

JUNE 2024 VOL 66 NO. 12

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



Make a  
joyful shout  
to the LORD!

-Psalm 100:1

**The 36th Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession**  
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# A Godly Give and Take

**O**ur faith that connects us to our Savior also connects us to other believers in Christ. “*That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*” (1 John 1:3 ESV) In this household of faith, good works are done out of love to support each other. Brothers and sisters in Christ give and receive comfort, encouragement, cooperation, reminders, admonition, forgiveness, and refreshment. They also pray for and edify each other. “*So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*” (Galatians 6:10 ESV)

But the devil and our old Adam attempt to corrupt and prevent good works. We’re tempted to help others only if we profit; we decline to encourage others because it’s “unnecessary”; we refrain from admonishing when we should because we’re timid or say, “It’s none of my business”; and sometimes we’re lazy. Dear Heavenly Father, forgive us for avoiding opportunities to help others.

The Bible tells of brethren supporting brethren. For example, consider Jonathan meeting with David at a time when King Saul was trying to kill David. Jonathan went to David and “*strengthened his [David’s] hand in God.*” (1 Samuel 23:16 ESV) Humanly speaking, it would have been safer for Jonathan to avoid David, lest Saul find out and become angry. Or why even bother reminding David that God would protect him? After all, it was David who earlier had said, “*The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine [Goliath].*” (1 Samuel 17:37) But Jonathan, making no excuses, went to David and offered encouragement.

Speaking of reminders: the Apostle Peter, watchful of his fellow-believers’ souls, said, “*Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure. . . . For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it*



Jonathan and David

*is right . . . to stir you up by reminding you.*” (2 Peter 1:10–13) It’s a blessing, not an annoyance, when brethren remind us of what God has said.

In 2 Samuel, we learn that God sent His prophet Nathan to rebuke King David. Imagine the excuses one could invent to avoid rebuking a king! But consider the blessings: David repented, and the Lord forgave him. We are to rebuke a brother or sister who sins against us, “. . . *and if he repents, forgive him.*” (Luke 17:3).

One last example of a blessing of Christian fellowship: Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul’s chains, and ministered to Paul when the apostle was imprisoned. These visits refreshed Paul. (2 Timothy 1:16-18)

Blessings of fellowship also occur when believers worship God

together. “*Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*” (Hebrews 10: 24-25)

Finally, just knowing that others in the family of believers undergo trials similar to ours strengthens us. “*Resist him [the devil], steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*” (1 Peter 5:9)

*Blest be the tie that binds, Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds, Is like to that above.  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our comforts and  
our cares,  
We share our mutual woes, Our mutual burdens bear,  
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.  
Yes, one in Christ and one in heart, We hope to meet again.  
Amen. (TLH 464 selected lines)*



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

# Make It Personal

One of the most comforting doctrines of Scripture is that of universal justification. This teaching assures us that because of Jesus' life, sacrificial death, and resurrection, all people of all time have been declared not guilty of their sins. However, in order for the full benefits of this declaration to be realized, each individual needs to embrace, by faith, the fact that this applies to him as well.

In a similar sense, on the day of His ascension, the Lord Jesus gave the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. Too many people think of this as pastors, teachers, missionaries, or "the church" doing the work of spreading the Gospel. But the Lord means for this mission work to be personal. A great blessing of being a justified Christian is that we now have the ability to partner with the Holy Spirit to advance the Lord's work in our personal relationships as well as collectively with the church.

Personal evangelism should, like all of a Christian's endeavors, begin with prayer. Pray that you might have a missionary's love for the Lord and His Word. Pray the Lord to give you a missionary's heart for the lost. Pray for a missionary's eyes to see any and all that come your way as souls needing to be reached with the Good News of Christ.

We begin with prayer. Preparation is a good next step. *"In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."* (1 Peter 3:15 ESV) Study your Scriptures, ask questions of your pastor, join in discussions in Bible Class—all of these will help to sharpen your focus on the message. People lose interest and confidence when someone is speaking about something he knows little about. However, when someone speaks with confidence, from a heart that sets Christ apart as our Lord and clearly defends our hope from His Word, it can go a long way to pique the interest of others, and the Holy Spirit is always with us to assist our



witness.

We can now take our next step into personal evangelism with no fear. *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."* (2 Timothy 1:7) So we are to be fearless when presenting the Gospel, because we know it is His will, He will be with us, and He has already promised us success. We are not to be concerned with consequences of speaking the Gospel, nor is it our job to convert anyone. We are to speak the truth and then get out of God's way. He has promised us success in that His Word will not return to Him empty, but it will accomplish the purpose for which He sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

We've prayed, prepared, and stepped out with no fear; now let's meet people where they are. When Paul met with Jews, he could begin with the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Messiah in Christ. When he spoke to the heathen, he began with the Creator

God Who has provided a plan for the forgiveness of sins. We too will meet people of various backgrounds and understanding. We should take care not to argue about religion, but rather focus on the simple message of sin, grace, and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Sanctification, or growth in one's personal faith, will come with further study of the Word.

