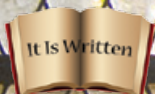


Lutheran Sentinel

A Publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

"Engage Others with Jesus."



God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

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www.els.name/ls

From the President

Dear members and friends of our ELS:

Parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and interested individuals and couples plan at times what they will leave behind and how this should be done. Generational transference of wealth has been the subject of more than a few seminars.

What kind of legacy do you want to leave to future generations? Is it in dollars? Real estate? Cultural traditions? How about this—to have the praiseworthy deeds of our great God so well-known and taught that “the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children” (Psalm 78:6)?

In my travels and visits around the synod one thing never ceases to amaze me. We have so many dedicated Christian parents in our land who seemingly spare little or no cost or effort to ensure that their children have access to a good Christian education. The sacrifices can be remarkable.

Doing without a brand-new this-or-that in order to foot the bill at a Christian grade school. Could it be trimming vacation goals or foregoing that long-sought lake property just so Gabby or Jason can be enrolled at a Lutheran high school? There are parents—many in our parsonages—who homeschool, giving their children a fundamental Christian worldview, weaving God’s Word daily into a full-ranging curriculum. Then, too, there are many families using the public system, and we find moms and dads working in the home to instill biblical truths, countering as needed anticipated influences that detract from the Christian way of life. And we dare not forget the Sunday School!



Readers of our *Lutheran Sentinel* may think of wonderful examples of providing such an educational legacy lasting beyond any earthly lifetime. Here are just a few I wish to share that show collectively a dedicated spirit among our fellow Christians: 1) Evergreen Lutheran High School has taken a commendable step, purchasing a nearly brand-new high school complex in Tacoma, Washington, which will serve as the school’s relocated campus; 2) Christ Lutheran Church and School of Port St. Lucie, Florida, is expanding a well-run pre-K into full elementary; it now has called a full-time Assistant Pastor/Academic Dean for this venture; 3) Gloria Dei in Cold Spring, Minnesota, is battling publicly for its tax-exempt status on its Dei Spring school property, despite accumulating back taxes levied against the church and school by the county. These and many other committed efforts for leaving such a lasting legacy deserve our praise and our prayers.

Children are a heritage from the Lord. What legacy will we be leaving?

John A. Moldstad
John A. Moldstad, President of the ELS



How Has God's Spirit Interacted with Man in the Bible?

So often we look at the sacred Scriptures merely as the owner's manual for our faith-life in Christ. The Bible is rarely regularly read from cover to cover. Instead only the proverbial "quick-start" pages are often consulted. Then once our faith-life is deemed off the ground and running, the Scriptures are then neatly tucked away in a drawer, along with those "warranties of faith" (baptismal and confirmation certificates, etc.), only to be pulled out when the pastor comes or when we need some help troubleshooting our faith-life.

Even though the Scriptures could be thought of as an owner's manual for the faith-life in a certain sense, the metaphor can be far more damaging than helpful. Not unlike an owner's manual, we certainly may have gotten ourselves into jams by not using the Bible properly. Because we thought we knew it all already, we somehow concluded that it did not apply to us, or we failed to regularly refresh ourselves with its content. However, the fundamental problem with such a metaphor for Scripture is that it gives us the mistaken impression that the Bible is merely information and unfortunately at best information that largely requires our obedience. Once we think that the Bible has no real intrinsic Spirit-filled power, it's all the more easy to consign it to the bottomless pit of the owner's manual drawer.

But Martin Luther (1483–1546) recognized that God's Word was something far more than mere guidelines for Christian living. When he was teaching young men how to be pastors, he drew their attention to the opening verses of Genesis 1 [Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Publishing House, 1958–), 1:21–22]. Here Luther pointed out that when God the Father speaks through His Spirit-filled Word, that Word creates, i.e., it brings something out of nothing.

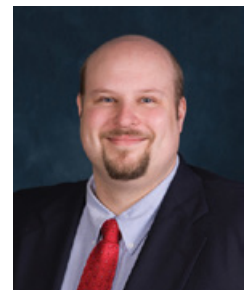
God's Word is far more than sacred information, it actually does what the trice-holy God says it does. So when God says that you are declared righteous, you actually are righteous! When He calls you a new creation, you really are a new creation! When He showers you with the gifts of

the Spirit, you actually possess those gifts, which empower your new faith-life in Christ. God said through His prophet Isaiah, "So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10–11).

God's Spirit-filled Word accomplishes His purposes in us in manifold ways. One helpful overview is provided by the Lutheran theologian, pastor, and spiritual writer, Johann Gerhard (1582–1637). He explains that the Scripture provides a "true and salutary recognition of Him [God]" (Matthew 11:27, John 1:18, Psalm 36:9), "instruction for those who err" (Psalm 119:105), "the conversion of sinners" (Acts 20:20–21, Acts 26:17–20), "the kindling and strengthening of faith" (Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 4:6), "spiritual rebirth" (1 Corinthians 4:15, James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23), "the salutary invocation of God" (Romans 10:14), "food for our soul" (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4, Amos 8:11), "comfort for the afflicted" (Psalm 23:4, Psalm 94:19, Psalm 119:50),

"guidance for pilgrims" (Psalm 32:8, Psalm 119:105), "strengthening for those in warfare" (2 Corinthians 10:4, Ephesians 6:17), and "the crowning and glorification of those who conquer" (John 6:68; Acts 13:26, Romans 1:16, Philippians 2:16). [Johann Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces*, trans. Richard Dinda (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006–), Locus I, Par. 366].

