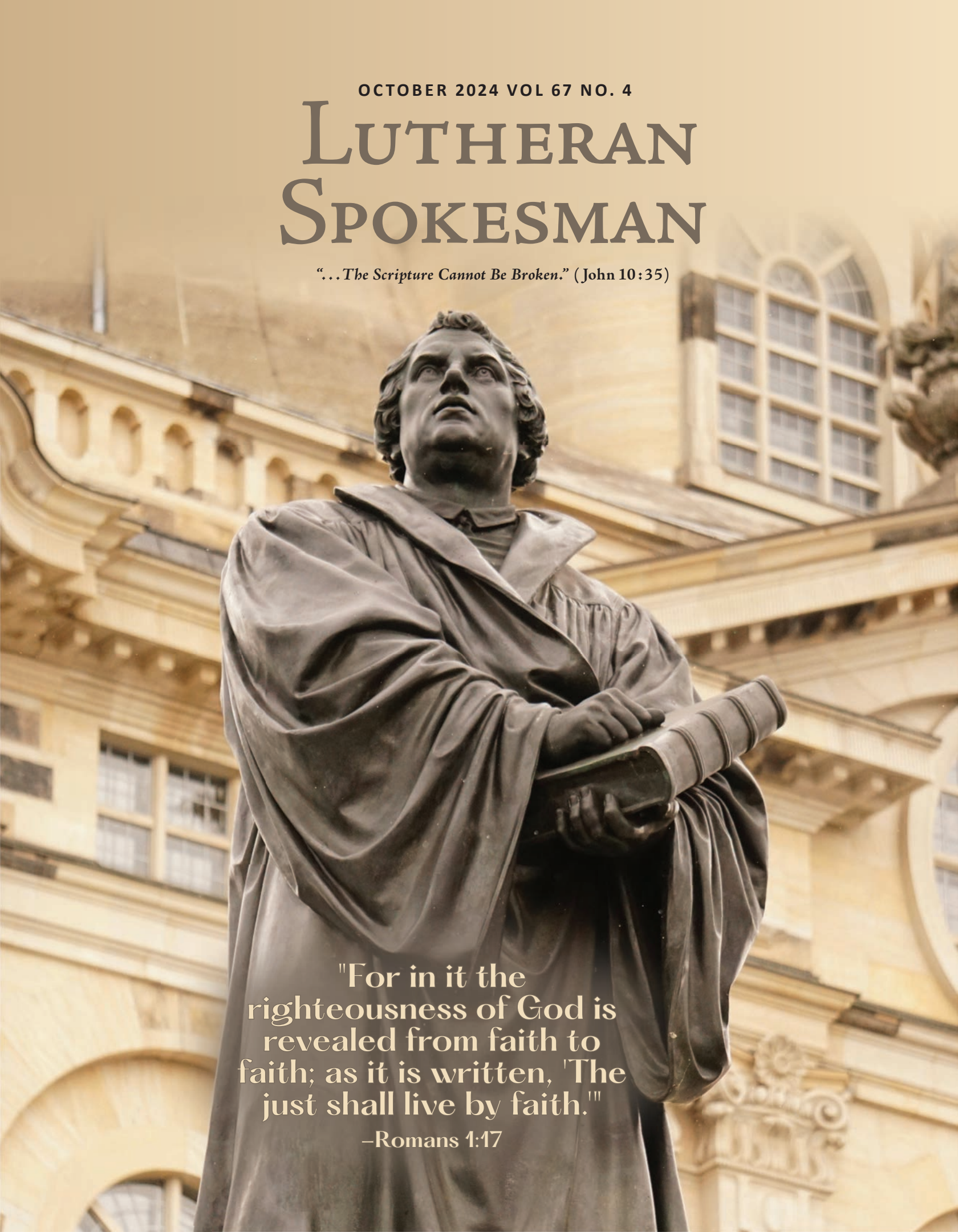


OCTOBER 2024 VOL 67 NO. 4

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



"For in it the  
righteousness of God is  
revealed from faith to  
faith; as it is written, 'The  
just shall live by faith.'"

—Romans 1:17



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# Martin Luther Topics from the Pier

A stranger approached me on a Florida pier. He was out witnessing. After several exploratory questions, he knew my church affiliation: Church of the Lutheran Confession.

“Martin Luther was evil,” he said, totally dismissing Luther.

Although taken aback, I mustered a response. “Everyone’s a sinner. Martin Luther uncovered scriptural truths that were not being taught by the Roman Catholic Church.”

Ignoring me, he steamrolled on, “And, Luther’s ‘faith alone’ saying is wrong—faith must include works.”

Eventually, he left. I walked over to my son-in-law and said, “That guy says Martin Luther was evil.”

“He’s probably referring to things Luther said about Jewish people.”

Admittedly, I knew nothing about this and had to research it.

In 1543, Luther wrote *On the Jews and Their Lies* and *Vom Schem Hamphoras*. His goals for both publications were similar:

furnish Christians with enough material to defend themselves against the Jews, help them “become the foe of the Jew’s malice, lying, and cursing,” and understand that their belief is false.

These publications contain ideas that one would not expect from Martin Luther. Even Philip Melancthon, a close friend of Luther’s, called these writings “severe,” while others, then and now, have been more critical. The stranger on the pier, for example, said “evil,” and an internet comment states, “I can’t differentiate between Luther the antisemite and Luther the reformer. I’ll have to bury him.”

Luther made mistakes, but “bury him?” We don’t worship Luther, but it would be impossible to cancel the work of Luther the Reformer. God used him to lead souls to the truth. Of course, we focus on the Word, not on the person who delivers it. “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Our second topic on the pier was about Luther uncovering scriptural truths.