We too are products of someone's evangelism. Whether our parents, a friend, or another; someone brought you to the truths of Christ, and the Holy Spirit made you His. May the Lord give each of us the heart of a missionary, so that we may see the masses of lost humanity around us and then speak—speak the Gospel of Christ, with gentleness and love.



**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 *Nunc Dimittis*

**T**he three best known New Testament “hymns” all occur in the Gospel of Luke. The *Magnificat* (Mary’s song when she greeted her relative Elizabeth) in 1:46-55, the *Benedictus* (the song of Zecharias at the birth of John the Baptist) in 1:68-79, and the *Nunc Dimittis* (the song of Simeon when Jesus was presented at the temple) in 2:29-32. The titles are simply taken from the first words of those verses in Latin.

All three are used regularly in Christian worship and are frequently set to music by a variety of composers, but the one found most often in our Lutheran liturgies is the *Nunc Dimittis*, sung following the distribution of the Lord’s Supper: “*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*” (KJV)

In the traditional daily services, the *Nunc Dimittis* is part of the *Compline* service, the last service of the day. It is also frequently used in *Vespers*, the evening service. Either way, it has its liturgical roots in the evening and nighttime hours, when the sun is setting or has set, and our thoughts turn to the end of the day, the passage of time, and the end of times.

It is a song of departure. When Simeon first uttered these words while holding the infant Jesus, he indicated his readiness to depart this life, for he had seen with his own eyes the promise of God fulfilled, the promise to send a Savior into world.

We too have seen Jesus. We have not cradled Him in our arms in the very same manner that Simeon did, but we have seen Him through the Scriptures with the eyes of faith. According to the Word of God, Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We have seen

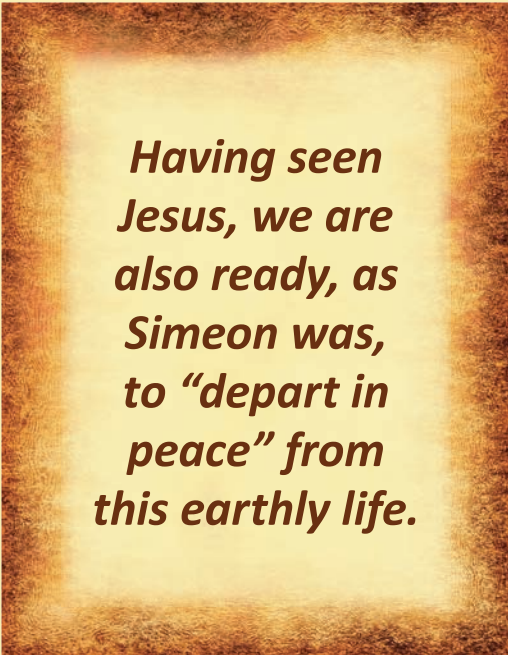
Him come and know Him as our salvation just as Simeon did. We too have seen the promise fulfilled: a Child come for the forgiveness of our sins.

Having seen Jesus, we are also ready, as Simeon was, to “depart in peace” from this earthly life—not only in the kind

of peace that comes from feeling calm and settled, free from care or worry, but *being at peace with God*. As one of our hymns says: *Christ came and has God’s anger stilled, Our human nature sharing. He hath for us the Law obeyed And thus His Father’s vengeance stayed Which over us impended.* (The Lutheran Hymnal, 387:5)

The *Nunc Dimittis* also speaks of Christ as the Savior of all people. His salvation was prepared “before the face of all” and He is “a light to lighten the Gentiles.” There is only one way to peace with God, one way to eternal life in heaven. It is through Jesus, and it is the same way for everybody: “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.” (Acts 16:31 EHV) and “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Acts 2:21 EHV)

In our worship we customarily sing Simeon’s song when we leave the communion table. This is an appropriate place for the hymn because the Lord’s Supper is a way of “holding” Jesus like Simeon did. There we see His salvation. There we are given peace with God. And in the joy of forgiveness we are prepared even to leave this life when the Lord chooses to take us home.



**Having seen  
Jesus, we are  
also ready, as  
Simeon was,  
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peace” from  
this earthly life.**



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# Christian Persecution is Not Unusual

*“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” (1 Peter 4:12-13)*

In God’s Word, the apostle Peter says that the persecution of Christians for their faith is not to be regarded as strange. Jesus reveals how this is so when He forewarns His followers, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.” (John 15:20-21) Jesus also said, “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” (John 3:19-20) When Christians let the light of God’s Word shine forth, those who love the darkness hate that light and its light-bearers, because it exposes their evil ways. Therefore they will resort to any means to silence them, even to the extent of causing them to suffer fiery persecutions.

Christian persecution started in the early church at the hands of Jews who rejected Jesus as the promised Christ. Such Jews regarded Christianity as a threat to them and their beliefs. And so, they hunted down believers, beat them, imprisoned them, and even had them put to death.

