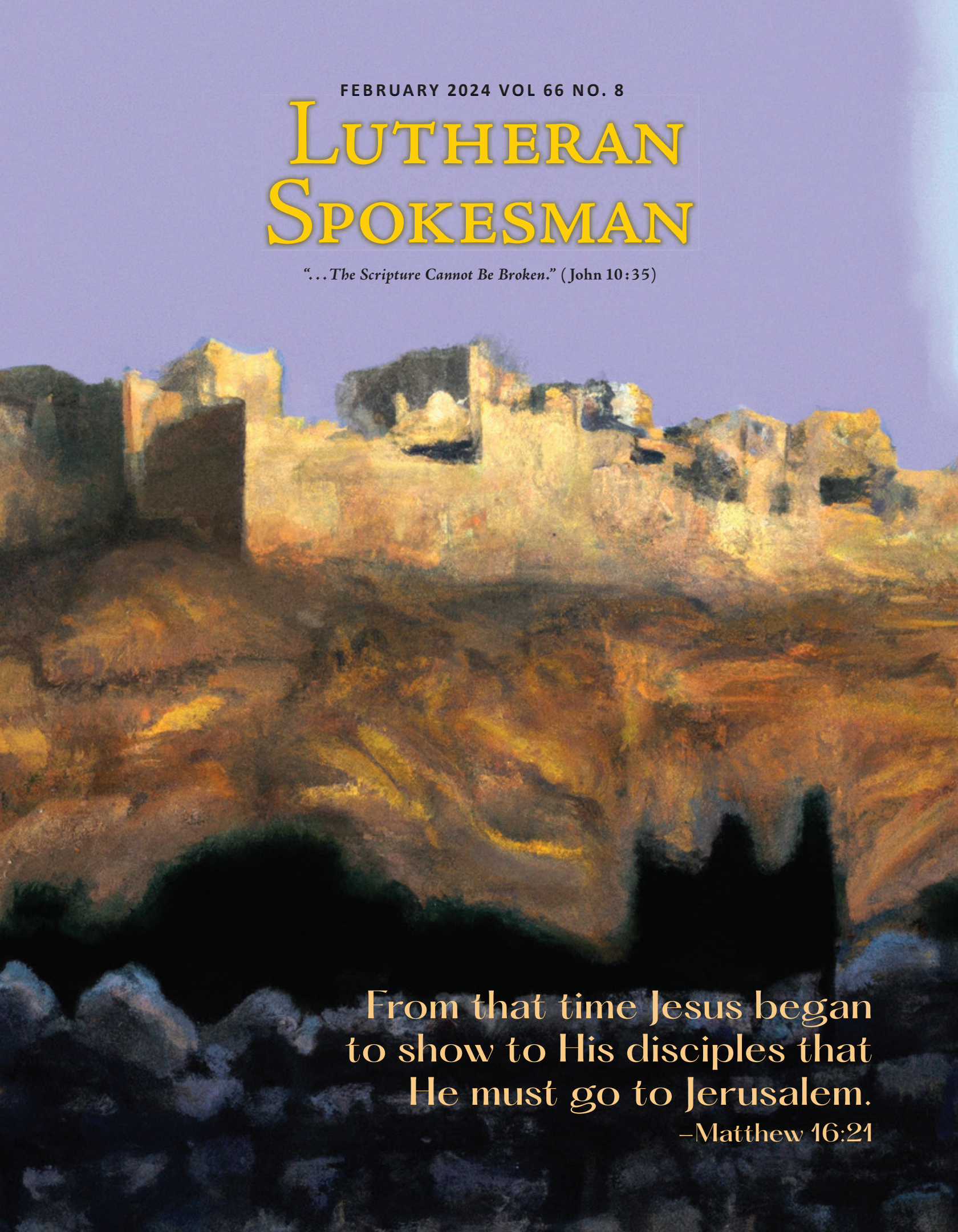


FEBRUARY 2024 VOL 66 NO. 8

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



From that time Jesus began  
to show to His disciples that  
He must go to Jerusalem.

—Matthew 16:21



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# “I Must Go to Jerusalem”

***“From then on, Jesus began telling His disciples what would happen to Him. He said, ‘I must go to Jerusalem. There the nation’s leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make me suffer terribly. I will be killed, but three days later I will rise to life.’” (Matthew 16:21 Contemporary English Version)***

**F**our months ago, October 7, 2023, to be exact, Hamas launched a surprise missile attack on Israel. At that time, unless a person were sent to fight, re-establish peace, or extract loved ones from danger, it wasn’t likely that anyone would have said, “I have to go to Jerusalem.” Death was in the air!

About two thousand years ago, Jesus told His disciples, “I must go to Jerusalem.” Death was in the air then, also, and it was Jesus’ own death—and He knew it. Not only did He know that He would die in Jerusalem, He was also aware of the suffering He would experience and that it would come from every quarter:

- From the Palm Sunday crowd that would welcome Him with “Hosanna to the Son of David” would come shouts of “Crucify Him!”
- From His own disciples would come betrayal by Judas (this troubled Jesus’ spirit); lack of support by Peter, James, and John (too tired to watch with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, they fell asleep instead); and denial by Peter (three times before the rooster crowed twice).
- From Jewish groups (the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, chief priests, and elders) would come severe opposition to Jesus and plots to kill Him.
- From the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, would come a declaration of Jesus’ innocence. But then, for fear of the crowd, Pilate would consent to have Jesus crucified.
- From the Roman soldiers would come humiliation, torture, and crucifixion.
- From revilers gathered on Calvary would come blasphemous remarks and mockery.
- From everyone ever born would come the burden of sin (our sins included) for which He would experience God’s wrath.
- From God the Father: abandonment. Jesus would cry from the



cross, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?”