Luther, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, grasped the meaning of Romans 1:17, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from

faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Here he describes what happened:

“I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore, I did not love an angry God, but rather hated and murmured against

him. Yet I clung to the dear [Apostle]

Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant [in Romans 1:17]. Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through an open door into paradise!”

God in His grace imputes to us by faith the righteousness earned by Christ.

Luther went back over other Gospel passages and found that this is consistently the teaching of the Bible.



Pier Topic #3: The stranger claimed that Luther’s “faith alone” statement was wrong. Works are a product and proof of faith, so it’s true that faith without works is dead (James 2:17); but Luther’s *Sola fide* (“faith alone”) is in connection with justification, and Romans 3:28 says, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” So faith alone saves (justification); but saving faith is never alone, because the Holy Spirit is always at work through faith to produce good works (sanctification).

O God, our Lord, Thy holy Word was long a hidden treasure  
Till to its place It was by grace Restored in fullest measure  
For this today Our thanks we say And gladly glorify Thee.  
Thy mercy show And grace bestow  
On all who still deny Thee. Amen (TLH 266:1)



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

# The Lutheran–Christian!–Confessions

**“I ask that my name be left silent and people not call themselves Lutheran, but rather Christians. Who is Luther? The doctrine is not mine. I have been crucified for no one.” — Martin Luther, “Admonition Against Insurrection,” 1522**

Regardless of Luther’s opinion, his name has stuck. Some eighty million individuals worldwide claim the name of *Lutheran* today. Without getting into the argument of whether some of these people should be called Lutherans or not, we need to focus on why we are called by this name.

At our Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary, several invaluable courses are offered in “Lutheran symbolics”; that is, the study of the Lutheran Confessions. This in-depth examination of the Book of Concord makes clear the teachings of the Lutheran church. Some parts of the Book of Concord are very familiar and are used frequently. Other selections may sound familiar, but details escape us. Still others may not be familiar at all.

What’s in the *Book of Concord*?

## The Three Universal Creeds—Apostles’, Nicene, Athanasian

These three creeds are used regularly in our worship and serve as a declaration of our basic Christian faith as it is set forth in Scriptures. The *Book of Concord* opens with these ancient creeds to establish their acceptance among Lutheran protestants.

## The Augsburg Confession and Its Apology (1530-1531)

Emperor Charles V wanted a united military front to go against the Turks. He felt he needed a united religious front first. He asked the *Protestants* (the name *Lutheran* is not used in the *Book of Concord*) to explain their teachings. Their beliefs are stated in the “Augsburg Confession.” The “Apology” [an *Apology* is a defense and explanation of doctrine], enlarges upon and clarifies the scriptural reasons for those beliefs.

## The Smalcald Articles (1529)

Luther was directed to “prepare a statement indicating the articles of faith in which concessions could be made for the sake of peace, and the articles in which no concessions could be made.”

## The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537)

The Protestant theologians felt that this treatise was necessary to show their disagreement with the papacy, but more importantly to show the disagreement between the papacy and the Scriptures.

## Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms

The *Small Catechism* is a most beloved and familiar handbook of Christian questions and answers supported by Scripture. It was intended to be used by the head of the household to teach all members of the family, especially the young or new to the faith.

The *Large Catechism* is directed toward clergy and the head of the household. In his preface, Luther implores the clergy not to “imagine they have learned these parts of the Catechism perfectly, or at least sufficiently,” but rather to continue to study, meditate, and discuss what the Word of God means. It’s great advice for any who would call themselves Christian/Lutheran.

## The Formula of Concord (1577)

After Luther’s death in 1546, many controversies arose, threatening to split the Lutherans. These documents list statements of belief as well as refutation of statements of the false teachers.

So why are we named after a “poor stinking bag of worms” like Martin Luther (his words, not mine)? Lutherans have historically held that the Holy Scriptures are the sole divine source and norm of all Christian doctrine. Neither church tradition nor church policy can or should claim equal or superior authority to that of God’s Word. We hold to the Lutheran Confessions in that we believe they give a correct and faithful exposition of the Scriptures. The Lutheran Confessions are Christian Confessions faithful to the doctrine entrusted to us by our Savior.

Whether you have never read the *Book of Concord*, or it has been a long time, I would encourage you to add a copy to your Bible study. It may prove a challenge to you to get into “the meat” of Scriptures (Hebrews 5:13-14), and deepen your understanding of God’s Word and your Christian/Lutheran heritage.



Original title page of the *Book of Concord* 1580



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 have examined the depth and meaning of the various elements of our Lutheran worship service.*

*This is the final article of the series.*

# The Closing Hymn

**H**ow do we end our worship time with God in a meaningful way? It is customary to close our church services with the singing of a hymn. Interestingly, the orders of service in some recent hymnals have attempted to remove the closing hymn and end with the Benediction instead. While there may be something to be said for ending with God's blessing in this way, it has not proved to be popular with congregations.

As it turns out, people want to conclude their worship as they began it—with singing. They want one last opportunity to thank, praise, listen, petition, or reflect before they leave. A closing hymn can effectively do any or all of these.

For *thanking* God, any number of hymns are especially suitable. Perhaps the most famous would be Martin Rinkart's *Now Thank We All Our God* (TLH 36), which gives thanks for God's tender care of us "from our mother's arms" until now.

For *praising* God, there is no shortage of choices, many of them familiar favorites such as *Praise to the Lord the Almighty* (TLH 39), *Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices* (TLH 30), or (especially for evening services) *All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night* (TLH 558).