The persecution of Christians did not stop with the Jews, for Roman emperors, one after the other, continued the assault on believers. Not unlike the Jews, the emperors viewed Christians as a threat to their idolatrous beliefs and their ungodly ways. Roman rulers outlawed Christianity, confiscated Christian property, imprisoned and tortured Christians, and had them put to death in the most cruel and painful ways.

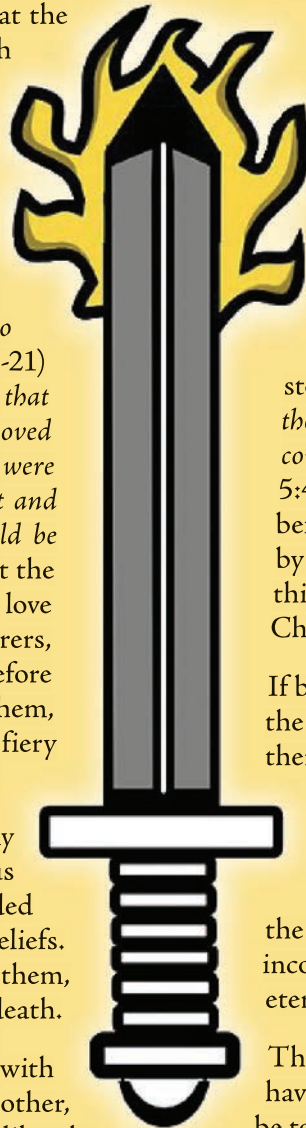
The practice of persecuting the followers of Christ continued in every succeeding century, all the way to the

present time. Our brethren in foreign lands can attest to this.

When persecutions take place, the Word of the Lord calls upon believers to “rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings.” Rejoice? Yes, rejoice with joy! What joy can be found in being persecuted? When the apostles were beaten by the Jews for preaching Christ crucified and then were sent away with threats, and were told to stop bearing witness of Jesus, “they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” (Acts 5:41) These ambassadors of Christ found joy in being given the opportunity to honor the Savior by suffering for His name’s sake. Concerning this, Peter testifies that in this way persecuted Christians “partake of Christ’s sufferings.”

If believers suffer great loss for Christ’s sake, even the loss of their lives, is there anything left for them to look forward to? Peter has a wonderful answer for us when he writes, “that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” When Jesus appears in all His glory on the last day, He will translate us to the new heavenly world where we will experience incomparable joys that will endure throughout all eternity.

Those who share in Christ’s sufferings will also have a share in the eternal glories of heaven. Praise be to God!



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# WHEN GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO BAD PEOPLE

(Please read Psalm 73)

Asaph wrote about a journey he took because he allowed himself to be led by his emotions as he compared his life as a believer to how things seemed to be for unbelievers. He concluded that the life of unbelievers looked pretty appealing. Just look at how much fun they have; look at how well they do! By comparison, his life didn't seem so good.

You could have spent all day telling him, "You shouldn't feel that way!" (How well has that worked when someone said that to you?) For Asaph to grow, he needed to wrestle with his thoughts and emotions. So the Lord allowed him to take this journey, giving him the opportunity to travel from discontent to wisdom.

Asaph admitted he was envious of the prosperity of unbelievers who seemed to have no struggles. They're healthy, strong, and free from troubles. They wear pride like a medal while using people and then casting them aside. They're unconcerned about what God thinks because, as far as they can tell, God doesn't care. They can do what they want and get away with it.

From a safe distance we can see flaws in his thinking; but many of us have similarly struggled. It may seem like the person who follows the rules loses, the compassionate person is taken advantage of, and unbelievers prosper. Conclusion: worldly people have way more fun and success than believers.

What's the point? "Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain." (Psalm 73:13) That cleansing had consisted of repenting daily and walking in faith. Our society prefers instant gratification. After faithfully going to church and choosing not to go along with what my worldly acquaintances are doing, I may wonder: "Where's the payoff?"

"When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me." (verse 16)

The more Asaph kept thinking about it, the more miserable he became—keeping his own counsel. What the world offers does have an allure. That was where Asaph found himself. That was the best he could come up with.

"Until I went into the sanctuary of God." (verse 17a) He returned to God's Word, spent time in it, and perhaps discussed his struggles with other believers.

"Then I understood their end." (verse 17b) From God's Word Asaph regained the truth, a perspective revealed by God Himself, which focuses on Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

Those who are worldly centric, however, are "brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors!" (verse 19)

Asaph admitted, "Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind. I was so foolish and ignorant." (verses 21-22) The Lord moved him from being ignorant and bitter to having understanding and being at peace. "You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel." (verses 23-24)

"Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (verses 25-26) During our earthly pilgrimage, the world offers nothing compared to the peace, joy, and life we have in Christ. And in heaven it only gets better!

