

JANUARY 2024 VOL 66 NO. 7

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

For it is the God who  
commanded light to  
shine out of darkness,  
who has shone in our  
hearts to give the light  
of the knowledge of the  
glory of God in the face  
of Jesus Christ  
-2 Corinthians 4:6





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# The Essential Epiphany

It is January and the hours of darkness still outnumber those of daylight. If you are not fond of shorter days, the good news is that we are gaining about two minutes of daylight each day.

Light dispels darkness. An epiphany is a light-shedding moment—a moment of seeing something that was not seen before, of reaching a greater understanding or clarity. We all have various epiphanies, but unrivaled as the greatest epiphany is what we celebrate annually: the Epiphany concerning Jesus, the Light of the World. This Epiphany is the revelation and subsequent learning about the person and work of the Messiah. This Epiphany leads to clarity that Jesus, born of Mary in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth, is indeed the eternal Son of God Who became flesh for the salvation of the world (John 1:1-5).

This is the one essential Epiphany, because it comes from God's grace and is born out of His truth. It leads to peace with God, purpose on earth, confidence in a sin-broken world, and eternal life in Heaven where there will be no more epiphanies because then *"we shall see Him [God] as He is,"* (1 John 3:2) and *"shall know just as I also am known."* (1 Corinthians 13:12)

The Holy Spirit brings light by revealing our Savior to us through the Word of God. *"[God] has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* (2 Corinthians 4:6) This light enables us to have an epiphany of seeing the blessings that are ours through Jesus: rescue from sin's guilt and condemnation, peace with God, the answer to a guilty conscience, and so much more.

Martin Luther had an epiphany when the Holy Spirit led him to understand that the righteousness of God comes to sinners through faith, rather than by works (Romans 1:17). God grants epiphanies such as this as we study His Word. An epiphany takes place when a Bible passage all of

a sudden "clicks" and makes sense, or is applicable to our lives in a way that had never before occurred to us, or when new experiences open our eyes to consider a passage with a fresh and new approach. Every day is a new opportunity

for the Word of God to give us new instruction, new understanding, new trust, and new weapons in our arsenal for doing battle against our spiritual enemies.

All of this comes down to that one great Epiphany: God's revelation of the Messiah from promise, through prophets, to the life and redeeming work of Jesus. It culminates in the essential Epiphany that Peter had when he confessed, *"You*

*are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* (Matthew 16:16) This is the truth that provides the spark for every spiritual epiphany we have. Every hope hangs on this truth. If this truth is sacrificed, compromised, or lost, the light is extinguished and darkness once again settles upon a soul.

Just like a January day burdened by darkness, many souls remain burdened by their sins, along with the sorrow, anger, and uncertainty which thrive within the shadows. These are souls for whom to pray—whether they are personally known to us or not. These are souls who need to hear the Gospel. These are souls just like our own—redeemed by Jesus, the Son of God, Who is revealed in the light of His Word.

This essential Epiphany is life-giving, eternal, and bright enough to create a blaze of never-ending joy in the darkest reaches of our hearts.

Dear Jesus, shine in my heart always. Amen.

***All of this comes down to that one great Epiphany: God's revelation of the Messiah from promise, through prophets, to the life and redeeming work of Jesus.***



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

# Solutions for Broken Resolutions

I don't recall ever making a New Year's resolution. Perhaps I had to come up with one as a school assignment once but, if so, I certainly never tried to accomplish it. The whole practice seems rather trite to me, and when I've brought up the idea in a sermon or devotion, my purpose was to illustrate our failures as sinful people. After all, most New Year's resolutions quickly become failed resolutions. I wonder if I've been too cynical, however. It is true that our lives are filled with certain day-to-day hopes. We have hopes for tomorrow, hopes for our relationships, hopes for improvement. These hopes energize us and are the reasons that so many people do make New Year's resolutions.

But if these small hopes were all that we had, then our resolutions really would be worthless and, ultimately, meaningless. We do, however, have other, greater hopes—greater both in effectiveness and in impact. One great hope is based in the past, found on the cross of Calvary and in an empty tomb. The death and resurrection of our Savior gives us a certain hope for the forgiveness of every sin and release from any guilt. Our other great hope is based in the future—in a King returning as He promised to judge both the living and the dead and to receive us into an eternal kingdom.

As the new year naturally presents us with the opportunity to both review the past and look forward to the future, let's use this moment to set our minds on these two great hopes. Look to the past and consider the resolve of your Savior to endure the cross for you. Look to the future and consider His continued resolve to come again and take you to Himself, that where He is you also may be. It is with these two hopes that you can march into the new year unbothered by any changes the coming months might bring, since your eternal future has already been secured.

