)

But since his business is easing the client's burdened conscience—"wanting to justify himself"—he proceeds with a question he has wrestled with in countless cases: "And who is my neighbor?" (verse 29)

The parable is Jesus' brilliant way of turning the question about. A key phrase is "by chance." Nothing happens by luck. Jesus is presenting the lawyer with a series of hypothetical cases to give each his full attention in succession.

"Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. . . ." (verse 31) The lawyer immediately puts his "justifying" skills to use. Priests have divine work given no one else. To help the man by the side of the road would literally take him off course. The greater good would be for the priest to let another attend to the needs of the wounded man.

"Now let's say a Levite comes along . . ." If others have passed by—and with more information—to stop and help might foolishly jeopardize his own safety along the thief-laden road.

But then comes the unexpected twist: the Samaritan. He lives nowhere near Jerusalem and has no personal connection to anyone travelling to or from the temple. Not only does this Samaritan have no business being there, according to the Law, were he in this sad condition, no Jew would touch him. Yet he chooses to sacrifice time, money, and personal safety to help a complete stranger.



Jesus then asked the

lawyer which of the three was neighbor to the victim of thieves. When the lawyer correctly answered "He who showed mercy," Jesus said "Go and do likewise." (verse 37)

Each brush-stroke of the picture would have held the lawyer in suspense. With a parable carefully crafted to stump the legal mind of man, Jesus masterfully uses the Law to reveal how human reason at its best can only justify sin.

The lawyer departed. But those who remained in Jesus' company would soon learn how the Son of God can truly justify the sinner.

A story almost too familiar, it is often reduced to a mere moral tale: "Be a good Samaritan." But taking the time to hear a parable as if for the very first time reveals how divine wisdom transcends any shorthand summary.

It's important to remember that none of the three sojourners were real people. In fact, no true "Good Samaritan" exists among us sinners. As with every parable, the key to the puzzle is the cross.

All you can do is pick and choose which Law serves you best. But the Gospel shows you a Savior Who chose to lay down His life to serve your eternal best.

Don't let the timeless nature of Jesus' parables keep you from digesting them with care. May the time you spend with each be as personal an encounter with Jesus and His kingdom as when He walked among us.



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



## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

# Mission Helper Trip to Nepal



Mission Helpers at the ancient city of Bhaktapur

Because of the pandemic and other scheduling issues, it had been six years since CLC Mission Helpers traveled to Nepal. But as the Lord is faithful, He provided and blessed another opportunity for thirteen individuals to spread the Gospel in Himalayan foothill cities and villages where the Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession of Nepal (HCLCN) is active in teaching and preaching the truths of God's saving Word.

Mission Helpers catch a glimpse of the Himalaya - Machapuchare Mountain

The thirteen 2023 Mission Helpers, ages eighteen to eighty, came from six different CLC congregations in Missouri, South Carolina, Minnesota, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The Mission Helpers, blessed by our Lord with unique individual gifts, personalities, and experiences, let their lights shine as they served our Savior by serving others and one another.

The Mission Helpers all met at Messiah Lutheran Church in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, on Monday, June 26. After a devotion by Pastor Michael Eichstadt, prayers, and hymns, they made their way to Chicago O'Hare International Airport for an evening flight to Istanbul, where they then boarded another flight for an early morning arrival in Kathmandu. Over the next couple of weeks, they would travel by bus, automobile, tuk-tuks (three-wheeled taxis), SUV, and more buses.

During their time in Nepal, they spent over fifty hours traveling to remote locations, spreading the Good News of Jesus.