For *listening* once again to the Word of God, a closing hymn can be chosen which reflects a prominent Biblical teaching from the service that day. For hearing about prayer there is *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* (TLH 457). For a life of sanctification there is *Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus* (TLH 409). For justification by faith there is Luther's famous *Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice* (TLH 387). For forgiveness at the cross there is *Just as I Am without One Plea* (TLH 388). There are many more hymns that do a good job teaching Biblical truth. It is the particular heritage of the Lutheran Church that we have hymns which actually proclaim the Word of God and are therefore "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16 NIV)

**People want to conclude their worship as they began it—with singing. They want one last opportunity to thank, praise, listen, petition, or reflect before they leave.**

For *petitioning* God (making requests of Him), the English hymn writer John Ellerton (1826-1893) wrote several beloved hymns for the close of a service. They are *Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise* (TLH 47) and *The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Is Ended* (WS 796). Many

others hymns are appropriate for petitioning God as well, such as *Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing* (TLH 50), *Now May He Who from the Dead* (TLH 51), and *Abide, O Dearest Jesus* (TLH 53). Read some of these hymns and consider what you are asking of God as you leave church singing them.

For *reflection* there are quieter hymns that lead our thoughts toward peace in Christ, helping us meditate on our salvation. Classic hymns of reflection would be *God Loved the World So that He Gave* (TLH 245) and *Jesus, Lead Thou*

*On* (TLH 410).

When your pastor chooses the closing hymn for your worship service, be aware that he does not choose it randomly. He has, almost always, one of these five purposes in mind. Further, the closing hymn will often include thoughts or references connected to the sermon, Scripture readings, or theme of the day, providing a mental summary of the service and helping you to take it with you out the door into the world.

What is your favorite closing hymn? If you're like me, you have more than one. It depends on the Sunday, the season, the thoughts in my mind that day, and so forth. Our Christian hymns are a vast treasure the Lord uses to build up our faith and strengthen our lives in Him.



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

# The Virtues of Humility and Trust

***“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:5-7)***

Throughout Holy Scripture the Lord teaches us many lessons concerning Christian virtues. Two of those virtues that stand out in this portion of 1 Peter are *humility* and *trust*.

In the verses surrounding this section, we are reminded of what Christians in that day were confronted with. It tells of them encountering fiery trials and suffering reproach for the name of Christ and of being stalked by the devil.

In many respects, what was true of those Christians is also true of us. We also experience tribulations and afflictions as we come under the chastening hand of God. There are trials in our personal lives, such as health problems, financial woes, and interpersonal relationship difficulties. We are also subject to the feverish efforts of the devil to get us to forsake God.

Whenever we are placed in the pressure cooker of life with all its adverse conditions, there is the temptation to complain about God permitting such woes to descend upon us. Having reservations in our minds about our lot in life, we might be prompted to call into question God’s wisdom and His providential care.

Another side of our human weakness is shown when we fall prey to fears and worries. These negative emotions can become so great that we feel like running away or hiding in a hole.

For times such as these, we are divinely exhorted to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and know that in due time He will lift us up. Additionally, we are to cast all our cares and anxieties upon the Lord and put our trust in Him to help us.

In the Old and New Testament Scriptures, there are two



Joseph sold by his brothers

believers who especially exemplified these Christian virtues. They are the patriarch Joseph and the Apostle Paul. In Genesis 37 and 39, we read of Joseph humbly submitting to being sold into slavery and, later, being unjustly thrown into prison. He entrusted all his cares and concerns to God instead of being consumed with fears and worries. In due time, God exalted him by putting him in a position of rulership in Egypt (Genesis 41:17-43).

In the case of the Apostle Paul, he was severely afflicted and oppressed in numerous ways (2 Corinthians 11:16-33) simply for being an ambassador of Christ who

proclaimed the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus. In the face of all these trials and tribulations, he humbly submitted himself and left them with God, trusting that He would see him through them. And in due time, Paul was delivered from this world and exalted on high in the glorious realm of heaven.

The abiding care and faithfulness of God was clearly demonstrated in His providing for all the Israelites’ necessities during their forty-year wilderness journey. God’s people were completely dependent upon Him for all their daily needs. And never once did He let them down.

May we learn from and remember these important lessons so that in every trial of life we humbly submit ourselves under the mighty hand of God and put all our trust in Him.



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

# We Need God to Rescue Us from Us

(Please read Ezekiel 36:22-28)

**T**hose who follow Jesus will have enemies.

First, there's the devil. He's determined to do you everlasting harm. He "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8b)

Then there's the sinful world filled with temptations.

"Whoever . . . wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4)

Note well that James warns us not only about the world; he also warns us—about us.

We have our sinful nature. We don't always notice the danger in what the world offers us. Feeling "free to do whatever we want to do" may sound appealing. But from where does that feeling come?

"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." (Galatians 5:17)

"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11)

When our flesh tells us it's okay to crack the door open for it just a little—look out! Our most dangerous enemy may well be us!

In Ezekiel 36 God was talking to people who had profaned His name and followed idols. It may come as a shock, then, to realize He was talking to people He still considered to be His own. They were, in fact, "church-going folks"—but they didn't realize how far they had gone off-track.

God, nevertheless, called them His people, remained invested in them, and still loved them. Yes, His grace was still active even while He scolded them! Why? Because His name is the **LORD**, that is, Jehovah or Yahweh. That name emphasizes His grace and mercy. His desire is to save His people from the devil, the world, and, yes, their own sinful flesh. By taking *that* name for Himself, the **LORD** made a pledge to rescue them.