Asaph had wandered into thinking that God was holding out on him. God's Word showed him the lies the devil was feeding him, and then reminded Him of how much God loved and blessed him. Truly God is good!

"But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God." (verse 28)



"I have seen a wicked, ruthless man, spreading himself like a green laurel tree." (Psalm 37:35 ESV)



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# The Unmerciful Servant

(Please read Matthew 18:21-35)

This parable concludes a chapter in Matthew in which the Lord details the extraordinary relations among members of His Church. In the kingdom of heaven, nothing is valued more than the simplicity of a child, so it is wicked to offend such souls; also, as a shepherd covers hill and dale to restore a wandering sheep, the church should undertake to restore to its fellowship the lost brother or sister.

That last part prompted Peter to ask, “How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?” and to venture his own progressive-sounding suggestion: “seven times?” Jesus responded with the famous “up to seventy times seven.” (verses 21-22). That led into a parable likening the kingdom of heaven to the events described in the reading above.

This parable impresses the reader with several heavenly truths. One is the extraordinary gravity of our sins. Jesus likens the Father in heaven (verse 35) to “a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.” One unwilling minion was brought in who owed him “ten thousand talents.” There are too many variables with the word “talent” to calculate any hard number in modern terms, but that’s just fine, because the debt described is simply incalculable. We are talking about sin here, and there is no way humans can quantify what it means to disobey God. Tasting the forbidden fruit brought Adam and Eve to ruin, and their descendants with them. A cross word with a brother is equal to murder; a lustful thought no less wicked than an extramarital affair (Matthew 5:22, 28). There is none among us who is not in the same extraordinary fix as this indebted servant.

When confronted by the reality of his debt, the servant dissolves into an unrealistic plea: “Have patience with me and I will pay you all.” What the servant was doing was the natural, flesh-based response to a spiritual crisis: work righteousness. “Wait, God—I can fix this.”



It was solely the master’s compassion that led to the next extraordinary move: he forgave him the debt, cleared him of all past obligations. This, of course, was the master’s prerogative, but let no one diminish the magnitude of such a move. It undoubtedly cost the master a lot to bear such a loss. The corollary here is what it cost the Father in heaven to forgive even one man’s debt: the redeeming death of His Son. The master’s move here is an example of God’s extraordinary grace in covering the debt that every one of us owes.

But the parable also exposes the extraordinary blindness humans are capable of in the face of such generosity and love. The servant comes across a fellow who owes him money. A far smaller debt, but

not insignificant—perhaps a few months’ wages. These debts certainly occur and are part of living in this sinful world: damage to one’s property; broken trust; violent crime. But just as the servant’s actions are unbalanced and harsh, so also our sense of justice is often distorted and vindictive and out of proportion, both as to the offense we’ve borne and—even more—to the grace we have been shown. The master was not pleased.

We have all been forgiven the unforgivable; we all have our vast debts removed and are welcomed into good standing with our Lord God. Believing that, we have spiritual life and spiritual liberty to joyfully serve in the Lord’s vineyard. But we also still bear with us a corrupt nature, so ready to nurture a grudge. This parable confronts us with the extraordinary grace that we have received, and the extraordinary consequences of losing track of that grace in our own dealings with others.



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Rev. Rollin Reim  
1922-2018

*In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by early leaders in the CLC. Pastor James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Rev. Rollin Reim (1922-2018) was a leader in the formation of the CLC. He held pastorates in Mapleview and New Ulm, Minnesota; Sioux City, Iowa; and Mountain View, California. This article is from the Lutheran Spokesman of June, 1965. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.*

## A Little Salt Goes a Long Way

When Christians get to feel the world's hostility—the “hatred” that Jesus said should not amaze us—they are often tempted to withdraw. The urge is to colonize; to seek out your own with whom to work and among whom to live.

Sound sensible? Perhaps, but it is not the Savior's way. When He said GO, He scattered His people like seed on the vast acre of the world. There is no Bible directive for a Geneva plan, or church-controlled state, as John Calvin sought to establish. Nor is there in Scripture an “Amana” plan for a religious colony. We are to be in the world, while not of it. This is, of course, a harder way. But it is the only way in which our society can be preserved during its time of grace . . . by the salt-like, preserving character of the believers within it.

Should a Christian seek a position of influence in government, business, the arts, and the professions? Will the world have him? The surprise answer is, “Yes!” Fact is, the world is often quick to appreciate the value of the gifts with which the Spirit enriches the children of God: the qualities of honesty, diligence, loyalty, and unselfishness all mean a great deal to any employer. You may not be sought after because of your faith in Christ, but you may very well be wanted for your natural and spiritual gifts.

Egypt had no love for Joseph's God, but it wanted what Joseph had, and it prospered through his Spirit-given abilities. There is no hint that Nebuchadnezzar or Darius of Persia ever bowed their knees to Daniel's God, but both were pleased to entrust their most vital governmental powers to this great Jewish statesman.