Nepali boy listening in



Mission Helpers teaching



Mission Helpers heading out in tuk-tuks

taught these simple Gospel truths to nearly 1,500 children, along with many adults who also gathered to listen in. While no one knows for sure how many of these children will one day join us in Heaven, we rejoice in the promise that God made when He declared through His prophet Isaiah:

*“For as the rain*

*comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 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 55:10–11)*

The theme for the child evangelism lessons was “The Bible Was Written So That We May Believe That Jesus Is Our Savior.” The children learned Bible stories from the New Testament that reveal Who Jesus is and what He has done for all people. Some of these children were members of HCLCN congregations and preaching stations, but many were not, having been brought up in Hindu families and being taught to worship literal idols with the goal of pleasing the “gods” to earn their favor and, they hope, be reincarnated into a better station in life after they die. While some of these children may have already heard the name of Jesus, this would have been the first time they had heard the truth of God’s grace and mercy in what Jesus has accomplished for all people through His life, death, and resurrection. The Mission Helpers



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



## WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

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

# Zion Lutheran Church *Ipswich, South Dakota*

**Z**ion Lutheran Church in Ipswich, South Dakota, celebrated its one hundredth anniversary this year with a worship service and meal reception held on July 16th. The service had sixty in attendance: people who came to celebrate with us the Lord's gracious, centennial milestone given to the congregation. The service focused on "The Power Behind One Hundred Years"; namely, the never-changing grace found in Jesus Christ and His Word, while also providing a perspective on how a congregation should view its past, present, and future. As God has blessed our group here at Zion, may He also bless you and your congregation. May He show you that your congregation's past is a showcase of His grace and mercy; your congregation's present is God's time of grace given to you to use the keys of Law and Gospel, making disciples of all nations; and your congregation's future, its objective, is to go from church militant to church triumphant, enjoying Christ's deliverance from this toilsome world to the realm of eternal joy in Heaven.

With the opportunity to celebrate one hundred years of existence as a congregation came a unique community outreach opportunity. Zion was blessed with the opportunity to spread the news via regional newspapers and radio service announcements, as well as word of mouth with old friends and former members. Regardless of whether these efforts were fruitful in gaining a larger attendance for the anniversary service, our congregation was at the very least putting the Gospel out in the public for many to learn about or be reacquainted with.

To be able to put our name out there in these ways is a phenomenal blessing, given our current worship venue. Our congregation does not own its house of worship. Over a decade ago, with the membership becoming smaller in number and older in age, it was becoming increasingly difficult for our congregation to adequately maintain their own church building. In 2011, the Lord presented the congregation with an opportunity to sell the church property and still have a place to worship. The congregation



sold the property to Mark Gramm for his funeral home business. A joint-use agreement which allowed Zion to hold services and other functions in the remodeled facility as long as the congregation exists was established. Since then, the building has since been sold twice, and the congregation continues to be blessed with the joint-use agreement. We certainly do thank God for giving us the opportunity to worship every Sunday through this agreement, yet with this current setup come challenges. Many people in the community and the areas surrounding it are not aware of our congregation's existence because we no longer own the building. Therefore, the unique opportunity with the anniversary to get our name out there is certainly a blessing.

With our manifold blessings come the blessings of





Zion Lutheran Church members

continuous ministrations. As has been the case since 2002, Zion operates as a dual parish with Redeemer, Bowdle. This arrangement has been a tremendous blessing for everyone involved. As a result, with seasonally rotating service times, both congregations are able to have worship every Sunday along with seasonal midweek services. With zeal fueled by the sweet message of God's Word, Sunday services are regularly attended with an average range of eight to sixteen people coming from Ipswich, Faulkton, and Aberdeen.

Along with a shared full-time pastor and regular Sunday worship, another item on the list of Gospel ministrations is the ability and desire to hold weekly Bible classes: one on Tuesday afternoons in the city of Aberdeen, and the other on Thursday afternoons in Ipswich. These Bible classes provide the opportunity to study many topics ranging from the history of the common liturgy to the articles of the Book of Concord. The latest topic for study in both Bible classes has been an overview of the books of the Old Testament. In our study time together, we have been blessed to have the opportunity to learn about the general theme, content, and origins of each of the books.