His people back then, and His people now, don't deserve to be rescued. But when it comes to the grace of God, *deserve* has nothing to do with it! His name has everything to do with it!

"The **LORD** is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy." (Psalm 145:8)

"Through the **LORD's** mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not." (Lamentations 3:22)

Saving sinners—that's what the **LORD** does! Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached, "Repent!" That requires reexamining our actions and reconsidering our motives. Am I being driven by pride? Am I being self-centered? Am I truly operating from love?

"I will cleanse you from all your filthiness." (Ezekiel 36:25)

We all need to be cleansed from our sins and misplaced affections.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26)

We may still be going to church, but are our hearts becoming like stone that has no life? A beating heart is alive. God wants our hearts to live!

Regeneration and sanctification are entirely the work of the Holy Spirit. Because of His work, the followers of Christ will not be bystanders when it comes to working in God's kingdom.

"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." (Ezekiel 36:27)

His statutes are His divine principles, and His judgments are based on what His Son has done for us.

God's verdict, therefore, is "Not Guilty." That's how God rescues us from us!

**We may still be going to church, but are our hearts becoming like stone that has no life?**



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

# The Marriage of the King's Son

(Don't miss the shocking conclusion!)

Online media providers know exactly what to promise the public to draw them in. “Don't miss the shocking conclusion” is especially effective bait in that it not only compels the public to bite, it encourages that visitor to chew longer—increasing something known as “session duration.” Online income is directly related to how long visitors remain “on site.”

It would not be inappropriate to attach that same phrase to the Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son, recorded in Matthew 22:1-14. Don't allow a diminished attention span to rob you of the message our Savior communicated to us in this parable. Not only is the ending truly shocking, it is the key that unlocks the entire parable.

A king (God the Father) gave a wedding feast for his son (Jesus) and sent his servants (the prophets) to call those who were invited (the Jews). They refused the invitation. Later he sent other servants (the Apostles and other disciples) with the message that the oxen and fat calves had been slaughtered (Jesus had been sacrificed to pay man's sin debt) and all was ready (the door to heaven had been opened.) Again, they refused the royal invitation, some more concerned with their possessions and others with accumulating still more. Choosing an alternative is the most common form of rejection. Others mistreated and murdered those who brought the king's invitation (the Gospel.) Angered, the king sent his soldiers (most immediately from Rome) to destroy both the murderers and their city (Jerusalem was destroyed by Roman legions under Emperor Titus in A.D. 70). The king then told his servants to invite all (Gentiles as well as Jews), both the bad and the good (those whom society regarded as evil, and those who were seen to display a civic righteousness.)

But don't miss the shocking conclusion, for without it the parable is incomplete, dramatically so. The obvious enemies had been separated, but what about the pretenders—the hypocrites

or false friends? A man was found without a wedding garment. The contention by historians that wealthy kings of the day would provide appropriate wedding garments for their guests is borne out by the fact that, when confronted, the man was speechless. He had no defense for his actions, since the robe of Christ's righteousness had been freely offered to him, as it was freely offered to rich and poor, strong and weak, noble and common. The man had refused the imputed righteousness of Jesus, evidently assuming that his own garment (his own personal righteousness) was enough. Only the king was able to see through



“Wedding of the King's Son” by Rembrandt

the hypocrisy and to recognize the true condition of the man's heart, and his judgment was as sobering as it was irrevocable. He commanded his attendants (His angels) to bind the man hand and foot, and to cast him into outer darkness (the eternal torment of hell).

It is in this dramatic ending that both the Law and the Gospel are clearly identified and divided. The Law: those who reject Jesus Christ and the payment He made for their sins on Calvary's cross will not be allowed into God's heaven—whether that rejection is openly paraded or secretly espoused. All will be sentenced to the unspeakable anguish of hell for all eternity.

The Gospel: the divine invitation excludes no one, and the righteousness needed to cover your sins is freely provided by Jesus Christ. No matter the sins of the past, present, or future, Christ's righteousness covers all, for Christ Jesus paid for all. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)



Michael Roehl is pastor of Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Bismarck, North Dakota.





Rev. H.C. Duehlmeier  
1913-1986

*In this series we are reprinting Spokesman articles by early leaders in the CLC. Pastor James Albrecht is the curator of the series. Rev. H. C. Duehlmeier (1913-1986) was a charter member of the CLC. He served as pastor of several Minnesota congregations, notably in Sanborn, Morris, and Fridley. He was a longtime chairman of the ILC Board of Regents. This article is from the Lutheran Spokesman of September 1972. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.*

## Be Of Good Cheer!

**T**he experience of the disciples on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:23-27) frequently repeats itself in the lives of the followers of the Savior to this day. We, who trust in Jesus as our Savior and Lord, set out on a course in life which we have not willfully chosen for ourselves but embarked upon only after prayerfully seeking counsel and guidance from the Word of God. For a time, all seems to go well, but before long all is changed. A sudden storm arises in the form of financial losses and reverses; sickness, sorrow, and even death enters our family circle; or some unforeseen crisis arises. Overnight the blue skies are blotted out by lowering storm clouds. The waves of tribulation and affliction run so high that they threaten to overwhelm us. To add to our distress, our deceitful heart conjures up all sorts of specters, whispering that our Jesus has turned against us, that we are such great sinners that He has withdrawn His grace from us, and that He is leaving us to perish in our misery, as we so richly deserve in view of all our sinning. All appears hopeless and lost, and despair wants to take over in our hearts.