The world as our Lord speaks of it is so large, while we are so small and so few. Can we possibly be of substantial influence in it? Remember, it takes but a little salt to flavor and preserve the

bulk of a ham; it takes but a small source of light to overcome the darkness of a room. Let us be what we are. What the effect will be is not our concern. Only do not let us hide our convictions, no matter how high or exposed our position might be.

The experience of Abraham's nephew Lot at Sodom and Gomorrah offers a vivid illustration. Peter tells us that Lot was vexed in his soul, day after day, by what he saw. Since he “sat in the gate” of Sodom, we may assume that he was active in local politics, for this expression was used for what we would call the city council. At the time of the angels' visit, he sought desperately to restrain the town's people, whom he called his brethren, from committing the vice of sodomy, and so he became the victim of their taunts and fury.

Did Lot accomplish anything for these twin cities of vice? His disgust and his rebukes did not change anything, to be sure. We know from Genesis, however, that those cities would have been spared the frightful judgment of fire and brimstone if there had been only ten people like Lot living there! (Genesis 18:32) The fact of his being there, for one thing, is enormously important. And being there as a person who is obviously vexed in his soul by the evil around him. This may also help. The sins of our times must be reproved by God's people, for the world as such makes light of them. To whatever extent the world may then be restrained from course outburst of sin by such witness, to that extent the world is also granted a continuation of its time for repentance.

Let us be busy in thus serving our nation wherever we may live or work. Take courage from the prayer of Jesus, whose Savior-heart is filled with concern for His people as they fulfill their dangerous mission “out there.” *“I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.”* (John 17:15)

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

# The Gospel Changes Lives

[**Editor:** The following is a report from Pastor Jyothi Benjamin, in his own words, about current activities in the Church of the Lutheran Confession in India (CLCI). The report is lightly edited for clarity.]

**G**reetings in the Name of our Lord. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as part of the CLC family, it's a privilege to be able to deeply connect with you, and we are happy to send this report to you. The Lord has led us through a difficult but blessed year in 2023-24. Let us remember the words of Apostle Paul mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." (NIV) Please continue to pray for the ministry of the CLCI. We are committed to run the race with unity, love, courage, and boldness here in India.

"To God be the glory." The year 2023 taught us to be grateful to our Lord Jesus for His abundant mercies and providence during these difficult times, which have included assaults on Christians here in India. We praise God that the CLCI has acted as a channel to spread hope and care for the poor, needy, and marginalized in these challenging times. God opened many ways through which we continued to spread His Word through our CLCI public Gospel meetings and mission activities. We are humbled to present to you our report for the year 2023-24 on how God has used the CLCI and its various churches to reach the unreached. Your prayers and support are of utmost importance for our evangelical outreach here in India.

We conducted the CLCI public Gospel meetings eight times in this year in various villages of Andhra and Telagana States. They say that India lives in the villages, so mainly we concentrate on Indian tribal villages. These CLCI public Gospel meetings are one of the ways of evangelism to reach the unreached. They sometimes enable us to start new CLCI congregations with the help of our CLCI members. The meetings are a vibrant witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ here in India. The meetings last three days, and the services are held in the afternoon and in the night. Meetings are held in open air under temporary tents and sermons are given over loud speakers. Anywhere from five hundred to one thousand people attend these meetings. Depending upon the number of people attending, sometimes we hire a sound and music system. We sing melodious Lutheran hymns with music to attract people, and to introduce them to Jesus



Chirala Gospel meetings



Bapatla Gospel meetings



Hyderabad Gospel meetings



Hderabad CLCI Choir team



Kottareddipalem Gospel meetings



Hyderabad Gospel meetings

Christ. Every public meeting starts with sincere salutations and supplications to our Lord God Almighty. Every meeting starts with joyful singing led by our CLCI choir team.

People gather spontaneously and with expectation participate in these meetings. We offer our short Lutheran worship service with a confession of sins. We share the Word of God with the people. The Word of God focuses the minds of the people on the purpose of their existence on earth. The inspiring messages from our CLCI leaders and pastors refresh many newcomers, and promise the way to salvation and eternal life. Jesus Christ was the ultimate winner in the hearts of many people, including children and youngsters. Sometimes we see positive results, and sometimes we face opposition from local antisocial elements and other religious groups.

Over the last year we received an amazing response to the Gospel we proclaimed in the tribal villages. Many there are suffering under the evils of alcoholism, robbery, superstition, and prostitution. These are the devil's strongholds in these tribal villages. After each prayer meeting, many come forward to have individual prayers. At the end of the prayer meetings, we pray for each and every individual so that people would be delivered from their problems, sickness, and evil powers; and know the Savior of their lives. We are glad to report that many of these tribal people have received Jesus as their Savior through these meetings, and have been baptized. We continue to start new churches. We keep moving ahead for more results with the gracious hand of our Lord. We firmly believe that the Good News of Jesus changes the lives of people. Please do pray that God may grant us His grace to do a good follow-up in these unreached villages. Rejoice and pray with us, this is the harvest time of the Lord here in India.