With the city of Ipswich as an ever-present prospect of Gospel outreach before us, there is also the booming city of Aberdeen to consider, located to the east of Ipswich about 30 miles away. Through a joint effort with Redeemer-Bowdle and Prince of Peace-Hecla, worship services are held there every fourth Sunday of the month in the lobby of a local tax office building. The Lord has blessed our

efforts with an average attendance of ten to fifteen each Sunday we meet.

What a great opportunity we have here in Ipswich! Zion is certainly blessed. And as we strive to be our name's sake, the great "city on a hill" that shines the Gospel for all to see, may the Lord bless us going forward as He has for the past one hundred years!



Pastors Zachary Sippert and Mark Tiefel, speakers at Zion's one-hundred-year anniversary service



**Zachary Sippert** is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bowdle, South Dakota and Zion Lutheran Church in Ipswich, South Dakota.



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

# What's Next?

There is an innate human desire that wants to know the next thing—the next assignment, the next meal, the next iteration of technology. There are many “next things” in everyday life. However, looking at the big picture of God’s dealing with mankind, there is only one “next thing” left to come: namely, Judgment Day.

God makes very clear that *all* people will be raised from the dead and *all* will stand before the judgment seat of God (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). Death is our own personal Judgment Day, because there are no second chances: *“It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”* (Hebrews 9:27) Nor will there be advance warning for Jesus’ return: *“The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:2)

God provides a step-by-step account of what will happen on Judgment Day. *“The Lord Himself will descend from heaven”* (1 Thessalonians 4:16), bringing with Him *“those who sleep in Jesus.”* (verse 14) *“The dead in Christ [believers] will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”* (verse 17)

After Jesus and His entourage of believers descend to the earth, *“He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. . . . Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food. . . . Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You . . . . And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”* (Matthew 25:32-40)

How will we appear before the Judge, and what will His verdict be? At first glance, it would seem that the sheep

inherit eternal life because of their good deeds on earth. But look closer. When those on the right hand respond to Jesus, they are described as “the righteous.” These are righteous in God’s sight because they are clothed in their Savior’s righteousness received through faith in Him.

***These are righteous in God’s sight because they are clothed in their Savior’s righteousness received through faith in Him. The deeds to which Jesus points are merely the visible evidence***

The deeds to which Jesus points are merely the visible evidence (a judge considers evidence) of their righteousness. As James wrote, *“I will show you my faith by my works.”* (James 2:18)

In contrast, unbelievers come to the judge without faith in Jesus. Therefore, they have no righteousness. Jesus died for them, and there was forgiveness for them, but they rejected it. Thus, those on the left hand stand before the judge completely on their own, and the evidence proves them guilty with even their best deeds fouled

by sin (Isaiah 64:6). The judge considers the evidence and declares, *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”* (Matthew 25:41)

There is no need to be fearful of the final judgment because the Judge is your Savior, your Shepherd, your Brother—Jesus. You will be able to stand confidently and fearlessly, not because of who you are or what you’ve done, but solely because of Who Jesus is and what He has done. *“Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.”* (Romans 8:33).

So each of us can say, “I can hardly wait for what’s next!”