Being true God, Jesus knew that all these things would happen. We’re told that in the Garden of Gethsemane “Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forward. . . .” (John 18:4). But being true man, He was deeply distressed by the horrors that would confront Him. He prayed, in agony, that the cup of suffering might pass from Him. Remember though, His prayer to the Father ended with the words, “nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” (Matthew 26:39) The Way—Jesus—was not looking for a way out. He didn’t try to escape when arrested; He offered no resistance.

He told Peter to put away the sword, and He, Jesus, set aside His divine power. He willingly laid down His life (John 10:18). “He was obedient to the point of death.” (Philippians 2:8)

And death did come: About the ninth hour, on the cross, Jesus said, “It is finished.” (John 19:30) His fight was over; He had crushed Satan. “That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Hebrews 2:14) His work of atonement was finished. The Prince of Peace had re-established peace between God and man. There is nothing more that needs to be done by Jesus, or anyone else, to free us from the curse of sin. He has extracted His loved ones—us, everyone—from eternal death, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

We sing with our children, “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so,” and realize that one of the many Bible passages that reveals Jesus’ love for us is when He says, “I must go to Jerusalem.”

Thank you, Jesus. Amen.



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

# Shared Temptations

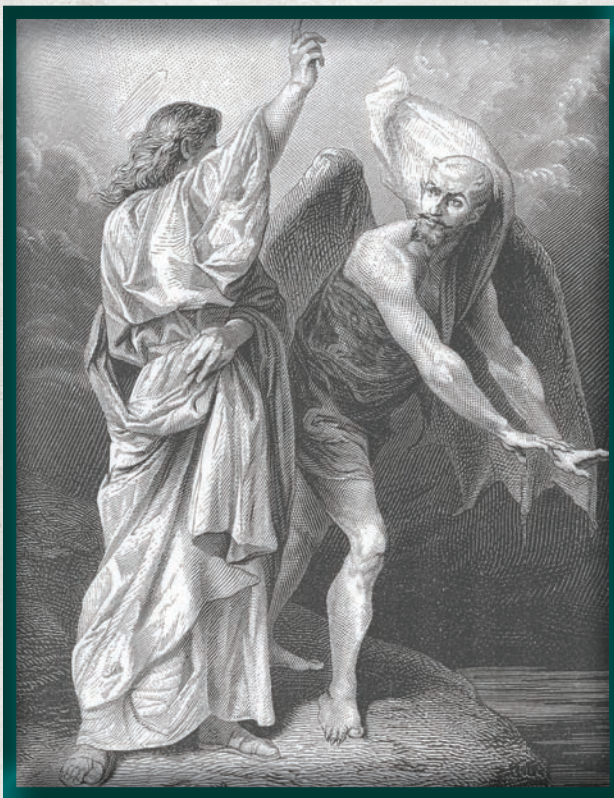
**M**atthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13 all relate the strange case of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness, which occurred at the start of His public ministry. Jesus had been led into this barren land by the Holy Spirit for this express purpose. In regard to Jesus' Godhead, this would be a futile attempt on the devil's part. Jesus is fully God (Colossians 2:9) and God cannot be tempted (James 1:13). Yet, Jesus is also fully human, complete with the aches and pains, needs, and limitations that we face. During His time on earth, He did indeed face real temptation.

Jesus was forty days in the wilderness without eating. This, no doubt, would dramatically increase His vulnerability to suggestions of any kind. We read that the devil attempted to sway Jesus with many temptations, yet only three are recorded.

First a direct assault. The devil came at Jesus head-on in the first temptation recorded in Matthew: *"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread."* (Matthew 4:3) I've never gone anywhere near forty days without food, but I know the things my body craves. Satan does too. How often doesn't the tempter urge us to use our talents, skills, and resources to satisfy our physical cravings with things that don't satisfy? Jesus reminded the devil of the one thing needed in our lives, God's Word. Just as Jesus did not use His divine power to provide for Himself, but served us, so we were created to serve our Father in heaven and our fellow man.

Next an angle attack. When Satan took Jesus to the top of the Temple and enticed Him to jump, the temptation was delivered with a push from Scripture. *"He will command his angels concerning you, on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."* (Matthew 4:6 ESV, quoting Psalm 91:11-12).

Since we are children of God, it is tempting to believe things are going to go the way we expect in life. Shouldn't God see to it



that my carefully laid plans come to fruition? Can't I expect that I will be kept safe in my daily plans? Yes, the holy angels are present to *"guard you in all your ways,"* as the devil conveniently left out of his quotation of Psalm 91. We are not, however, to test God with our foolish behavior. Rather we are simply to trust Him to watch over us as we go about His business.

Finally, the "idol" threat. You'd think it would be easy to love God above all. After all, look what our Father has done for us. He sent His Son to live perfectly, die innocently, and rise gloriously all for our justification. He blesses us continuously in this life and has promised an incomparable life with Him in heaven. Yet, our wayward hearts would seek after other fathers and saviors. Often, when trouble comes into our lives, we seek our own solutions; when triumphant, we are too willing to

accept praise for our petty accomplishments. The crass attempt of Satan to make Jesus bow down to worship him doesn't seem so crass when we view the fickle human heart. In his fallen condition, mankind loves to build his own idols, some in his own image, but all with rules he can live with. Jesus commands, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."* (Matthew 22:37)

At times we may believe we are alone in our temptations, as though no one could understand the things with which we struggle. But we have One Who understands better than we know, and Who is sure to help. *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15) Let us then go with confidence to Jesus for help in our times of temptation.