From the bottom of our hearts, we convey our sincere thanks to all the CLC USA members who have been upholding us with your wonderful material and spiritual support. We appreciate your prayers and partnership in carrying out our vision to equip and mobilize God's people to transform and win many souls for Jesus here in India. On behalf of the CLCI ministry, I extend our gratitude to all our beloved CLC USA leaders, brothers and sisters for your continued support and prayers. Thank you.



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

## WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

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

# Faith Lutheran Church New Ulm, Minnesota

Ten years ago, there was a sense of resignation among some members of Faith Lutheran Church in New Ulm, Minnesota. It is difficult to be a small confessional Lutheran congregation in a town that is dominated by two large Wisconsin Synod (WELS) congregations. In the previous decade, Faith had suffered some substantial losses, including several of its charter members. Between 2007 and 2017, both total membership and church attendance had decreased by over 30%. This can be difficult on an already small and geographically dispersed congregation. It had the added challenge of being part of a dual parish, of which it was the smaller congregation. As such, their pastor lived off-site, in another town twenty minutes away.

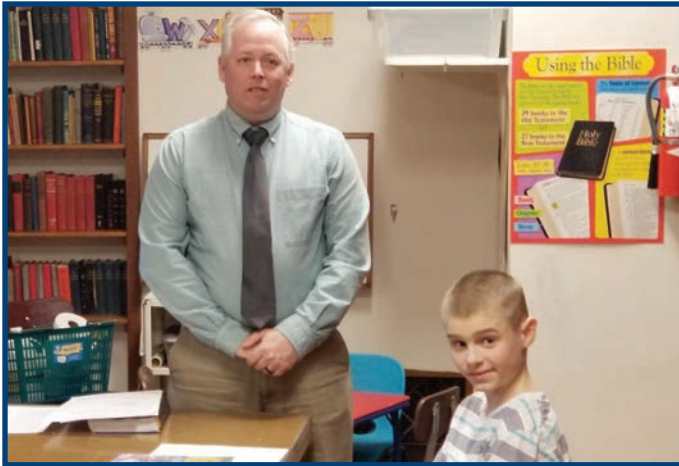
This is not unlike the story of many other CLC congregations, or congregations of other church bodies. It's a trend not only among one or two churches, but also across our nation in congregations of every size and within all Christian denominations.

The devil would love to see Christians throw up their hands in despair and frustration and resign themselves to the thought that their impact on society is worthless, or that their work and role as part of Christ's church on earth is never going to bear fruit in our current culture. But the Lord assures us that His Word is effective in the hearts and lives of sinners, whether we see it or not: *"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."* (Isaiah 55:11) We need to hold on to this promise from the Lord!

At one point several years ago the congregation considered selling the church property and either meeting in the homes of members or finding a space that would be less



costly. Instead, the members decided to keep the property and the beautiful old church where the congregation has worshiped the Lord of promise for over fifty years. They have continued to invest both time and money into maintaining and improving it. A substantial amount of money was spent to replace the old "knob and tube" wiring



Sunday school teacher and student



Some members of Faith on a recent Sunday

in a building that was built in 1891, in order to address safety concerns. The three-season porch on the back of the attached parsonage was repaired, including the installation of new windows and a new exterior door. A crew of congregational volunteers removed the old siding on the detached parsonage garage, which was then resided with new vinyl siding.

A little over a year ago the congregation celebrated its sixtieth anniversary (two years late due to COVID and other factors). A former pastor of Faith, Bruce Naumann, served as the guest preacher for the anniversary service, and we were joined by many former members of Faith from years past. Following the anniversary service, attendees gathered for fellowship, during which we reviewed the congregation's history. That history was joyfully and humorously supplemented with stories and recollections from current and former members alike. It was a needed reminder that faith is indeed *"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1)

During the last couple years, the Lord has blessed Faith with both numerical and spiritual growth. Several families have transferred to Faith from other CLC congregations, giving the existing members valuable support and encouragement. The congregation has sponsored a couple of community seminars over the past few years on the topics

of Christianity and education. Two years ago, we sponsored a community Christian music festival in connection with our fall mission festival service, to which the community was invited. These haven't produced the visible results that we hoped for, but we keep trying, holding on to the Lord's promise that His Word will be effective. We have had relatives and people from the community join us for worship and show interest in joining our fellowship. In addition, we rejoice in the spiritual growth which the Lord has brought about. The congregation has a lively and active Bible study group which inspires everything else the congregation does. Although the congregation has only one Sunday-school aged child that is in church regularly, they have decided to revitalize a regular Sunday school program. Plans are to advertise to our community this special opportunity for Christian education in a number of ways in the coming months, as we look to the start of a new school year in the fall.