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



# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS OCTOBER 2023

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
October 2	TLH 447 / LSB 664	Jeremiah 1	The Lord calls Jeremiah to serve as a prophet. The Lord commands Jeremiah to prophesy destruction for the people of Judah. The people will oppose Jeremiah, but the Lord will be with him.
October 3	TLH 149 / LSB 435	Jeremiah 2	The Israelites have abandoned their God. As a result, foreign nations will invade and conquer Israel.
October 4	TLH 495	Jeremiah 3	The Lord compares His people to an unfaithful wife. The Lord calls Israel to repentance, promising to send faithful shepherds to care for His people.
October 5	TLH 421 / LSB 688	Jeremiah 4	The Lord invites His people to return to Him. The Lord declares to Judah disaster from the north. The Lord expresses deep anguish over the destruction that His people have brought on themselves.
October 6	TLH 574 / LSB 892	Isaiah 5	The unfaithful people of the Lord are like an unfruitful vineyard. Isaiah pronounces judgment on those who disobey the commands of the Lord.
October 7	TLH 380 / LSB 565	Philippians 3	Believers in Christ are righteous by faith, not by works of the flesh. Having been declared righteous in Christ, we are privileged to serve the Lord faithfully as we grow in grace through His Word.
October 9	TLH 367 / LSB 531	Revelation 4	John sees God on His throne, surrounded by twenty-four elders seated on thrones. Four living creatures praise God and the twenty-four elders cast down their crowns and praise God.
October 10	TLH 344 / LSB 812	Revelation 5	John sees a scroll sealed with seven seals. Jesus, appearing as a slain Lamb, takes the scroll to open it. The twenty-four elders praise Jesus. The angelic armies praise Jesus. All creatures praise Jesus.
October 11	TLH 604	Revelation 6	Jesus opens six of the seven seals.
October 12	TLH 656 / LSB 676	Revelation 7	A great multitude of people from every nation, clothed in white and holding palm branches, declares the praises of God. Angels join in worshiping God.
October 13	TLH 200 / LSB 461	Isaiah 25	Isaiah praises the God of our salvation, the God Who has promised to destroy death forever!
October 14	TLH 72 / LSB 515	Philippians 4	Paul closes his letter to the Christians of Philippi with words of encouragement and final greetings.
October 16	TLH 153 / LSB 451	Matthew 22	Jesus tells the parable of the wedding feast. Jesus perfectly answers a trick question of the Pharisees regarding paying taxes to Caesar. Jesus perfectly answers a trick question of the Sadducees regarding marriage in the resurrection. Jesus perfectly summarizes the law: love God and love your neighbor. Jesus teaches the Pharisees from Psalm 110 that the Messiah is both the Son of David and the Lord of David.
October 17	TLH 326 / LSB 608	Jeremiah 5	The rebellious people of Jerusalem have sinned against the Lord and have refused to repent. Therefore the Lord threatens judgment.
October 18	TLH 522 / LSB 615	Jeremiah 6	The Lord continues describing the coming judgment of Jerusalem.
October 19	TLH 320 / LSB 610	Jeremiah 7	The Lord invites His people to return to Him and to reject falsehood. Even so, the people continue to sin against the Lord and to worship false gods. Again the Lord foretells terrible destruction for the people of Judah.
October 20	TLH 437 / LSB 714	Jeremiah 8	Even in their graves, the wicked will find no rest; death is not the end for the righteous or for the wicked. The Lord continues proclaiming judgment. Jeremiah grieves for his fellow Judeans.
October 21	TLH 293 / LSB 693	1 Thessalonians 1	Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy praise and thank the Lord for the faithfulness of the Thessalonian believers.
October 23	WS 739 / LSB 650	1 Thessalonians 2	Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his ministry among them when he visited them. Paul yearns to visit Thessalonica again.
October 24	TLH 297 / LSB 580	Romans 1	Paul greets the Christians in Rome, whom he longs to visit in person. Believers in Christ are righteous by faith. God reveals His wrath against the unrighteousness of mankind.
October 25	TLH 377 / LSB 555	Romans 2	The judgment of God is righteous and just. Those who would escape the judgment of God by their good works must obey the entire Law perfectly.
October 26	TLH 375 / LSB 568	Romans 3	No one is justified before God by obeying the Law. On the contrary, the Law exposes our sin. The Law reveals the problem, not the solution. True righteousness before God is received freely by faith in Jesus Christ.
October 27	TLH 505	Revelation 14	John sees the redeemed of the earth. A flying angel proclaims the Gospel to everyone on earth. The judgment will be glorious for those who are righteous by faith, but terrifying for the unrighteous.
October 28	TLH 261 / LSB 655	John 8	Jesus absolves the woman caught in adultery. Jesus proclaims Himself to be the light of the world. Jesus speaks harsh words to the Jews who are plotting to kill Him.
October 30	TLH 129 / LSB 409	Romans 15	Paul continues urging those who are strong to bear with those who are weak, following the example of Christ. Christ has provided hope for Jews and Gentiles alike. Paul reflects on his work of proclaiming the Gospel among the Gentiles and expresses his hope to visit Rome on his way to Spain.
October 31	WS 743 / LSB 802	Romans 16	Paul closes his letter with personal greetings, a warning to avoid false teachers, and praise to the Lord.