**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.*

# Service of the Sacrament: The Words of Institution

**M**artin Luther did not ordinarily get involved in telling congregations how to conduct their worship services. He recognized correctly that we have a significant amount of Christian freedom in matters such as liturgy and hymns. So it was with a great deal of reluctance that he finally offered an order of service of his own, and when he did, it did not look much different from what was already being done. One aspect, however, which did end up undergoing significant change was the liturgy surrounding what we know as *The Words of Institution* (TLH, page 27; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26), which describe Jesus' distributing the Lord's Supper to His disciples the night before He was crucified ("*the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread. . .*")

In the liturgy of the Roman Church, the Words of Institution were part of a larger *eucharistic prayer* which was part of the *canon*, the portion of the service that forms the heart of the Catholic celebration of the mass. The canon with the eucharistic prayer contained theology that was not in keeping with Scripture. As an example, consider this 1902 English translation of the traditional prayer: "We, therefore, humbly pray and beseech Thee, most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ Thy Son, our Lord, that Thou wouldst accept and bless these gifts, these presents, these holy unspotted sacrifices, which, in the first place, we offer Thee for Thy holy Catholic Church. . ." It is immediately clear that the Roman liturgy turns the Lord's Supper into *our* sacrifice which *we* offer to Christ, rather than Christ giving us the forgiveness of sins through *His* sacrifice. For this reason, among others, Luther removed all this from the familiar liturgy of his day, leaving only the Words of Institution behind.



This explains why these words seem to stand alone and apart in our Lutheran liturgies. They are no longer surrounded by their original liturgical context. Some Lutherans have rewritten the objectionable Catholic prayers to try to return the Words of Institution to a more historic setting, but *The Lutheran Hymnal* did not.

What then is the reason for the Words of Institution in our services? Some have suggested that an unintended consequence of removing the eucharistic prayer and leaving only these words was that certain Lutherans over time began to think of the Words of Institution as something of a magic formula—as if when they were spoken they pinpointed the very moment when

the body and blood were present with the bread and wine.

We would say rather that we use these words to *consecrate* the elements (the bread and wine). But what does *that* mean? It simply means that with these words we recognize that we are going to use this bread and wine to celebrate the Lord's Supper as Jesus invites us to do. It distinguishes our use of the bread and wine in the sacrament from our use of bread and wine at home around the dinner table. The Words of Institution tell us, "This is the *Lord's* Supper now that we are eating. *He* is feeding us with His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins, and we are blessed." They are not "magic" words. They are words which point to Jesus and express the Gospel. They show us what *He* is doing for us. With that in mind, we thankfully receive this precious gift.



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

# Water that Saves

***“There is also an antitype which now saves us—Baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.” (1 Peter 3:21-22)***

From Genesis to Revelation the Word of God supplies us with answers to questions posed in this sin-darkened world. The Apostle Peter’s reference to the great flood in the days of Noah in the third chapter of his first epistle calls to mind one such question; namely, was there really a worldwide flood as described in the book of Genesis, or is this only a fictional story intended to teach a lesson?

As Peter connects the Noahic flood waters with water Baptism, yet another question is raised by some. Does water Baptism do anything for us spiritually, or does Baptism merely symbolize or picture blessings of God?

Since all of God’s Word is true, and its divine revelations are stated in clear and unmistakable terms, an answer to these questions is unequivocally given by Peter. He reveals that there was most certainly a worldwide flood in Noah’s day and that God does actually impart to us wonderful spiritual and eternal blessings through water Baptism.

Peter testifies that the flood waters, which saved Noah and his family by buoying up the ark in which they were floating, serve as a type that prefigured our being saved through water Baptism. The apostle makes known that Baptism isn’t performed to wash away dirt on our body, but rather to wash away all our sins so that we can have a conscience free from blame and a soul unhurt by sin, and be eternally saved.

Baptism gives us these priceless blessings because it connects us with Christ’s sin-atonement death and His triumphant resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). As the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts (Titus 3:4-7) through the Sacrament of Baptism, we receive the benefits of Christ’s redemptive death, and His victorious



resurrection from the dead assures us of our bodies being raised from our graves in glory and translated into heaven.

Peter’s reference to heaven in the section under study in this article brings to mind still another question raised by those living in the darkness of unbelief; and that is, does heaven really exist or is it simply a pipe dream of wishful thinkers? Just as the apostle revealed that there was really a worldwide

flood that took place in ancient times and that Baptism truly saves us, so also he testifies that heaven is a real world that lies beyond our temporal earthly existence. Peter makes known that the risen Lord Jesus didn’t remain bodily on this earth, but rather ascended into heaven.

Just as Jesus ascended into heaven to assume His rightful place of power and authority over everyone and everything, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, so also on the last day of this temporal world we will be lifted up from this earth and ascend into heaven to reign with Jesus throughout all eternity (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 2 Timothy 2:10-12).

How truly wonderful it is to have God’s divine revelations recorded for us in Holy Scripture, for His Word clearly gives answer to questions of great importance! May the Lord in His rich grace and mercy ever enable us to cling by faith to His blessed truths that give us peace, joy, and hope in Christ Jesus.



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# Put Your Hope in God

***“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.” (Psalm 42:5)***

**N**ews can come from the radio, a phone app, or a doctor’s report. How do we react when it’s troubling? The psalmist was downcast and disquieted. Rather than denying or ignoring what we’re feeling, it can help to appraise honestly *what* we’re feeling and *why*.

Many psalmists spoke of wrestling with their fears. They were believers and knew God’s Word. Yet they struggled with their feelings. The Psalms address life as it really is and do more than just provide answers. They also show the *process* by which we can get past internal obstacles and embrace the peace of God.

The psalmist began by talking to himself regarding what he was feeling. Were his feelings valid?