### **The Voice in The Storm**

How groundless were not the fears of the Twelve that night and their imagination that they were being haunted by an evil spirit intent on their harm. What they had mistakenly taken to be a ghost was none other than their beloved Lord Himself, coming to their rescue. They recognized Him from that dear voice of His coming to them loud and clear over the storm: “*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid!*” That instantly dispelled all their anxieties and fears. He did care. He was concerned. With

Him near, help was at hand. And He didn’t disappoint them. At His bidding the wind and the waves ceased to rage, and they found themselves within the calm and serene waters of the shore for which they had been heading.

### **The Voice of Jesus Today**

To us today Jesus no longer appears visibly and speaks audibly as He once did that night to the disciples. To us He now speaks in His written Word as we have it in our Bibles. Well for us in the storms of life if we are well acquainted with it and have even committed pertinent portions of that Word to memory, words like, “*But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*” (Matthew 10:30) “*For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee.*” (Isaiah 54:10) To these and similar words of His we should listen, and not give heed to or look at the winds and waves threatening to engulf us. In His own time and way, He will rescue us as surely as He did the disciples.

### **The Final Storm**

For all of us, sooner or later, there lies in store that most threatening storm of all when our faith will be put to its severest test, the hour of our departure from this world and life. Then too His voice will go out to us, “*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*” May our eyes then be fixed on Him alone, and He will grasp us by the hand and lead us in safety through that dark valley of the shadow of death and bring us to that quiet and peaceful shore, where no further storms will ever again overtake us.

## WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Updates from congregations around the Church of the Lutheran Confession

# Gethsemane Lutheran Church Spokane Valley, Washington

**A**s we pause to reflect and share with you “what’s new” at Gethsemane, we see God’s faithfulness and give Him our praise and thanks. As in every congregation, we have members who have faced and are still facing cancer and other disease. Individual times of grace have been brought to a close; we have wept together and have been comforted together. We have faced challenges, and we have rejoiced in God’s blessings. We rest in His grace and keeping. *“Praise the LORD with the harp; Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.”* (Psalm 33:2-3)

Music has long been a heritage of the Gethsemane congregation. This blessing continues with many musicians in the congregation who collectively add music to our worship via organ, piano, brass, woodwinds, and strings. The children of Gethsemane add their voices in song, as does the church choir and occasional soloists and ensembles. Two very special gifts have been added to our musical worship—a new Phoenix organ and a Schimmel grand piano.

*“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.”* (Psalm 78:4)

Gethsemane Lutheran School is preparing for its ninth year since reopening in the fall of 2016. This year we are expecting



an enrollment of sixteen. Our called servants, Principal/Teacher Jeffrey Karnitz and teacher Kendra Rodebaugh, are assisted by a number of volunteers. In some cases, these volunteers serve with expertise from their professional fields, in other cases they have interest in a particular area of learning, and in all cases they are serving out of love for the Lord and His lambs.

Throughout the year, the school hallways are richly decorated with school art projects. The school newspaper, *The Olive Press*, is produced by the seventh- and eighth-grade students. Each spring, Gethsemane Lutheran School joins with St. John’s Bible Academy (Clarkston, Washington) for a field day, and the Gethsemane school year ends with student performances in a “Family Fun Night.”

*“Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.”* (Psalm 96:2)

Gethsemane’s worship services have been streamed online for many years. More recently, we have expanded our online presence to YouTube, Facebook, a blog, and a podcast (including Daily Rest devotions). We have begun producing a series of brief scriptural pamphlets on a variety of subjects.



Members of Gethsemane Lutheran Church



Gethsemane members compete at "Blongo Ball"

These "Truth Tracts" will be available for personal use and as a springboard for sharing the Gospel with others. An annual Vacation Bible School provides spiritual nourishment and summer fun for Gethsemane's children, and as outreach in the community. Thirty-two students attended VBS this year.

*"The work is great, because the temple is not for man but for the LORD God."* (1 Chronicles 29:1)

A long-desired, but also long-delayed, building project has made great strides in 2024. We are hopeful that, Lord-willing, some construction can be undertaken in the next twelve-eighteen months. The initial goals are to build a truss-roof over a flat roof (adding a second story to that portion of the building), to expand the fellowship hall including a new kitchen, and to redesign and expand the parking lot.

*"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."* (Colossians 3:17)

We have added a periodic "Coffee with the President." During this time, the congregation president updates the members on any news from the congregation and invites input and discussion.

A group of women desired midweek fellowship and time in the Word of God. "Ladies' Check-ins" are being held at least once a month to provide exercise for the body and time in the Word for nourishing the soul.

"Men in Training" is a new opportunity for men, young men, and boys to gather together for time spent in discussion, Bible study, sharing interests, and learning and



Vacation Bible School children

growing. Regardless of age, we are all "in training" as we seek to grow in strength and to faithfully serve God and one another.

The Gethsemane Lutheran Church Women (GLCW) facilitates a great deal of work around the congregation—food service for potlucks, festivals, and funerals; altar flowers, church library, a member calling list, prayer chain, and more. This fall, they hope to organize regular shut-in visits by the women.

For each of the past several years, students from the congregation have been able to join with peers from sister congregations in the Pacific Coast Conference to form a team (West Coast Warriors) for the CLC Grade School Basketball Tournament.

Each summer, as part of the congregational picnic, young and old compete in the annual Blongo Ball (aka ladder golf) tournament. This year the tournament was played in the rain—a delight since July rain is rare in the Inland Northwest.

*"May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways. . . that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other."* (1 Kings 8:57-58, 60) Amen.