But sandwiched between the past and the future is the present, where you exist. Right now, with these two great hopes anchoring you, your life has new meaning, as do your small, day-to-day hopes. No longer do they need to be tied to such matters as self-improvement, as most New Year's resolutions are. Rather, your resolutions can reflect the purposes that God has given you in this life: to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. And since you are reading these words right now, you have been given the gift of at least some portion of 2024 which you can use to serve God and your neighbor.

So, if you have never made a New Year's resolution before, think about starting right now. Resolve to spend time each day in God's Word. Resolve to fight back against that certain temptation with which you have often struggled. Consider those people with whom you may have a strained relationship and resolve to mend that bond with the forgiveness that Christ Jesus has already shown to you.

Will you be successful with your resolutions? Perhaps not any more than most are with their various New Year's hopes. But remember, this is not the only hope you have. You can still look to the past and remember that Christ has redeemed you from your failures. You can still look to the future and know your salvation has been promised by Him. And because of this, you can treat every day of 2024 as a new beginning, a new year.



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

## OUR LITURGICAL LEGACY

*Ever wonder why we Lutherans use the form of worship we do?*

*In this series we examine the depth and meaning of the various elements of our Lutheran worship service.*

# Service of the Sacrament: The Lord's Prayer

In our communion liturgies, the Lord's Prayer follows The Sanctus (December 2023 *Lutheran Spokesman*) and precedes The Words of Institution. That is no accident. It would, however, be an error, taught by some, to think of the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer ("Give us this day our daily bread") as referring to the bread of the sacrament, as though we are in the Lord's Prayer somehow consecrating that element. That would be a misapplication of God's Word. Rather, as Luther explained in the *Small Catechism*, the "daily bread" of the Fourth Petition refers to "everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body." The Fourth Petition requests physical blessings, not spiritual ones.

So, then, why is the Lord's Prayer placed where it is in our Liturgy? Mark this well, and remember it when you are about to take Communion: it is there as a prayer of Christians preparing to receive Christ's body and blood along with the visible elements of bread and wine for the forgiveness of their sins. That is—at least in a sense—it might well be thought of as being where it is for the consecration (the setting apart for a holy purpose) of Christians, not for the consecration of an element of the Sacrament. The Lord's Prayer is part of our *preparation* for reception of Holy Communion. Indeed, in the medieval liturgy, communicants were reminded of that fact with the words, "Admonished by thy saving precepts and instructed by thy divine ordinance, we make bold to say, 'Our Father.'" So also today, we boldly claim to be God's children and heirs of salvation, and can call Him *Father*, only because of the perfect life and atoning death of Jesus, the Christ, Whose body and blood we are about to receive in Holy Communion. When the words "Our Father" of the Lord's Prayer precede the Sacrament, we are reminded

of that fact.

The book *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* by Leonard Brauer reinforces this aspect of our worship with the words, "The use of the Lord's Prayer before the consecration emphasizes its significance as the 'Prayer of the Faithful,' the children of the heavenly Father whom he tenderly invites to call upon him as beloved children approach their dear father. Here, as we pray the family prayer of the Church of Christ, we are reminded who we are and in what relationship to God we come before him."

There are those who think that using memorized recitations such as these in our liturgies (or elsewhere, such as for table prayers) is somehow inferior to having all prayer and other worship elements be spontaneous and *ex corde* ("from the heart"). If our words are merely being recited while our minds are elsewhere, they are right. However, the words of our liturgies—and especially the words of the Lord's Prayer—are not just "vain repetitions" such as those to which Jesus refers in Matthew 6:7. Indeed, it is in that very same context that Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer, telling His disciples, "*In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven. . .*" (Matthew 6:9-13) The words we recite are "vain repetitions" only if we fail to focus on the meaning. However, as we are fully engaged in the *meaning* of the words, our worship is lifted far above what might otherwise be our own *ex corde* expressions. May our gracious Lord grant that we focus our minds and hearts on the words of our mouths. Amen.



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

# Reason for Hope

*“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.” (1 Peter 3:18-20 ESV)*

**1** Peter 3:15 tells us to *“always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”* (ESV) When we are in the midst of suffering, as were the Christians to whom Peter wrote, we may wonder if we do have any reason for hope. This text provides great comfort.

First, we read that Christ *“suffered once for sins.”* When the text says *“once,”* it means *“once for all.”* Christ suffered for all of the sins of the world for all time. As the righteous Son of God, He did this for the unrighteous; in other words, for you and me. What a great comfort this is when we suffer!

When we suffer, we are often tempted to think that God is out to get us, but it’s not true because He already “got” His Son for our sin on the cross. There are still times of hardship in this sinful world, but that is not evidence that God is out to make us miserable. And so we cling to the truth that Christ suffered for our sins to bring us to God.