The members and pastors come and go through a congregation's history. It gathers for Baptisms and confirmations, weddings and burials. The people change and the faces change. But the Apostle Peter reminds us, *"All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever."* (1 Peter 1:24-25) It is that enduring truth of God's Word which comforts and strengthens us, and which we are privileged to proclaim!



**Nathanael Mayhew** was recently installed as associate pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota. He is a former pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in New Ulm.

# “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS JUNE 2024

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
June 1	TLH 34 /LSB 611	Mark 2	Jesus forgives the sins of a paralytic and heals him. Jesus calls Levi, the tax collector, to follow Him. Jesus explains why His disciples do not fast. The disciples of Jesus pluck heads of grain on the Sabbath and Jesus defends them.
June 3	TLH 399/LSB 694	Deuteronomy 6	Throughout the Old Testament the Lord gives His people many commandments. The greatest commandment is, <i>“You shall love the LORD your God.”</i> (Deuteronomy 6:5) Jesus will add that <i>“the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”</i> (Matthew 22:39)
June 4	TLH 651/LSB 752	Genesis 23	Sarah dies in Canaan. Abraham buys the field of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite. Abraham buries Sarah in a cave of the field.
June 5	TLH 620/LSB 859	Genesis 24	Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for Isaac from the family of Abraham. The servant returns with Rebekah. Isaac takes Rebekah as his wife.
June 6	TLH 596/LSB 759	Genesis 25	Abraham takes another wife, Keturah, who bears him more children. Abraham dies and Isaac and Ishmael bury him in the cave of Machpelah. Rebekah gives birth to twins, Esau and Jacob. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob.
June 7	TLH 351/LSB 700	Ezekiel 12	Though the Judeans live in exile, they refuse to believe that the temple in Jerusalem will be destroyed. The Lord sends Ezekiel to warn them that He will fulfill all of His prophecies.
June 8	LSB 844	Mark 3	Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Jesus heals many, and crowds follow Him. Jesus appoints the twelve apostles. In response to the accusation that Jesus casts out demons by the power of the devil, Jesus teaches about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
June 10	TLH 76/LSB 383	Ezekiel 13	In every age, false prophets prophesy what people want to hear. The exiled Judeans want to hear that they will experience no further destruction, but that they will enjoy peace. Therefore this is what false prophets preach to them. Through Ezekiel the Lord condemns false prophets.
June 11	TLH 401/LSB 692	Ezekiel 14	Through Ezekiel the Lord condemns the worship of idols. Jerusalem will not escape from the coming judgment of the Lord.
June 12	LSB 540	Ezekiel 15	By their unfaithfulness the Judeans have made themselves worthless. Therefore the Lord compares the residents of Jerusalem to a useless vine, worthy only of being thrown into the fire.
June 13	TLH 333	Ezekiel 16	The Lord compares His people to an unfaithful bride. Even so, the Lord promises to remember His covenant with the children of Israel.
June 14	TLH 26/LSB 797	Ezekiel 17	Through a parable of two eagles and a vine, the Lord condemns Judah for relying on Egypt for assistance in rebelling against Babylon. At the same time, the Lord promises that He will restore His chosen nation.
June 15	TLH 52/LSB 923	Mark 4	Jesus tells the parable of the sower. Jesus explains the parable to His closest followers. Jesus tells the parables of the lamp under a basket, of the growing seed, and of the mustard seed. Jesus calms a storm.
June 17	TLH 329/LSB 607	Ezekiel 19	In words of poetry, Ezekiel laments the religious and moral decline of his people and their resulting defeat.
June 18	TLH 517/LSB 758	1 Samuel 4	It is a tragic time for the children of Israel. The Philistines capture the ark of the covenant. Hophni and Phinehas, the wicked sons of Eli, are killed in the battle. When Eli hears about the ark, he also dies.
June 19	TLH 234/LSB 496	Samuel 5	Strange and terrible things occur wherever the Philistines take the ark. Therefore the leaders of the Philistines resolve to return the ark to Israel.
June 20	WS 738/LSB 821	1 Samuel 6	The Philistines return the ark to Israel along with a guilt offering.
June 21	TLH 33	1 Samuel 7	Samuel calls upon the people of Israel to put away their false gods and to return to the Lord. The people repent and turn to the Lord.
June 22	WS 701/LSB 343	1 Samuel 8	Like the sons of Eli before them, the sons of Samuel are corrupt and unfit to lead Israel. The elders of Israel ask Samuel to appoint a king over Israel. The Lord warns the people of the curse that will come with monarchy, but the people refuse to listen; they want to have a king in order to be like the surrounding nations. The Lord directs Samuel to give them their king.
June 24	LSB 727	Psalms 91	As believers in Christ, we are safe from all harm and danger. Jesus’ heavenly Father is our heavenly Father and He promises to protect us. When He allows evil to touch our lives, He promises to use even evil for our benefit. One day He will call us out of this world of evil to live forever in a perfect world where no evil will exist and where death will be no more.
June 25	TLH 541/LSB 876	Psalms 92	We praise the Lord for His wondrous works. We praise the Lord for the depth of His wisdom. We praise the Lord for His protection against our enemies. We praise the Lord for His continually feeding and strengthening us in body and in soul.
June 26	TLH 268	Lamentations 1	Jeremiah mourns as he reflects on the exile of Judah.
June 27	LSB 754	Lamentations 2	When we experience various trials and hardships in life, we do well to remember that all pain and suffering are results of sin. As human beings, each of us is to blame for sin and for the suffering and death that result from sin.
June 28	TLH 537	Lamentations 3	Even in the midst of deep mourning, Jeremiah expresses his abiding hope in the faithfulness of the Lord.
June 29	LSB 849	Mark 5	Jesus drives many demons out of a man. At the request of this legion of demons, Jesus sends them into a herd of pigs. Jesus heals a woman with a discharge of blood and raises the daughter of Jairus from the dead.