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

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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

# Mission Helper Trip 2024

**“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’” (Mark 16:15)**

The 2024 CLC Mission Helper Trip took place in July. Seventeen CLC members from nine different states participated in child evangelism efforts in four East African countries. This year’s theme was “Get to Know the Real Jesus.” The Mission Helpers taught four lessons that reveal Jesus as “True God,” “True Man,” “The Savior,” and “A Savior for All People.”

**Tanzania**—Missionary Bruce Nauman and his wife Paula, along with leaders of the Tanzania-CLC, hosted a team of four Mission Helpers to Tanzania. They had the opportunity to teach more than a thousand children along with many adults who listened in as they conducted fifteen outreach events at churches, schools, and orphanages. The team taught Bible stories, gave gifts, and led the children in songs in the Swahili language. The Tanzania team consisted of Nicole Hansen, Gary Peters, Jeff Radichel, and Amy Tester. The Mission Helpers also went on a one-day safari to the Ngorongoro Crater National Conservation area, where they were able to see many of God’s amazing African animals.

**Kenya/Uganda**—Pastor Mike Gurath, along with Sam Radermacher, Kaylee Koenig, Elinor Gbedey, and Catherine Gbedey made up the Mission Helper team that did Child Evangelism in Kenya and Uganda. They were able to teach nearly 1,300 children at twelve different schools and churches. They also had the privilege of spending time with the children at two Kenyan schools in Etago and Moi’s Bridge, which are supported by CLC Kinship. During some free time, the team went on a river cruise to the source of the Nile River in Jinja, Uganda, and did a safari at the Nakuru National Park in Kenya.

**Zambia**—Pastors Ibrahim and Mwaza of the Zambia-CLC had everything ready to go for the Zambia team. Missionary Todd



**Above:** Tanzanian team member Jeff Radichel and school children

**Below:** Zambian team members and a family of rhinoceroses at Mosi-ao-Tunya



Ohlmann and Pastor Tom Naumann, along with Fletcher Hughes, Noah Sydow, Ulrika Speckman, and Lauren Gurgel were privileged to teach more than 1,700 children and many adults who also listened in on the lessons. They taught in thirty-five classrooms and churches. The Mission Helpers spent over thirty-five hours on public buses to travel from the Copperbelt province near the DR Congo border in the north to the Livingstone province in the south. The team also had the opportunity to marvel at the beauty of God’s creation at Victoria Falls, a safari at Mosi-ao-Tunya National Park, and a sunset cruise on the Zambezi River.

You can see lots of pictures and read first-hand accounts from the Mission Helpers at the trip blog: <https://2024clcmhteastafrica.blogspot.com/>

Thank the Lord for safe travels, the privilege of sharing the truths of His saving Word, and His promise to bless the spread of the Gospel in East Africa and beyond.