After Christ suffered once for sin, He was *“put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”* (verse 18) His suffering was complete. He suffered the ultimate wages of sin, namely, death. The price has been paid in full, evidenced by the fact that He was made alive again. Now He promises deliverance and eternal life.

Made alive in the spirit, Jesus descended into hell to proclaim to the spirits in prison. You know that a victory is complete when the king walks into the enemy’s palace, sits on the throne, starts making proclamations, and no one stops him. That’s what Jesus did when He descended

into hell. But the proclamation He made is not for the spirits who are there. They don’t want to hear it. The proclamation is for us. You see, when someone is suffering, a common temptation is to believe that the Lord is too weak to completely overcome our problems. To that, Jesus says, *“I’m not too weak. My victory is complete! I marched into hell to proclaim My victory over sin, death, and the devil, and no one could stop Me.”* And then He left, and no one could stop Him. Christ has been to hell and back for us so that we can be sure that

*Christ has been to  
hell and back for  
us so that we can  
be sure that He will  
deliver us.*

He will deliver us.

Finally, there is an encouragement to be patient. God is patient with our world as He gives more time for people to hear His Word, repent of their sins, and believe in Him. As we live in God’s patience, we may feel as if God has forgotten us. It’s not true. In the days of Noah, the number of believers was only eight, but they were not forgotten. The Lord delivered them, and He will deliver us, too.

Is there a reason for hope? Absolutely! As long as there is sin and evil in this world, there will be suffering, but we are not forsaken. Christ has suffered for sin once for all. And so, He tells us that we are righteous and that we have life in Him.



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

# Beneath the Juniper Tree

*"[Elijah] came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die." (1 Kings 19:4)*

**H**ave you ever felt like giving up; like saying, "That's it. I'm done. I've had enough"? If so, you're not alone. At one point in his life, a very *low* point, the prophet Elijah felt the same. Fleeing into the desert, he slumped beneath a juniper tree and begged God to end his miserable existence. "I've had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life. I'm no better than my ancestors."

How could Elijah sink into such despair? He was a prophet of God. His very name expressed confidence in the Almighty. Elijah—*ELIYAHU* in Hebrew—means "My God is Jehovah." A confession of faith. Yet, almost inexplicably, after one threat from wicked Queen Jezebel, Elijah fled to a desert, fled to a juniper tree, where he prayed for death.

For us, one comment from a doctor, "It's cancer"; or from an employer, "You're fired"; or from a financial advisor, "Your retirement fund is in ruins"; can send us running to a dismal juniper tree of our own. The question is, what should we do when we get there?

## Remember God's Past Dealings

Did Elijah remember God's past dealings? Honestly, I don't know. Perhaps he temporarily forgot, or considered them irrelevant to his personal circumstances. And we are quick to criticize him. "Elijah, when you prayed for drought, God sent drought. When you prayed for rain, God made it rain in torrents. When you had no food, God sent ravens to feed you. Did you forget all this, Elijah? You should be ashamed of yourself."

Only, haven't we all done the same? Amid some crisis or need, have we not all forgotten God's past dealings with us, or considered them irrelevant to our personal circumstances? And so, like Elijah, we run and hide and slump beneath our juniper tree, wondering who will help us, insisting no one can. Nonsense.

Instead of complaining, we should be asking: "Has God ever failed me in the past? Has there ever been a day when God has failed to provide for me or protect me or keep my heart beating the 115,200 times it beats each day? Is this not the same God Who sacrificed His only Son to save me from my sins? And this being true, will He withhold any other godly blessings in my life? No. So, am I going to stay here beneath this juniper tree, feeling sorry for myself, or am I going to get up, brush myself off, and go forth in the joy and confidence God wants me to have?"



Acacia tortilis, or broom tree, in eastern Israel.

## Remember to Feed on God's Word

As Elijah lay beneath his juniper tree, an angel told him, "*Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.*" (1 Kings 19:7) So Elijah ate the food God provided and was enabled to complete his journey.

Whether our journey is through the next day, next problem, or life itself, we too need to feed on God's Word—what Jesus called the one thing needed, and Paul called the power of God for salvation. When we avoid God's Word, we feed our depression, not our faith.

If you want the strength to complete your journey, feed on the food God has prepared, as did Elijah, remembering this promise of Jesus in John 6:35, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*"

Afterwards, strengthened and refreshed, take the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and chop down that juniper tree.



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

# The Barren Fig Tree

Farming isn't what it used to be. We live in a cash-crop economy, from seed to harvest in just a few months. Our world wants immediate results, as hands-off as possible. But the Scriptures teach that the Lord takes a long-haul approach to cultivating the soul.