Our minds may continue playing the same messages repeatedly—some since we were children. Are they true? Were they ever? Are they relevant today? Overwhelmingly negative and critical messages contribute little that’s helpful. We may be inclined to focus more on our reactions to them rather than effectively dealing with them.

What if *this* or *that* happens?! Does God even care? It may be time to ***listen less*** to ourselves and ***talk more*** to ourselves. “Hey, the devil’s the one who wants to fan my fear into panic and my uncertainty into despair.” We need to remind ourselves that *God loves us!* He redeemed us! That remains true even when our lives are in shambles.

The psalmist honestly appraised his internal dialogue and then applied the Good News of God’s love. That was how he could go forth in the joy of God’s peace.

The next thing he did was reorder his expectations. Wishful thinking equals disappointment. The Lord helps with this by telling us what to expect.

Jesus said, “*In the world you will have tribulation.*” That is going to happen. Then He says, “*But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*” (John 16:33) Expect *both* things to happen!

When our expectations line up with what He assured us is coming, then we won’t be disappointed. “Put your hope in God!” We’re encouraged to tell that to ourselves. Don’t hope in

your health, money, or any politician. Only God can and will come through for you.

The Lord buoys us with words like these from Psalm 103:3-5:

*“[He] forgives all your iniquities . . . heals all your diseases . . . redeems your life from destruction . . . crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies . . . satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”*

When we compare how much time we spend thinking about those things to how much time we spend thinking about all the disquieting things around us, we may want to reconsider how we’re spending our time.

Looking at a screen less may be just be the ticket! The Lord gives us everything we need to remain calm and confident, but we won’t enjoy the full benefit of those gifts if we permit our Bibles to remain unopened.

Consider this summary of thoughts from a dear departed pastor:

- When we think about our justification, then we don’t need to dwell on the past and on our guilt;
- When we think about our sanctification, we are assured that God is invested in us and continues to work in us;
- When we think about our adoption, we’re reminded that God does love us as a father;
- When we think about our future resurrection, then we’re not afraid of aging or dying.

That is why we will put our hope in God, and we will yet praise Him, our Savior and our God!

It may be time to ***listen less*** to ourselves and ***talk more*** to ourselves.



Delwyn Maas is pastor of Gift of God Lutheran Church in Mapleton, North Dakota, and St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Ponsford, Minnesota.

# The Great Supper

(Please read Luke 14:15-23)

Jesus, for whom a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years, a day, has little tolerance for smug religious claptrap (think of His “whitewashed sepulchers” speech against the Pharisees, Matthew 23). So when He was at a dinner hosted by influential Pharisees, one where He had already called out their glory-grubbing hypocrisy, and one of the diners intoned, “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God” (interpretation being “happy are folks like us who are descended from Abraham and belong to the ‘right’ party”), Jesus was ready. With a parable.

“A certain man gave a great supper and invited many.” (Luke 14:16) Jesus gives no detail about the when and where of this supper; no wine list or menu is described, it is just “great.” Significantly, the invitations have already been delivered. The parable here represents the history of Israel: the long promise—descending from Abraham, through Jacob, through Moses, through all the priesthood and prophecy—the promise of a Messianic kingdom; an era of grace and fellowship with the Lord. All those years the Lord had held out a continual invitation to Abraham’s descendants to embrace the promise of this banquet (which was, as David might have said, “a table in the midst of my enemies.”) (Psalm 23:6)

“Come, for all things are now ready.” (verse 17) Jesus, here, is pointing to His presence among them at that moment—the Lord incarnate, the Lamb of God (John 3), ready to offer up the redeeming sacrifice for all; Israel’s Passover Lamb, by Whose blood the people would be saved.

“But they all alike began to make excuses.” (verse 18 EHV) While Jesus is addressing the Jewish leaders who refused to follow Him, in one way or another the excuses given probably expose our own failures: “I have bought a piece of ground.” (verse 18) Just where, exactly, did the fellow think that ground was going to go? Do we not often overlook the extraordinary of the Kingdom for the



ordinary of this world? “I have bought a yoke of oxen.” (verse 19) Okay, oxen might wander away, but to “test” them implies that this was business. But is the daily press of business an excuse to spurn the invitation of the Provider of all things? The last excuse, the blunt “I have married a wife,” (verse 20) is a flat rejection of all things heavenly for the fleeting benefits of the earthly. Have we ever made a poor exchange like that?

Up to this point, the parable deals largely with the past and present: Israel had been promised a Messianic king, and here He was. But those who held an invitation to the great supper had no real hunger or thirst for the righteousness of God.

But there is a prophetic element to the parable as well. The Master is good, the Master is generous, and if the rejection of those invited to His feast provokes anger,

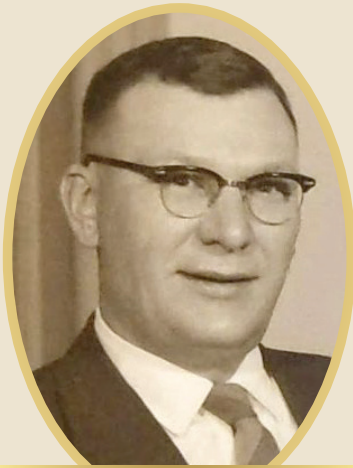
He turns that anger into something marvelous and wonderful. The invitation is quickly extended broadly and urgently to those who long had been on the edge of God’s covenant activity: the unclean and the Gentiles. “The poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind,” (verse 21) though not formally prohibited from participation of Israel’s fellowship (unlike, for instance, lepers), they were seen by others as less acceptable to God. Likewise the Gentiles (out on the highways) were despised by proper Jews as unworthy of the kingdom. But it was to them that the invitation was sent, and they were brought in by the score, urged on by servants of the King, servants like Paul, who wrote “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us . . . be reconciled to God.” (II Corinthians 5:20)

Jesus is God’s invitation to the feast. Let all who hear the invitation accept it by faith and with the obedience of faith.