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

## “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS OCTOBER 2024

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

Date	Hymns	Reading	Comments
October 1	TLH 38 / LSB 794	1 Samuel 22	Four hundred men support David. The prophet of Gad instructs David to go to Judah. Saul has eighty-five priests killed as punishment for assisting David.
October 2	LSB 803	1 Samuel 23	David and his men defeat the Philistines in order to protect the city of Keilah. Saul plans to capture David at Keilah, but David and his six hundred men escape. Saul continues pursuing David.
October 3	TLH 644 / LSB 805	1 Samuel 24	David has an opportunity to kill Saul, but spares his life. Saul expresses remorse for having attempted to kill David.
October 4	LSB 861	1 Samuel 25	Samuel dies. When Nabal refuses to help David and his men, David plans to attack the household of Nabal. However, Abigail, the wife of Nabal, intervenes, convincing David not to attack. The Lord kills Nabal. David takes Abigail as a wife. David takes Ahinoam of Jezreel as a wife.
October 5	TLH 132 / LSB 810	1 Samuel 26	Saul pursues David again. David has another opportunity to kill Saul, but spares his life. Saul repents again.
October 7	TLH 361 / LSB 554	1 Samuel 27	David flees to Gath to live among the Philistines, where he will be safe from Saul. David and his men spend their time attacking and exterminating foreign invaders among their fellow Judeans, thereby establishing a favorable reputation for David in order to prepare for his rule as king. David deceives the king of Gath into thinking that David is attacking Judeans, leading the king to assume that David will remain under his control.
October 8	TLH 536 / LSB 868	1 Samuel 28	As the Philistines prepare to attack Israel, Saul visits a medium. The medium consults the spirit of Samuel. The spirit predicts that the Philistines will defeat Israel and that Saul and his sons will be killed.
October 9	TLH 539 / LSB 872	1 Samuel 29	Since the Philistine commanders do not trust David, they force the king of Gath to send David and his men away.
October 10	TLH 540 / LSB 869	1 Samuel 30	Raiding Amalekites capture the women and children of David and his men. David and his men defeat the Amalekites and recover their wives, children, and property.
October 11	TLH 534	1 Samuel 31	The Philistines defeat Israel. Saul and his sons are killed in the battle.
October 12	LSB 406	Matthew 3	John the Baptist preaches repentance in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. John baptizes Jesus “to fulfill all righteousness.”
October 14	LSB 424	Matthew 4	The devil tempts Jesus in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. Jesus resists every temptation, defending Himself with the Word of God. Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee. Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John to be His disciples. Jesus heals the sick and demon-possessed, and great crowds follow Him.
October 15	TLH 430 / LSB 730	Ecclesiastes 1	Solomon contemplates the meaninglessness of life in this world without the Lord. From a worldly perspective, even wisdom is meaningless in the end.
October 16	LSB 877	Ecclesiastes 2	Self-indulgent pleasure is meaningless. Even wise living is meaningless in the end, since both the wise man and the fool face the same fate: death. Work also is meaningless, since “you can’t take it with you.”
October 17	LSB 762	Ecclesiastes 3	Human efforts are furthermore meaningless since the proper times for various occurrences and actions are determined by the Lord apart from the will or decision of man. Injustice and wickedness seem to thrive in this world and man, like the animals, dies.
October 18	TLH 622	Ecclesiastes 4	Injustice and oppression are realities in this world. The pursuit of worldly wealth is meaningless. Companionship is a blessing from the Lord. The success of a good and wise ruler soon is forgotten.
October 19	TLH 175 / LSB 425	Ecclesiastes 5	Solomon teaches humility and faithfulness before the Lord. The love of money is meaningless. To eat and to drink and to find enjoyment in one’s work are blessings from the Lord.
October 21	TLH 92 / LSB 386	Ecclesiastes 6	The earthly blessings of the Lord do not benefit the man who finds no enjoyment in them. The earthly life of a man is short and meaningless.
October 22	TLH 366 / LSB 536	Ecclesiastes 7	Solomon contrasts wisdom with folly. Despite the meaninglessness of life in this world, the wise man trusts that the Lord will work all things for good.
October 23	TLH 469 / LSB 648	Ecclesiastes 8	The wise man obeys earthly authority. The wise man fears the Lord. While we cannot make sense of everything that happens in this world, we trust that the will of the Lord prevails.
October 24	TLH 552 / LSB 878	Ecclesiastes 9	All people face impending death. Solomon advises us to eat, to drink, and to work, enjoying life on earth while we have it. Wisdom is greater than might. Wisdom is greater than folly.
October 25	TLH 514 / LSB 765	Ecclesiastes 10	Solomon teaches the way of wisdom in an unpredictable world.
October 26	TLH 192 / LSB 467	Ecclesiastes 11	Solomon continues teaching the way of wisdom in an unpredictable world.
October 28	TLH 206 / LSB 741	Ecclesiastes 12	Solomon describes the physical deterioration that we experience as we age, encouraging us to know the Lord while we are young. “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”
October 29	TLH 457 / LSB 770	Matthew 7	Jesus speaks against hypocritical judging, exhorts us to pray to the Father for all good things, teaches the golden rule, warns His followers to beware of false prophets, and encourages each of us to build his house on the rock of His Word. The crowds are astonished at the authority with which Jesus teaches.
October 30	TLH 415 / LSB 510	Matthew 8	Jesus heals a leper, the servant of a centurion, the mother-in-law of Peter, and many others. Two men learn that following Jesus comes with an earthly cost. Jesus calms a storm on the sea. Jesus drives demons out of two men and into a herd of pigs.
October 31	TLH 262 / LSB 656	Psalms 46	The basis of Luther’s famous hymn, “A Mighty Fortress,” Psalm 46 paints a picture of security in the midst of conflict and tumult. Whatever battles or hardships or threats or dangers we may face, our mighty Lord is with us to protect us in this life and in eternity.

# An Expected Blessing Arrives at an Unexpected Time

**“U**nless the LORD builds the house,  
those who build it labor in vain.  
Unless the LORD watches over the city,  
the watchman stays awake in vain.  
It is in vain that you rise up early  
and go late to rest,  
eating the bread of anxious toil;  
for he gives to his beloved sleep.  
Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,  
the fruit of the womb a reward.  
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior  
are the children of one’s youth.  
Blessed is the man  
who fills his quiver with them!  
He shall not be put to shame  
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.”  
(Psalm 127 ESV)



Pastor and Mrs. Luke Willitz at the Baptism of their daughter

Our seventh child was due to be born on June 26, 2024.

My wife, Kim, assured me that most of our children had been born after their due dates, so I had every intention of attending the CLC Convention in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on June 20-23.

My plan was to leave for Eau Claire early on Thursday morning. On Wednesday just before 3:30 P.M., Kim asked me to drive the six children to their grandparents’ house. She had been experiencing contractions for about two hours and they were not going away. “Should we all go so that we can go straight to the hospital from there?” I asked. “No, we have time. Just take the kids and come back.”

When I arrived back home, Kim met me outside and said that we needed to leave right away (she wouldn’t even let me change out of my yardwork shorts and Metallica T-shirt). I ran into the house to grab my phone. Once I was back outside, Kim informed me that we would not have time to make it to the hospital and that she would just have to give birth at home. So we went back into the house.

I had time to do little more than disinfect my hands before I delivered our seventh child. Amelia Rose Willitz was born at 4:08 P.M. on June 19. I drove Kim and Amelia to the New Ulm Medical Center, where they stayed for about twenty-four hours.

My parents also have seven children, of which I am the second. Our first six children followed the same pattern as my parents’ first six (girl, boy, boy, boy, boy, girl). Amelia broke the pattern

(my youngest sibling is a brother). Our other children are named Aurora Dawn, Levi Joel, Silas Tertius, Tristan Johann, Matthias Quintus, and Asenath Loretta.

We thank the Lord for a quick and healthy delivery. We thank Him even for His perfect timing of it all. Things could have gone far less smoothly if we had attempted to drive the twenty-five minutes to the hospital before the birth or if Kim had gone into labor a day later, after I had left for convention. We thank the Lord for granting continued health and healing for Kim and for Amelia. Above all we thank the Lord for granting Amelia a second birth through water and the Word on Sunday, June 23 at Living Savior Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie, Minnesota.