Our parable (Luke 13:6-9) presents a fig tree planted as the centerpiece of a vineyard. Figs were the highly prized sugar-crop of the day. Fig trees were time- and resource-intensive, so if one proved barren, it was to be summarily removed.

This landowner has been more than patient: "Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down." (verse 7)

Yet his groundskeeper advocates an old-time, hands-on approach: "Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it." (verse 8)

Throughout Biblical imagery, a vineyard is commonly the kingdom of God as a whole, and the fig tree, the chosen nation of Israel. The parable's context, Jesus confronting the false religion of His day, substantiates that He speaks of the longsuffering patience shown Abraham's biological descendants throughout their wayward history.

When the landowner's gardener intercedes for just one more stretch of time—"If it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down" (verse 9)—Jesus uses poetic code to teach us that the reason that the Lord had been so merciful throughout the centuries was for the sake of His labor among lost mankind: "And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming." (Malachi 3:1)

There was no more personal care than the three years the Son of God walked the earth: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14).

Nothing stands between the axe and the tree except this Gardener like no other, Who has reconciled the sinner with our landowner God by having His flesh dug into with nails



The Barren Fig Tree, by Jan Luyken

and spear, and by fertilizing the earth with His holy, precious blood.

Despite this painstaking labor on home soil, the fig tree's time of grace came to a tragic end. Bearing no fruit, "not one stone was left upon another." But the long-haul agricultural approach is never a waste. The Lord's long-standing mercy toward the fig tree Israel is a lesson for every believer to learn from: "Now all these things happened to them as examples." (1 Corinthians 10:11) "Whatever things were written before were

written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4)

Like a sweet shower of grace, the Gospel has moved from that barren land out across the globe. During this last stretch of time until Christ's return, the keeper has placed the tools of Law and Gospel (to dig and fertilize) in our feeble care.

The Lord still farms the way He always has. On account of sin, we should have been cut down long ago. Instead, Jesus tenderly digs in with the Law, when needed, and never hesitates to get His hands dirty to show you His love. In contrast to this cash-crop world, faith bears fruit over time in Word and Sacrament, so that you can "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:1-2)

The Gospel never fails to provide a yield, just not quite how you might expect. May you learn from any barren patches of your life to turn again to the Keeper of your soul and find in Him "a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth." (Psalm 86:15)



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



*In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by early leaders in the CLC. Pastor James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Pastor Arvid Gullerud (1920-2015) was a leader in the formation of the CLC and a longtime synodical board member. He was chiefly responsible for securing the property in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, that eventually became the campus of Immanuel Lutheran College. We here reprint an article from the Lutheran Spokesman of June 1960.*



Pastor Arvid Gullerud  
(1920-2015)

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## Small Hinges



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Great events turn on small hinges. Robert Bruce once took refuge in a cave from a pursuer who was seeking his life. A spider at once wove a web across the mouth of the cave, and when the pursuer came up, seeing the web he took it for granted that no one had entered, and so he passed on. The lives of millions of people hinged upon that little spider's web.

We cannot always discern which are the little or great events in God's records. God has taken the humble method of preaching the Gospel and the despised witness-bearing of Christians as the means for the building and spreading of His Church. God has called each Christian to assist in this blessed task of turning men from the darkness of sin and Satan to God, who is the Father of light and salvation. He has called each Christian to guard and keep His Gospel pure and unadulterated so that sinners might be converted to that pardon, comfort and peace which Christ has won for all men. When we think that each of us, by what we do or do not do, by what we say or do not say, by what we give or do not give, by the testimony we give or do not give, may be a pivot on which turns the destiny of a nation or an age, certainly we should be spurred on in our faithfulness to God. God uses insignificant

people, the seemingly small talents, and the seemingly feeble efforts of His humble followers for His glory.

It was the seemingly insignificant invitation of Philip to Nathanael: "Come and see" that started the tremendous missionary movement of the early Christian Church. It was through the "chief of sinners," Paul, who had been saved to bring the saving Gospel of Jesus to others, that the European continent was Christianized. It was due largely to the testimony of Luther that the deteriorated church was restored and that we today enjoy the truth of the Gospel. It has been the mission zeal of a minister here, a layman there, that has started our congregations. The small efforts of but a few school-minded Christians have been the small hinges that opened many of our Christian day schools. The insignificant, but consecrated, gifts of all our people pooled together have opened and will open the door of God's truth to many more blood-bought souls. We may not turn out the largest number of candidates. We may not open up the most mission stations. But the little we do, let us do it with all our might. Let us do it in the Name of our Lord, and great things will happen. Great events turn on small hinges.

## WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

# Berea Lutheran Church Sioux Falls, South Dakota

There is a delightful picture that is tucked away in an old photo album. It is a picture of the new Berea Lutheran Church building from the 1980's. There is nothing around the building except a wide-open field and sky. Today, if you get the opportunity to visit us here, you will notice that that is no longer the case. The city of Sioux Falls has grown in leaps and bounds over the years, even in these last three years that I have had the privilege to be here. There are new buildings and housing developments, and the traffic on the road is no doubt heavier than it was over thirty years ago. But there in the middle of it, Berea Lutheran Church is still standing.

This wonderful congregation bears that name with mindfulness. Just as the Bereans “searched the Scriptures daily to find out” whether the things Paul shared aligned with God’s Word (Acts 17:11), so too do the Bereans of Sioux Falls hold fast to the unchanging Word of God in an ever-changing environment.

The Lord has richly blessed our congregation over the years, and still does so today. There are quite a few children at Berea, both in Sunday School and up through high-school aged. The current confirmation class has six students, with



VBS 2023

three being confirmed this spring and a class of five joining next fall. Throughout the year, these students get to take part in the service through songs or various presentations during VBS or Reformation. Our annual Christmas service packs the church to the brim with family, friends, and members gathered to hear the children’s faithful witness.

As the city of Sioux Falls continues to grow, so does our congregation. Over the last few years, as people have moved here for work or school, we have received several transfers from our sister congregations in the CLC. Most of our members



Group photo 2023

live within a twenty-mile radius, but we also have a number that commute further.

Fellowship gatherings are less annual and more sporadic here at Berea. There are a few events planned through the year, but many come about quickly in less-than-traditional ways. It is truly a joy to see how these pan out. Our Ladies Aid group, called SING (Sisters in the Name of God) is diligent to coordinate schedules so that the members and families of the church can meet for potlucks or other activities. One of our annual parties is held in autumn right before Reformation. Families gather some evening, enjoy a meal, carve pumpkins, and get together around a fire outside the parsonage.

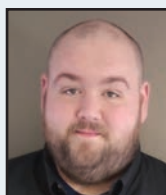
Concerning our numbers, one of the questions that frequently comes up at conferences and conventions is about the possibility of expansion. Berea has been on the lookout for the best option to accommodate a larger crowd. The Building Committee has been meeting to gather information and to work out our specific needs for a new space. Their meticulous work, ever guided by God, continues for the time being. Whatever the future holds and whatever decision is made, we know that God will use it for good and for His purposes.

A typical Sunday includes the service at 10:00 A.M., preceded during the school year by Sunday school and Bible class at 9:00 A.M. We cycle through three of the liturgies found in the Lutheran Hymnal and the Supplement every month. More and more Bible classes have taken place in the parsonage, to allow for slide shows and an occasional round of "Bible Class Jeopardy." During Advent and Lent, we have evening services on Wednesdays at 7:00 P.M. If you find yourself in Sioux Falls, be sure to head on over. We would love to have you!



Fall Party 2023

As we make our way into a future that is not fully known by us, we give thanks continually to our Savior and King Christ Jesus, Who has assured us of the greatest thing we can expect: an eternity with Him. It is His grace alone that has given us the rich blessings we enjoy. We will continue to put our trust in Him. In thirty years, a picture of Berea Lutheran might look completely different from the old photograph, or the one on the previous page. But whatever the case may be, we take comfort and rejoice that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)



Cory Drehle is pastor of Berea Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

# Preparing Saints, Building Churches in Nepal!

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

**T**he HCLCN and the HBI (Himalayan Bible Institute) work together to train and equip pastors and leaders for the harvest. There is a great need for the true Word of God. There is a great need of preachers and teachers, as it says in the Gospel of Matthew 9:37-38, *“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray that Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”* There are places in Nepal that are still unreached. The HCLCN and the HBI are working to spread the good news to the most remote areas of Nepal.

There are various kinds of false teachings that are growing and affecting the Christians. There are a number of church bodies and congregations and “Christian denominations” that are working actively in Nepal. There are new liberal teachings emerging among the Christians in Nepal. They are spending an impressive amount of resources and providing attractive incentives and remunerations to the ones that work with them and for them, but they lack the only thing that is needed: truth.

The saving Word is being preached rarely, while “people pleasers” are seen everywhere and are infecting even some churches that were formerly faithful to the true Word of God. It is painful to see some of the dedicated Christians following and promoting false teachings, and little by little sharing and affecting other good Christians.