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





Pastor Ruben Ude  
(1923-1970)

*In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by early leaders in the CLC. Pastor James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Pastor Ruben Ude (1923-1970) was a naval aviator in WWII and a graduate of Bethany Lutheran Seminary. He was involved in the formation of the CLC, and for the last four years of his life served as chairman of the synod's Board of Missions. This article is from the Lutheran Spokesman of January, 1966.*

## In The Blessedness of a Christian Death

The Christian is called to be a soldier of Jesus Christ here on the earth. As soldiers are mustered out of the army one by one and sent home when their tour of duty is over, so we Christians are one by one mustered out of Christ's army here on earth and taken home to heaven. As there is sadness over being parted from one's companions in arms, so there is sadness over the death of a Christian; but as the soldier's joy over laying down his duties and going home overcomes his sadness, and as the joy of his buddies for him overcomes their sadness, so our Christian hope and joy overcomes our sadness at the time of death. Thus, St. Paul writes: We "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13 KJV)

If the soldier did not know where he was going, or if he knew he was being transferred to an even worse battlefield, then he and his buddies would be sad indeed. Then he would much rather stay in the Viet Nam jungles, disagreeable as they are. If we did not have hope, if death were some dark unknown abyss, then death would have to be a fearful thing. Then our departure out of this life would be most sad, both for us and for our fellows. That is what death would mean for us if our Lord Jesus Christ had not come to this earth to redeem us. Because of our sins, death would mean departing this life to begin the far worse hardships and sufferings of hell. Then, the fear of death would fill us. We would certainly rather stay in this life.

But God did not leave us in that helpless state. He so loved us that He sent His only begotten Son to be born of a virgin, to take our place under the Law; in our place He lived a holy God-

pleasing life here on earth and in our place He suffered all the pains of hell.

Because He took our place we are now free from having to go to hell. Because He rose again from the dead we now have hope that we will also be raised up again. God, the righteous Judge, Who cannot lie, has declared that all who believe in Jesus for life and salvation shall have it. Thus, our future is bright and secure. Through death we go home to Paradise, as St. Paul says: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:8 KJV)

Where then is the fear of death? Where then is sadness over death? The Christ-Child, Whose birth we have just celebrated, takes away all our fear and sadness. By faith in Him we overcome our fear of death. By faith in Him we even overcome our sadness and learn to rejoice in death as the battle-weary soldier rejoices in being mustered out of the army to go home. By faith we say with St. Paul: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:55-57 KJV) By faith in Him we learn to regard life and death as St. Paul did when he wrote: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." (Phil. 1:21, 23-24 KJV)

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

# Truly Good News in Tanzania

***“Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15-16 ESV)***

On November 19, 2023, a graduation ceremony was held at Wittenberg Lutheran Theological Seminary in Arusha, Tanzania. Four men received their diplomas for completing the one-year course in Evangelism. One student, Philippo Molel, will return to his home in the Maasai village of Mbyuni to be a pastoral assistant. The other three are Eubank Elijah, Jasper Musakali, and Godfrey Mzoo, who will be returning to our three-year seminary program in January. Highlights from the graduation service can be seen at [www.tinyurl.com/witt-grad23](http://www.tinyurl.com/witt-grad23).

An “evangelist” is an announcer of the good news about Jesus. We are thankful to God that we are able to graduate men from our Wittenberg Seminary who are prepared to do just that—to announce the news about Jesus that is truly good and truly saving. The goal of our graduates will be to follow Jesus’ direction from Luke 24:47 that “*repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.*” This message is what true evangelism is all about.

The so-called “Prosperity Gospel” is prevalent in this part of the world. These peddlers of prosperity say that God promises to grant good health and riches in this life, but only to those who have a strong enough faith. The tragedy is that this becomes bad news during times of want and sickness, which creep up on every one of us sooner or later. There is no lasting comfort in this news.

There are also many “signs and wonders” churches here. The news from these miracle-men is that outward signs such as faith healing and speaking in nonsensical “tongues” provide the proof that a person is a Spirit-filled and holy child of God. This becomes bad news for the honest person who continues to see the ugly effects of sin in his heart in spite of the showy pseudo-miracles on display. There is no real comfort in this news, either.

Real evangelism focuses on the real Jesus—the one Who was



(L to R) Pastor Jeremia, Bruce and Paula Naumann, Kenyan seminary student Jasper Musakali

crucified and raised to life again on our behalf. He is the one Who freely gives His forgiving grace to those who know that they are abject sinners. He doesn’t reserve His blessing for those who are worthy of health and prosperity. He didn’t come to favor those who can prove their holy status with supposed miracles. Instead, Jesus came and died for the *ungodly* (Romans 5:6) in order to raise them up to faith and life. This lasting treasure comes through simple trust in His completed work for us. This is the great good news that Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach. It is also the same Gospel message that is going forth in the Tanzanian Church of the Lutheran Confession (TCLC) in a variety of ways:



Evangelism graduates received diplomas during the worship service

- ✦ In God's outpouring of grace in holy Baptism for eleven children at the Maasai village of Mbyuni on November 5, 2023, and at the baptism and confirmation of Miriam on November 12 at Ambureni;
- ✦ In the ongoing training of pastoral candidates in the new school year at Wittenberg Seminary, which is set to begin in January of 2024;
- ✦ In the TCLC pastoral conference in Moshi, Tanzania scheduled for January 23-25 for mutual instruction and encouragement in God's Word;
- ✦ In the visitation to our sister churches in Kenya by Missionary Naumann, Pastor Jeremia Issangya, and Kinship representative Ted Quade in late January and early February 2024;
- ✦ In the ongoing preaching and teaching of God's Word in twenty-seven TCLC congregations, which serve about 1,200 souls;
- ✦ In outreach events being planned for remote villages, to bring the genuine good news about Jesus to those who do not yet know it.