**Luke Willitz** is pastor of Living Savior Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. He also prepares the “Bread of Life” devotions for the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

# The Heart of the Matter

***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)***

**M**artin Luther knew how to get right at the heart of the matter. When the common folks purchased indulgences, he understood that they believed they were actually buying the forgiveness of sins. Luther could see that the people, in effect, were relying on pieces of paper rather than on Christ for their hope of heaven. When the people were taught to make intercession to God through the Virgin Mary, he understood that they were looking to Mary, and, again, not Christ, for grace. When monks and others were sent on pilgrimages to view relics or some such thing, he could see that the people were being taught to trust in their own merits for salvation, and, again, Christ was left completely out of the picture. Luther knew how to expose all of these things for what they were, namely, Satan using the antichrist church of Rome to lead simple people into a false security regarding their souls' salvation.

We still need faithful preachers to help us clearly see the heart of the matter. We may not be tempted to think that buying an indulgence will get us closer to God. Yet we may be tempted to self-righteously believe that we are nothing like our blatantly immoral next-door neighbor. Or we may be tempted to think that the generous support we give to our church somehow makes up for our many sins. Even things like our prayers, our personal Bible reading, and our faithful church attendance can become props we begin to trust in for spiritual security. The point is that our sinful hearts can easily deceive us into believing that we can somehow make ourselves right with God. Martin Luther once wrote: “The sin underneath all our sins is to trust the lie of the serpent that we cannot trust the love and grace of Christ and must take matters into our own hands.” The Bible says, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked.*” (Jeremiah 17:9)



The heart of the matter is that by nature we are sinful through and through, deserving nothing from God but eternal punishment in hell. An honest evaluation of our hearts and lives reveals sins of idolatry, pride, hate, lust, greed, deceit—and the list goes on.

There is only one reason why we are accepted by God, and that is on account of the sinless life and substitutionary death of His Son, Jesus Christ. At the heart of all Scripture is the blessed truth that Christ gave His life a ransom for all, and that, as the sacrificial Lamb of God, He has taken away the sin of the entire world. The red heart in Luther's coat of arms is a vivid reminder that Jesus' crimson blood has washed us clean of all sin, so that God, for Christ's sake, now sees us as righteous and pure. Salvation is God's doing entirely, and not in any way man's doing. Martin Luther did not write the hymn, but he would have agreed with the one who did: “*Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling . . . Thou must save and Thou alone.*”

Thank God for pastors like Martin Luther who, from Scripture, make clear to us that there is nothing we sinners can do to save ourselves from death and hell. Even more, thank Him for pastors who, in their preaching and counseling, point us to the loving heart of our Savior God, Whose redeeming love covers the multitude of our sins. In Luther's time, and in our time, the heart of the matter is that “*by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*” (Ephesians 2:8-9)



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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Great Lakes Pastoral Conference

October 1-3, 2024

Peace Thru Christ Lutheran Church, Middleton, Wisconsin

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis (Selected Psalm)—Pastor Michael Wilke
  - Grounds for Divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11—Pastor Mark Tiefel
  - A Study of Church Membership—Professor Chad Seybt
  - Evangelism: Helping Congregations Engage Community—Pastor Terrel Kesterson
  - New Testament Exegesis (Romans 8:1ff)—Professor Steven Sippert
  - Jordan Peterson—Pastor Thomas Naumann
  - Chaplain—Pastor Paul Tiefel
  - Communion Service Speaker—Pastor Stefan Sonnenfeld
- Pastor David Ude, Secretary, GLPC

### 2024 Southeast Pastoral Conference

Resurrection Lutheran Church, Corpus Christi, Texas

October 8-10, 2024

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis: Ecclesiastes 10:1-10—Pastor David Koenig
- New Testament Exegesis: Galatians 3:6-14—Pastor Robert Sauers
- A Critical Examination of the Critical Theory of Westcott and Hort—Pastor David Baker
- The Proper Use of AI Technology in Sermonizing—Pastor Frank Gantt
- The Importance of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills, Based Upon Scripture—Pastor Glenn Oster
- Leadership: Training Faithful Men in Our Churches—Professor David Schaller
- (Essayist's Choice)—Professor Mark Weis
- The Question of God: CS Lewis & Sigmund Freud Debate—Pastor Matthew Hanel

Chaplain: Douglas Priestap

—Pastor Dennis Rieken, Secretary

**Anniversary.** Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hidewood Township, South Dakota, will be celebrating their 125th anniversary on Sunday, October 13, 2024. All are welcome. Former Pastor Andrew Schaller will be speaking at the 11:00 A.M. service. A fellowship meal follows.

—Pastor Paul Krause



**Four generations of ILC students:** (l-r) Pastor Emeritus Dale Redlin, seminary class of 1963; Julie Reim, college class of 1983; Tamar Pfeiffer, college class of 2010; Abigail Pfeiffer, high school class of 2028

**Installation.** In accord with our usage and order, **Laura Wales**, who was called by Grace Lutheran Church of Fridley, Minnesota, to be its part-time kindergarten teacher, was installed on July 28, 2024.

—Pastor John Hein



Pastor John Hein and teacher Laura Wales

**Installation.** In accord with our usage and order, **Joshua Ohlmann**, who was called by Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church and School of Saginaw, Michigan, to be its principal and upper grade teacher, was installed on August 11, 2024.

—Pastor Michael Wilke

**Installation.** In accord with our usage and order, **Matthew Thurow**, who was called to Immanuel Lutheran College to be a professor, was installed on August 25, 2024, in conjunction with ILC's opening service.

—Pastor John Hein, Chairman, CLC Board of Regents.



Regents chairman Pastor John Hein (l) and new professor Matthew Thurow (r)