An HCLCN leader providing ministry resources to a local church



An HCLCN church under construction

In order to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3) we need to know the truth. As the Apostle John writes in John 8:32, *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

The HBI is dedicated to training and equipping the saints for the harvest, to setting people free from all kinds of bondage of darkness, and to be unwavering in whatever situation and condition.

The expanding of the churches follows the equipping of saints. We help to equip saints but at the same time we need to expand the churches and reach more people with the Gospel. To preach the Gospel confidently we need church buildings or huts that are enclosed and private, since Nepal has anti-conversion laws in effect.

We try to help local churches to grow and become established. We do this through prayer, and by providing resources to build churches. We are always burdened to help build safe places for congregational gatherings.

There are several churches the HCLC helped to build over the years. Currently, there are several more churches that need prayers so that they can complete their work and start using their buildings for the purpose of ministry.

We are sure that the Lord will continue to bless His work in Nepal and beyond.

# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JANUARY 2024

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
January 1	TLH 123/LSB 733	Psalms 90	Though our earthly lives are short, our eternal God provides for all of our needs in time and in eternity.
January 2	TLH 409/LSB 685	2 Corinthians 1	Paul and Timothy greet the believers in Corinth. Though our faith often results in suffering in this world, the Lord comforts us. Like Paul, we find that often our plans are not the plans of the Lord.
January 3	TLH 331/LSB 614	2 Corinthians 2	When a Christian has fallen into public sin, it is the responsibility of the congregation to call him to repentance. When a Christian has repented of his sin, it is the joyful privilege of the congregation to declare to him the forgiveness of the Lord and to receive him again as a forgiven brother in Christ.
January 4	TLH 398/LSB 704	2 Corinthians 3	The law is a curse to those who are unrighteous. According to the new covenant, the unrighteous are declared righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. As believers, we are privileged to have received this glorious message for our own salvation. We are further privileged to have been called to proclaim this glorious message to others for their salvation.
January 5	TLH 90/LSB 375	Numbers 24	Though Balaam has asked Balaam to curse Israel, Balaam blesses Israel for a third time. Balaam also curses the enemies of Israel.
January 6	TLH 131/LSB 399	Matthew 2	Wise men travel to Bethlehem bearing gifts for Jesus, the king of the Jews. Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape from wicked King Herod. Herod murders all the boys of Bethlehem two years old or younger. After the death of Herod, Joseph brings Mary and Jesus to Galilee in Israel.
January 8	TLH 268	Isaiah 49	The Lord restores Israel by sending His servant, Jesus, to accomplish salvation for all people.
January 9	TLH 300/LSB 592	1 Samuel 1	Hannah has no children and is barren. She prays for a son. When the Lord gives her a son, she dedicates him to the Lord. The boy will serve the Lord at Shiloh under Eli the priest. His name is Samuel.
January 10	TLH 628/LSB 864	1 Samuel 2	Hannah expresses her faith in the words of a beautiful prayer. The sons of Eli are wicked men. As a result of their great wickedness, the Lord rejects the household of Eli. The Lord promises to raise up a faithful priest.
January 11	TLH 296/LSB 589	1 Samuel 3	The Lord calls Samuel and reveals to him that He is about to punish the house of Eli. The Lord blesses Samuel as he grows into a man, establishing him as a prophet.
January 12	TLH 568/LSB 785	2 Thessalonians 1	Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy greet the believers of Thessalonica, thanking God for them and for their faith. Christ will return to judge the unrighteous. Those who have faith in Christ will be judged righteous.
January 13	TLH 401/LSB 692	2 Thessalonians 2	Paul foretells the coming of the Antichrist. We see this prophecy fulfilled in the Roman Catholic papacy. Though we are afflicted by many antichrists and their false teaching, the Lord calls us to remain faithful to the glory of His name and to our eternal salvation.
January 15	LSB 586	Jonah 1	The Lord sends Jonah to prophesy against the city of Nineveh. Jonah travels in the opposite direction and boards a ship to Tarshish. The Lord sends a great tempest and the sailors are terrified. Jonah instructs them to throw him into the sea. After they have thrown him into the sea, the storm ceases. The Lord sends a great fish to swallow Jonah.
January 16	TLH 403	Jonah 2	While inside the belly of the great fish, Jonah praises the Lord for having delivered him. After three days and three nights the fish vomits Jonah onto dry land.
January 17	TLH 166/LSB 419	Jonah 3	The Lord sends Jonah to prophesy against the city of Nineveh. This time Jonah obeys. The people of Nineveh believe the proclamation of Jonah and they repent. Even the mighty king of Nineveh clothes himself in sackcloth and sits in ashes as signs of his repentance. The king commands everyone in Nineveh to fast, to wear sackcloth, and to turn away from evil. Knowing that the Ninevites have repented, the Lord spares them from disaster.
January 18	TLH 395/LSB 696	Jonah 4	One man remains to be called to repentance—Jonah himself. Jonah is angry at the Lord for having shown compassion to the enemies of Israel. If Jonah cares so much for the plant that shades him from the sun, should the Lord not care for the many souls residing in Nineveh?
January 19	TLH 550/LSB 874	2 Corinthians 4	The Lord enlightens us through the Gospel, revealing to us the way of salvation. The Lord uses imperfect vessels like us to bring the Gospel to others.
January 20	TLH 597/LSB 742	2 Corinthians 5	As believers in Christ, we look forward to our departure from this corrupt world and our entrance into a perfect world. Until then, we enjoy the privilege of proclaiming the message of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ.
January 22	TLH 526/LSB 745	2 Thessalonians 3	Paul requests that the Thessalonian believers pray for his work of proclaiming the Gospel. Paul warns the Thessalonians to avoid idleness. Paul concludes his letter with a blessing.
January 23	TLH 59/LSB 398	Jeremiah 11	The Lord pronounces judgment on Israel and Judah because they have broken His covenant and have worshiped false gods. The Lord threatens to punish the men of Anathoth, the hometown of Jeremiah, who have opposed the preaching of Jeremiah.
January 24	WS 760/LSB 544	Jeremiah 12	Sometimes we may wonder why the wicked seem to thrive in this world and why the Lord seems to be doing nothing about it. We can be certain that the Lord will punish the wicked. If not for the grace of God in Christ, we would be numbered among the wicked and punished forever. Thanks be to God, we have salvation in Christ and we have been given the privilege of sharing it with others.
January 25	LSB 432	Jeremiah 14	The Lord will use sword, famine, and pestilence to carry out His righteous judgment against His people. False prophets deceive the people, proclaiming that the Lord will not judge them in these ways. Many false teachers in our day preach a similar message, encouraging sinners to live securely in their sins.
January 26	TLH 234/LSB 496	Jeremiah 16	The Lord continues to denounce the idolatry of His people. At the same time, the Lord promises restoration for Israel.
January 27	TLH 134/LSB 394	Deuteronomy 18	The Lord gives laws for the provision of the physical needs of the Levitical priests. The Lord forbids several abominable practices. The Lord promises to raise up a prophet like Moses.
January 29	TLH 269	Jeremiah 17	If we trust in other people or even in ourselves, then we are lost. Our trust must be only in the Lord, Who has redeemed us in His Son. Therefore we, too, remember the Sabbath day. Our Sabbath observance consists not in a day of physical rest <i>per se</i> , but in our regular gathering with fellow believers to receive forgiveness and salvation through the means of grace.
January 30	TLH 393/LSB 713	Jeremiah 19	The Lord commands Jeremiah to break an earthenware flask in the presence of elders and priests as an illustration of what the Lord will do to Jerusalem and Judah in response to the wickedness of the people.
January 31	TLH 4/LSB 907	Revelation 15	John sees seven angels with seven plagues. John sees the faithful, who have conquered the beast, praising God with harps in their hands.