Our little church body, the CLC, has a multitude of open doors to evangelize; that is, to proclaim in many parts of the world the good news about Christ crucified. By ourselves, we can't reach ALL the world to preach the Gospel to EVERY creature. But then, neither could the original apostles hope to do so. They were to have an initial, leading role in God's plan for His Gospel. We are thankful to be at least a small part of



Baptism and confirmation of Miriam (center)



Baptism of eleven children at Mbyuni parish

the Lord's plan as well. Through His Word, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, He continues to lead people, by faith in Christ crucified, to eternal life. May He continue to bless our feeble efforts in Tanzania, in Kenya, and in all the other fields before us!



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

## WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

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

# Ascension Lutheran Church *Tacoma, Washington*

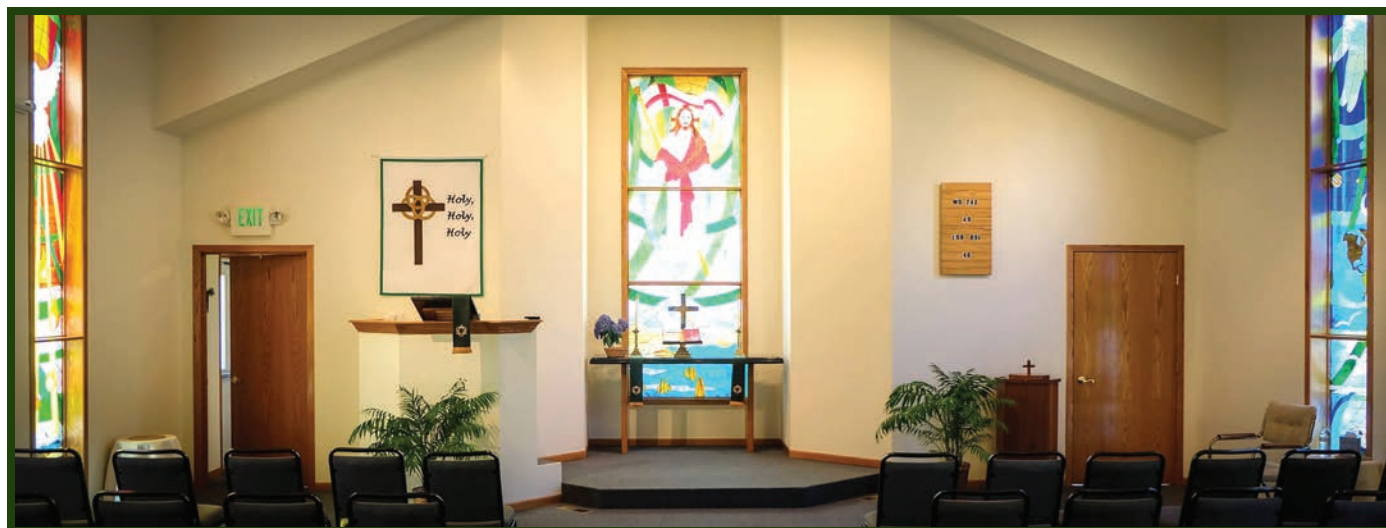


If you were to use two words to describe Ascension Lutheran Church since its last update, they would be “resilient” and “blessed.” The people of Ascension endured an almost two-year long vacancy starting in November 2021. During that time, they were occasionally served by faithful vacancy pastors, for which they are extremely grateful. However, they held many lay services when they weren’t able to have a pastor serve them; volunteers kept services going, including liturgy, CLC-pastor-written sermons, and recorded music.

While the numbers did not increase much during this time, they remained constant. The church halls refused to go silent, and the Word of God remained steadfast among them. For this they are

thankful.

In today’s world it might have been easy to sit back and let the small attendance and lack of a pastor lead to complacency, and perhaps to their candle being snuffed out completely. Far be it from the members of Ascension! Their light continued to shine as bright as ever. This too was a blessing from God, for it is not human strength or will that allows this or any church to endure the pressure this world puts on it.





Prayers were answered as the dual parishes of Ascension Lutheran Church of Tacoma and Redemption Lutheran Church of Lynnwood celebrated the ordination and installation of Pastor Jonah Albrecht on July 16, 2023.

Being blessed by the grace of our loving God, Ascension has stood as a beacon in a dark place. God has remained faithful to His people here and has strengthened them when all else may have seemed lost.

The members of Ascension are excited about prospects that await them in the near future. They plan to organize single-day VBS events in the Tacoma area for the Easter and Christmas seasons, in hopes of reaching other Christian-minded people who may not know who Ascension is or what we stand for. Ascension is also looking into re-starting outreach efforts in the Portland area.

As the weeks and months go by, joining in acts of fellowship has been an essential part to this church's identity. Potlucks and work days have been catalysts for our fellowship to grow stronger and for friendships to blossom.

Above all, the faithful members of Ascension are grateful to God Who has allowed them to return to regular church services, and Who will continue to open up doors of opportunity to bring others into our Shepherd's fold.

*On Christ the solid Rock we stand. All other ground is sinking sand!* (TLH 370).



(Top Left) Installation - pastor and parents  
 (Top Right) Some members of Ascension  
 (Bottom) Clean-up day



**Jonah Albrecht** is pastor of Redemption Lutheran Church in Lynnwood, Washington, and Ascension Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Washington. Longtime Ascension member Ann Radcliffe contributed to this article.

# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS FEBRUARY 2024

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

| Date        | Hymns           | Reading         | Comments  |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| February 1  | TLH 390/LSB 560 | 1 Corinthians 2 | Our faith rests only on Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom to receive the truth of God.  |
| February 2  | TLH 385         | 1 Corinthians 3 | Christ Jesus is the object of our faith and the Head of His body, the Church. As believers, our loyalty is to Christ and not to the undershepherds who minister to us.  |
| February 3  | TLH 485         | 1 Corinthians 4 | The Lord blesses us greatly through the undershepherds into whose care He has entrusted us. Pastors and teachers are called to be faithful. We who are under their care are called to imitate their faithfulness.   |
| February 5  | TLH 165         | 1 Corinthians 5 | Paul calls the Corinthian believers to repentance over an unresolved situation of sexual immorality in their midst.   |
| February 6  | TLH 335         | 1 Corinthians 6 | Paul admonishes those among the Corinthians who have brought lawsuits against fellow believers. Paul urges the Corinthians to avoid all forms of unrighteousness, especially sexual immorality.   |
| February 7  | TLH 625/LSB 862 | 1 Corinthians 7 | Paul instructs the Corinthians on how to conduct themselves, whether they are married or unmarried. Sometimes it is wise for an unmarried person to marry. Sometimes it is wise for an unmarried person to remain unmarried. In either situation, the Lord calls the believer to faithfulness and purity.                                 |
| February 8  | TLH 395/LSB 696 | 1 Corinthians 8 | Sometimes an action that is not wrong in itself may be troubling to a Christian brother who is weak in faith or lacking in knowledge. The faithful believer desires to avoid exercising his Christian freedom in a way that will offend the weak.   |
| February 9  | TLH 483/LSB 682 | 2 Kings 2       | The Lord takes Elijah to heaven by a whirlwind and Elisha succeeds him. Elisha heals a spring of water miraculously. A group of boys mock Elisha and are killed by bears.   |
| February 10 | WS 720/LSB 413  | Mark 9          | Jesus is transfigured on the mountain. Jesus frees a boy from demonic possession. Jesus predicts His death and resurrection. Jesus teaches His disciples about humility. Jesus teaches that it is better to lose a part of the body than to be led into sin by that part of the body.   |
| February 12 | TLH 224/LSB 497 | Joel 2          | Joel prophesies the coming “ <i>day of the LORD</i> ,” including a clear description of the events of the Day of Pentecost, as fulfilled in Acts 2.   |
| February 13 | TLH 509         | 2 Corinthians 6 | Now is the time to believe the Gospel! Now is the time to bear the cross, rejoicing in the salvation that we have received through Christ! The Lord commands His faithful people to avoid those whose teaching is contrary to that of His Word.   |
| February 14 | TLH 458/LSB 766 | Matthew 6       | Among many other teachings, Jesus gives His disciples the Lord’s Prayer.  |
| February 15 | TLH 326/LSB 608 | Genesis 20      | Though commended as a man of faith, Abraham at times fails to trust the Lord and instead takes matters into his own hands, committing great sin.  |
| February 16 | TLH 40/LSB 798  | Genesis 21      | Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah. Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham makes a covenant with Abimelech at Beersheba.   |
| February 17 | LSB 547         | Genesis 22      | The Lord commands Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham is willing to obey the command of the Lord. The Lord stops Abraham from killing Isaac and provides a ram to be sacrificed in his place.   |
| February 19 | TLH 318/LSB 613 | Revelation 16   | At the command of the Lord, the seven angels pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God.  |
| February 20 | LSB 348         | Revelation 17   | One of the seven angels shows John the great prostitute, Babylon, and a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns.   |
| February 21 | TLH 613/LSB 672 | Revelation 18   | An angel declares the fall of Babylon the great. Another voice calls the people of God to come out from Babylon.  |
| February 22 | TLH 275/LSB 934 | Genesis 17      | The Lord changes the name of Abram to Abraham and makes with him the covenant of circumcision. The Lord changes the name of Sarai to Sarah and promises to provide Abraham and Sarah with a son in their old age.   |
| February 23 | TLH 34/LSB 820  | Genesis 18      | The Lord appears to Abraham and tells him that Sarah will bear a son in about a year. The Lord reveals to Abraham His plan to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham intercedes for the city of Sodom for the sake of his nephew, Lot. The Lord agrees not to destroy Sodom if ten residents are found to be righteous. |
| February 24 | TLH 346         | Mark 8          | Jesus feeds the four thousand. The Pharisees demand a sign from Jesus, but He gives them no sign. Jesus warns His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. Jesus heals a blind man. Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus predicts His death and resurrection.   |
| February 26 | TLH 452/LSB 661 | Revelation 19   | A multitude of voices praises God for having judged the great prostitute. The voices continue to praise God for having prepared the marriage supper of the Lamb. John sees Jesus as a rider on a white horse victoriously leading the armies of heaven.   |
| February 27 | TLH 611/LSB 508 | Revelation 20   | An angel binds Satan for one thousand years. The martyrs and those who have not worshiped the beast reign with Christ during the thousand years. Satan is defeated. The last judgment occurs.   |
| February 28 | TLH 605/LSB 513 | Revelation 21   | God dwells with man in a new heaven and a new earth. Tears, death, mourning, crying, and pain are no more. Jesus Christ makes all things new. The holy city of Jerusalem, the holy Christian Church, is the bride of Christ.  |
| February 29 | LSB 561         | Revelation 22   | The river of the water of life flows from the throne of God. The tree of life grows on either side of the river. Jesus Christ is coming soon to take us there.  |

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Today's tough economy prompts the question; "What is a worthwhile investment?"  
Here's a simple answer to that question: **children.**

# EduK8 - A Worthwhile Investment

*For Life*

From the beginnings of the CLC, Christian education has always been a priority investment. God's grace and steadfast love can be recounted in story after story in the history of our synod's efforts to start and maintain Christian schools.