# An Update on Mission Work in Zambia



The CLC's involvement with the spread of the Gospel in Zambia started on two fronts with two different efforts that were completely independent of each other. In 2010, Ibrahim Lyimo was invited by a friend to visit Lusaka, Zambia, to start a Lutheran congregation. Ibrahim was a student at Saint Peter Seminary in Himo, Tanzania, at the time. He was one semester shy of completing his seminary training, but the seminary was closed before he could finish his classes. This was because of a dispute over the ownership of the seminary after the CLC broke fellowship with Jesse Angowi and the Lutheran Church in East Africa (LCEA). Ibrahim visited Zambia in 2010, and in 2011, relocated to Zambia and began evangelism work in Lusaka. He later relocated to Livingstone to begin outreach there.

Pastor Yumba Lumbala of the Congregation Confessionnelle Luthérienne Au Congo (CCLC) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo also had contacts in northern Zambia in the Copperbelt Province. Three men were ordained by Yumba and accepted into the fellowship of the CCLC. Though CLC missionaries made regular visits to both areas in Zambia, the two ministries essentially functioned independently of each other.

Eventually, the two groups began working together to form and register as one CLC-affiliated church body. Church registration is crucial in Zambia, as it enables congregations to conduct legal marriages, burials, and outreach. Missionary Todd Ohlmann

visited Zambia in April to conduct training seminars in the Copperbelt district, Lusaka, and Livingstone, and to assist in completing the church registration process.

There have been a number of challenges over the past few years in Zambia, with the pandemic, and with health and immigration issues that Pastor Ibrahim has dealt with. As a result, consistent pastoral training had not taken place. Plans and funding are now in place to begin weekly classes in Livingstone for the three evangelists, two elders, and one pastor living there. Semi-monthly one-week seminars will begin in Livingstone with three young men from Lusaka along with the six men from Livingstone. There will also be annual training conferences in Lusaka or Livingstone with all the men from Lusaka, Livingstone, and the Copperbelt Province. Missionary Ohlmann also plans to make two visits per year for the next few years to assist with organizational efforts.

Despite several setbacks and difficulties over the past few years, we rejoice to have a small but solid group of faithful Christians to work with in Zambia.



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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Minnesota Delegate Conference

Grace Lutheran Church, Fridley, Minnesota  
June 8th, 10:00 A.M.

Agenda:

- Communion Service
- Prospectus Review and Synod Board Updates
- Business Meeting

—Ross Theneman, Conference Secretary

### The 35th Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession June 20-23, 2024

Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

- Theme: "Make A Joyful Shout to the LORD!" (Psalm 100)
- Essayists: Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Pastor Drew Naumann
- Chaplain: Pastor Thomas Naumann
- Convention Service Speaker: Pastor Delwyn Maas
- Convention Service Liturgist: Pastor Paul Krause
- Memorial Service Preacher: Pastor Emeritus Vance Fossum
- Reporter: Professor Joseph Lau
- Convention Organ Coordinator: Teacher Lane Fischer
- Convention Technology Coordinator: Professor Ross Roehl

—Pastor Paul Nolting, CLC Moderator

**New Preaching Station.** Since January of 2022, Prince of Peace, Hecla, South Dakota, has been sponsoring services in Lincoln, Nebraska. Attendance has generally been twelve to twenty CLC members and other contacts from Lincoln, Omaha, Beatrice, Seward, and Grand Island. The group recently celebrated the confirmation of a young lady, Alexis Wood, who completed three years of long-distance instruction (see photo). Beginning this summer, Berea, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is taking the lead on our Lincoln, Nebraska, CLC preaching station. Pastor Cory Drehle would be pleased to reach out to any contacts you might have to suggest in the area: [c\\_drehle@yahoo.com](mailto:c_drehle@yahoo.com)

—Pastor Timothy Daub



Members of the CLC Coordinating Council deliberate, April 2024



Reception held at the Lincoln, Nebraska, preaching station for confirmand Alexis Wood (pictured far right)