Every other month we get an update on what's been happening recently at our Immanuel Lutheran High School, College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

# New Blog Keeps You Current with ILC Activities

Though spring is normally the busiest season at Immanuel, this year we had quite an eventful time leading up to Thanksgiving break. On November 10, we hosted College Visitors' Day, which always coincides with our fall musical. On November 18, our students dressed up and enjoyed their formal dinner, served by faculty and staff.

The following descriptions of these events are taken from our new blog, "What's Happening at Immanuel?" (<https://immanuel.lutherannews.blogspot.com/>). This blog, curated by Professor Ross Roehl, provides an excellent way to keep up with activities and events at ILC.

## Immanuel Lutheran College Visitors' Day

College Visitor's Day was a great success again this year. Faculty members offered presentations on such subjects as "Topology," "Greek: The Bible in High-Def," introductions to the Education and Pre-Theology Programs, and "Why Should I Come to Immanuel for College?" A highlight of the day was the presentation



Girls dorm thankfulness pumpkin

by the CLC Recruiter, Pastor Sam Rodebaugh. With his unique, engaging style, Pastor Rodebaugh explained how pursuing a career in the full-time pastoral ministry fulfilled his life's deepest desires – especially



Cast of formal dinner murder mystery



Cast of *Beauty and the Beast*

the desire to help people! Thirty or so students were in attendance—mostly high school juniors. If you are interested in finding out about Immanuel for college, contact Academic Dean Paul Naumann (paul.naumann@ilc.edu).