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

# Support for Myanmar Amid Crisis

"Daily bread' means everything we need for our bodily well-being. It includes . . . good government. . . ." (Luther's Explanation to the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer).

Martin Luther lists over twenty different things under the heading "Daily Bread." Good government helps to maintain order and peace in society, which allows us to receive the things we need for our daily lives. Paul tells us that the government is "God's minister to you for good." (Romans 13:4) We thank God for good government, especially when we see the suffering and chaos caused by bad government. That is what our fellow Christians in Myanmar have been experiencing over the past two and a half years.

On February 1, 2021, Myanmar's military regime usurped power from their democratically elected government. Since the coup, the political, economic, and humanitarian crisis has only grown more dire. Protests and violence between the military and citizens continue. Banks and ATMs were shut down, making it impossible for the CLC, for a time, to send funds to the NLCM and CLCM, the two indigenous church bodies with whom we are in fellowship. Members of our sister church bodies have heard gunfire and explosions just blocks from where they live. Recent reports indicate that more than two million people have been displaced since the coup.

The situation in Myanmar has also affected efforts to proclaim the Gospel. Most of the outreach efforts of our sister church bodies involve visiting members in their homes. Any large gathering is seen as a threat by the military and is quickly dispersed.

Pastor Kham of the CLCM recently reported that after an eight-day ground battle between the military junta and the People's Defense Force, the military sent in bomber and fighter jets and carpet bombed several villages in Chin State. Many



Village in Chin State in western Myanmar - June 2023

houses of CLCM members have been burned, damaged, or destroyed. In total, twenty-three families (115 individuals) have been affected. These families, who had already been struggling to provide for themselves, have now been forced to leave their homes and villages in search of safety and shelter.

Pastor Kham estimates that the cost to feed and shelter this many people is about \$13,200/month or \$3.82 per person per day. He believes the displaced members will need care for two or three months. In response, the Board of Missions authorized a \$15,000 grant from kinship to provide aid for those displaced. In a recent correspondence with Missionary Todd Ohlmann, Pastor Kham wrote: "We couldn't express in word how we feel and our gratitude to you and the CLC. Praise the Lord! How great He is!"

Please pray for our fellow Christians in Myanmar. Pray that God will strengthen and comfort them in their distress. Pray that He will provide for all their needs, including good government. Pray that He will enable them to continue to share His love and truth with others.



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



# Reformation Confidence

**“A**nd by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.” (1 John 3:19-21)

It has often been noted that God began the 16th Century Reformation of His Church through one man’s struggle with his sinful heart. By every account, Martin Luther lived an outwardly moral life. Commenting on his time as a monk he wrote, “I kept the rule of my [monastic] order so strictly that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery it was I.”

However, Luther’s intense struggle to produce a righteousness acceptable to God only drove him to despair. In his biographical hymn he lamented, “Sin was my torment night and day; in sin my mother bore me.” (TLH Hymn 377:2)

Luther realized that his sin was not limited to his outward failings. The greater problem had to do with the very nature of who he was. He understood that sin is an inherited condition, and that within the human heart all manner of evil resides (Matthew 15:19). Luther suffered not only because of his sins of commission, but much more so because he realized that he was conceived and born in sin.