Recently we've been given yet another wonderful opportunity to be part of God's plans for the future of His church. EduK8, pronounced *educate*, is a fund that promotes the starting and maintaining of CLC Christian elementary schools. This fund was established by the CLC Convention in June of 2022. The ongoing work of starting and maintaining Christian elementary schools among us will be carried out by a Christian Education Committee (CEC), operating with and under the CLC Board of Education and Publications.

God has been good to each of us. "For your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9) Jesus took on His shoulders our debt of sin, and grants to each of us the riches of justification in God's sight. It's just as if you never sinned! Truly of all people in the world today, believers are the wealthiest, spiritually speaking. Most of us have also been blessed with earthly riches. Faith prompts us to be good stewards of God's blessings. God promises, "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38) Why not designate part of your resources to the worthwhile cause of the Christian education of our children? The EduK8 fund is here to make that happen for God's glory.

A recent movie, *The Sound of Freedom*, has brought to our attention the horrible reality of sex-trafficking and child-

slavery rampant in our nation and the nations of this wicked world. Watching this movie causes our hearts to yearn to free these children from this terrible bondage of cruel slavery. How much more shouldn't our believers' hearts yearn to bring the message of the cross of Christ to free our children from the horrible reality of sin and its terrible bondage to death and the devil? It starts in our homes with teaching and everyday living, saturating our own children, grandchildren, and our family-

of-faith children with God's Word. As God told His people, "These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

Conclusion: "How can I support this effort?"

Answer: Do what you've

always done—pray! Pray that God's Word will not be bound by society's wicked ways, but have free course in our Christian schools. Pray that God opens hearts, starting with our own, to give and give generously to the EduK8 fund. Your church treasurer will know to send these offerings to the General Business Office at Immanuel Lutheran College. Allocate and plan whatever the Lord moves you to give. Won't it be nice to sit back in our old age and watch God's earthly blessings to us benefit the generations to come with the same eternal blessings He's given us? "All your children shall be taught by the LORD, And great shall be the peace of your children." (Isaiah 54:13)



Mount Zion of Detroit is one of the churches considering a new school



**David Naumann** is pastor of Saint John's Lutheran Church in Clarkston, Washington, and Peace Lutheran Church in Orofino, Washington. He also serves as chairman of the CLC Board of Education and Publications.

## SEEN IN PASSING

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

**Research Supports “The Success Sequence” For Young People.** In a column for *The Deseret News*, University of Virginia sociology professor Brad Wilcox cites numerous studies that confirm what he calls “the success sequence.” “This three-pronged sequence encourages young adults to get at least a high school degree, work full time in their 20s, and marry before they have any children,” says Wilcox. Recent research has shown that people who follow the success sequence are 60% less likely to experience poverty and have twice the odds of eventual home ownership. Why is marriage important, as compared with single parenthood or cohabiting parents? Because kids born to married parents are twice as likely to still be living with both parents at age ten than children born to cohabiting parents. Further, children from intact, married families are statistically far more likely to succeed in school and in their careers. By contrast, “children from nonintact families are about half as likely to graduate from college and twice as likely to land in prison.” Professor Wilcox is careful not to denigrate the sacrifices and successes of single parents. “Many single parents across the nation put in long hours and tiring days, working selflessly for their children. I was raised by a single mother and turned out OK — and the same could be said for figures like Barack Obama and Jeff Bezos. But as a sociologist, I can also tell you the evidence could not be clearer that kids are far more likely to flourish when they have the privilege of being raised by their own married parents.” Wilcox, Brad. “Perspective: For kids, marriage still matters.” *Opinion*. Desert.com, 26 Nov. 2023. Web. 17 Dec. 2023.

**Anti-Christian Attacks Up 44% in Europe.** The watchdog group Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe (OIDAC Europe) reported 748 anti-Christian hate crimes in 30 different countries in 2022. These ranged from arson attacks, graffiti, desecrations,

and thefts to physical attacks, insults, and threats. University of Vienna Professor Regina Polak expressed concern about the rising number of cases: “The increasing number of anti-Christian hate crimes in Europe reported by OIDAC is deeply worrying. It is highly necessary to raise both governmental and societal awareness for this problem and undertake political measures to tackle and combat it decidedly.” The report also analyzes different forms of discrimination against Christians. In several high-profile cases across Europe in 2022, Christians lost their jobs, faced suspension, or criminal court cases for expressing non-violent religious views in public. Christians who adhered to the traditional teachings of their churches were targeted or even prosecuted for allegedly committing “hate speech.” “The criminalization of expressions of mainstream religious teachings—which do not incite violence or hatred—as ‘hate speech’ is dangerous on various levels,” said OIDAC Europe’s Executive Director, Anja Hoffmann. “It stigmatizes legitimate conscience-related convictions and at the same time weakens the severity of actual incitement to hatred. Furthermore, silencing Christian voices in public undermines the plurality of democratic western societies and essentially renders a free discourse impossible.” N/A. “OIDAC Europe’s Annual Report 2022/23 Released.” *Archive*. Intoleranceagainstchristians.eu, 16 Nov. 2023. Web. 25 Nov. 2023.

**Physical Collection Plate Still the Most Popular Way to Give.** Most Protestants who give regularly to church still prefer a physical collection plate to a digital one. A Lifeway Research survey of 1,002 American Protestants found that since the pandemic, more people are giving online—but still not most. Today, only 7 percent of those who give use a church smartphone app. A further 8 percent have set up automated bank payments. Silliman, Daniel. “Every Dollar Counts.” *Christianity Today*, vol. 67, no. 8, November 2023, p. 14.