### What a Weekend!

The ILC Theatre Guild presented its fall musical, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, on November 10th-11th. Due to some issues beyond their control, directors Trinity Mayhew and George Carstensen had a shorter amount of time than usual to put together the production. However, through hard work and (lots of) practice, the musical came together wonderfully and was a real treat to watch.

One of the challenging aspects of this particular musical was its large cast, which involved thirty-four students as actors and actresses. Beyond that, however, we also had many students working behind the scenes on makeup, lighting, sound, and set construction and painting. It is truly amazing that a smaller school such as ours can put on such a large production and do it so well! That we are able to do so speaks very highly of the God-given talent and dedication of our students.

### A Fun Night for the Immanuel Family

For many years the Activities Committee has planned

a "Formal Dinner" for the student body. The committee chooses a theme, plans decorations and photo ops, chooses music, etc. The student body dresses up and partakes of a special meal and enjoys some unique entertainment. Prof. Rodebaugh has prepared the food for the last several years but is calling it quits after this year. Prior to that we've had a number of people serve in that role as food preparer, oftentimes the school cook that year. There have been many, like Kathy Sydow, who led the effort for several years. We will be looking for someone to step up next year.

The entertainment has been performed by the faculty over the years and has varied from *The Legend of the Emerald Knight and the Crystal Princess* to skits fitting the theme, to original movies like *Scooby Doo and the Gravebook Wizard* and *Louie Lancer and the Lunchy Pail*. This year a large group of parents joined a few of the faculty and staff members to present a murder mystery. Both the actors and the students tried to discover the guilty party-goer and his motive.



Dr. Daniel Schierenbeck is President of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

## SEEN IN PASSING

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

**Canadian Professor Thinks People Will Soon Worship AI.** Writing recently for *The Conversation*, University of Manitoba philosophy professor Neil McArthur noted the correlation between the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and the drop in organized religion. He thinks that AI engines like ChatGPT may be taking the place of God for many people. His reasons: “1) Generative AI...displays a level of intelligence that goes beyond that of most humans. Indeed, its knowledge appears limitless. 2) It is capable of great feats of

creativity. It can write poetry, compose music and generate art, in almost any style, close to instantaneously. 3) It is removed from normal human concerns and needs. It does not suffer physical pain, hunger, or sexual desire. 4) It can offer guidance to people in their daily lives. 5) It is immortal.” McArthur, Neil. “Gods in the machine? The rise of artificial intelligence may result in new religions.” *Tech*. TheConversation.com, 15 Mar. 2023. Web. 25 Nov. 2023.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Installation.** In accord with our usage and order, Stephen Krause, who was called by Grace Lutheran Church of Valentine, Nebraska, to be a grade school teacher, was installed on July 30, 2023. Also installed on the same Sunday was student teacher Noah Ohlmann. Pastor Paul Krause participated in the service, and Missionary Todd Ohlmann was in attendance. Pictured in the photo above (l to r) are Pastor and Mrs. Todd and Beth Ohlmann, teachers Noah and Stephen, and Pastor and Mrs. Paul and Collette Krause.  
—Pastor Paul Nolting.

**Nominations for ILC Professor and ILC President.** The Board of Regents announces the following nominations to fill the professorship vacated by the impending retirement of Professor Mark Kranz at the end of the 2023-24 academic year: Neil Bernthal, Jeff Karnitz, Joshua Ohlmann, Dan Roehl, Seth Schaller,

Steve Sydow, Matthew Thurow, Paul Tiefel III, and Matthew Ude. In addition, the following and only person has been nominated for the office of President of Immanuel Lutheran College: Daniel Schierenbeck. The term of the ILC President’s call is for two years, extending to the end of Academic Year 2026. All comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates are to be received by email or letter no later than midnight January 2, 2024 (letters postmarked December 23, 2023) to: Mr. James Burkhardt; 217 Windy Lane; Rockwall, TX 75087; email: jeb6217@yahoo.com.

—Pastor John Hein, Chairman, CLC Board of Regents

**Upcoming Installation.** On the weekend of December 30-31, 2023, Pastor Neal Radichel will be installed as a pastor at Messiah Lutheran, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. On that same weekend we will install Mrs. Kelly Beekman as fifth and sixth grade teacher for the morning, and Mrs. Marcie Schierenbeck for the afternoon, for the remainder of the present school year. Additionally, we will install Pastor Mark Bernthal as Chaplain serving the elderly, shut-ins, and hospitalized of our congregation for 2024.

—Pastor Caleb Schaller

**Call for Nominations.** Nominations to fill synodical offices can be made by CLC pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of CLC congregations any time between January 1 through March 31, 2024. Nomination forms will be available on our [clclutheran.org](http://clclutheran.org) website.

—Pastor Paul D. Nolting, CLC Moderator