Many claim that if people would only follow their hearts, the world would be a better place. But that’s exactly the problem. People do follow their hearts. In Jeremiah we read, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked.*” (Jeremiah 17:9)

The heart’s deceit is seen in its propensity to think up ways to excuse and cover up its sins. Don’t we often dream up elaborate stories to justify our bad behavior? This only underscores how sinful the human heart truly is. It condemns us all the more.

While the sinful heart is a strong witness against us, there’s an even stronger witness in our favor, a witness that completely overturns the verdict of our hearts. That witness is God Himself. “*For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart.*”

Luther pictured it this way: “Conscience weighs you down and

tells you God is angry, yet God is greater than your heart. The conscience is but one drop of water; the reconciled God is an entire ocean of mercy.”

Not only is God greater than our hearts, He knows all things. He knows about our many sins, including the ones lurking deep within us. But God knows something else.

He knows how to deal with our sin. He sent His Son to give His life a ransom for all. On Calvary’s cross Jesus made full payment for the sin of the world. When the Spirit led Luther to understand that salvation is a free gift through faith in Christ, he wrote, “I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open.”

On Reformation Sunday we gather to rejoice in our God-given heritage of “Grace Alone! Faith Alone! Scripture Alone!” We praise God for the grace by which we have been given faith to put our entire confidence

in God’s Word. In His Word we find a Savior Who, being condemned for us, took away the heart’s condemning power. May God give us a Reformation confidence—a confidence expressed by Martin Luther in the following hymn stanzas:

Though all my heart should feel condemned  
For want of some sweet token,  
There is One greater than my heart  
Whose Word cannot be broken.

I’ll trust in God’s unchanging Word  
Till soul and body sever,  
For, though all things shall pass away,  
HIS WORD SHALL STAND FOREVER!

(From the hymn “Feelings Come and Feelings Go,” by Martin Luther)

*Many claim that if people would only follow their hearts, the world would be a better place. But that’s exactly the problem.*



**Michael Wilke** is pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Saginaw, Michigan, and president of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.



# Lutheran Spokesman

501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI, 54701

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2023 Minnesota Pastoral Conference

West Battle Lake, Clitherall, Minnesota

October 8-10

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis: Zephaniah 1:10 ff.—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
- New Testament Exegesis: Titus 2:1 ff.—Pastor Joseph Naumann
- Confirmation Age Considerations—Pastor George Dummann
- Study of the Lord's Supper and How Often Congregations Should Offer It—Pastor Luke Willitz
- Review: Perspicuity of Scripture—Professor John Ude
- 1 Corinthians 14:34 Applications in Congregations—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
- Book Review: "Doctor of Souls: The Art of Pastoral Theology," by John Schuetze—Pastor James Albrecht
- A Study of Virtual Communion—Pastor John Schnose
- Moderated Discussion of TARA (1990) and/or with "What Scripture Teaches Regarding Admonition and Termination of Fellowship" (2023)

Chaplain: Delwyn Maas

—Pastor Joseph Naumann, Secretary

**ANNIVERSARY.** Gift of God Lutheran Church of Fairfax, Virginia, invites anyone in the Washington DC metro area on November 5th to join us for our Fortieth Anniversary celebration. Pastor Michael Wilke (served 1988-1992) will give the message of thanksgiving and joy for the Lord's many blessings. For information, contact Pastor Glenn Oster at 803-361-2739, or [Glenn.Oster@gmail.com](mailto:Glenn.Oster@gmail.com).

**INSTALLATION.** In accord with our usage and order, **Levi Schaller**, who was called by Grace Lutheran Church of Fridley, Minnesota, to be its part-time kindergarten teacher, was installed on July 30, 2023.

—Pastor John Hein.



Attendees of the 2023 Lower Michigan Youth Camp July 17-20



CLC clergy in attendance at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of Mount Zion Lutheran Church, Detroit, Michigan, August 6th, 2023



Attendees of Mount Zion's anniversary celebration



L to R  
Teacher Levi Schaller  
Pastor John Hein