Yet all that being said, St. Paul could not have summarized the Spirit-Filled Word's interaction with man more succinctly and powerfully than with these words, "**For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life**" (2 Corinthians 3:4–6). Amen.



Timothy R. Schmeling is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Sebastian, Florida.

“What Help Does the Spirit Give to My Faith?”

Sometimes we think we have everything figured out. We devoutly read the Bible and memorize the correct answers from Luther’s *Small Catechism*. We may even feel a sense of pride in being part of a church body that adheres to the full counsel of God. Then we are reminded by Jesus’ words that “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

The Christian life isn’t only a matter of the head, lived by reading and reciting. It is also a life of the Spirit; a living, breathing relationship with the God who dwells in our hearts. It is a life inhabited by the Spirit of God. Though we may regard Martin Luther chiefly as a scholar, he was also a man who abided in hours of daily prayer and personal Bible reading. So it is no surprise when in his *Large Catechism*, while writing about the Apostles’ Creed, Luther speaks of five ways that the Spirit helps our faith.

To begin with, he reminds us that (1) apart from the Spirit, no one could have faith. “Neither you nor I could ever know anything about Christ, or believe in him and receive him as Lord, unless these were offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the gospel by the Holy Spirit” (*Large Catechism*, II (Apostles’ Creed), paragraph 38; see John 14:16–17, Ephesians 2:5, Romans 10:14). An unbeliever who reads the Bible doesn’t intend to become a Christian, any more than an infant who is brought to church for Baptism. Spiritually dead by nature, we are unaware of our need and helpless even to begin crying out to God for help. What we need from the Spirit is more than help. We need rescue.

(2) Through God’s Word and Baptism the Spirit provides that needed rescue. Luther writes: “I was brought into [the Christian Church] by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still hear God’s Word, which is the beginning point for entering it” (*Large Catechism*, II, 52, see John 5:21, Romans 10:17, Ephesians 1:13–14, John 3:5, Titus 3:5–6). Whether we believe and receive salvation by hearing or reading God’s Word or by God’s Word being splashed upon us in Baptism, it is the Spirit who is at work.

Perhaps you have seen the lapel button “PBPWMGINFWMY.” (Please be patient with me, God is not finished with me yet.) (3) Receiving faith and the promise of heaven isn’t the end of the Spirit’s work, but only the beginning: “Through [God’s Word] he [God] creates and increases holiness, causing it daily to grow and become strong in the faith and its fruits, which the Spirit produces” (*Large Catechism*, II, 53, see Philippians 2:13, Ephesians 2:10).

As we grow in our Christian life, the Spirit touches our hearts to realize that (4) this isn’t just about us. As we couldn’t receive salvation apart from the Spirit working through God’s Word, neither can anyone else: “For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian church, apart from which no one can come to the Lord Christ.” (*Large Catechism*, II, 44; to see where in the world the need for the Gospel is greatest, visit www.CGIoutreach.org)

Finally, (5) the Spirit will perfect us in heaven: “Then, when we pass from this life, in the blink of an eye he will perfect our holiness and will eternally preserve us in it.” (*Large Catechism*, II, 59). Until then, we pray in the words of the hymn: “See, to Thee I yield my heart, Shed Thy life through ev’ry part; A pure temple I would be, Wholly dedicate to Thee” (*ELH* 402:6).



Rev. Greg L. Sahlstrom is an ELS pastor residing in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

What Does It Mean to “Walk in the Spirit”?

One of my earliest memories is walking hand-in-hand with my father around the gardens of Stan Hywet Hall, former home of Goodyear Tire founder Frank Seiberling, in Akron, Ohio. At the time our congregation was building a new sanctuary. We were worshipping temporarily at the gatehouse of Stan Hywet Hall.

When I think of walking in the Spirit I think of walking with my father. Just as my father led me by the hand around the beautiful gardens of Stan Hywet, the Holy Spirit seeks to lead you and me and all believers in the paths God has prepared for us. Paul uses this imagery for the Christian life, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

When you and I came into this world we were not led by the Holy Spirit but by our sinful nature. We came into this world spiritually dead on arrival, dead in transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1). But then God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ. He gave us the seal of the Holy Spirit guaranteeing the inheritance of eternal life. (Ephesians 1:13, 2:4–5).

The Holy Spirit makes you and me new creations in Christ. But in this life we still have our “flesh,” that is, our sinful nature, clinging to us. There is a constant battle going on. St. Paul says, “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). We see this in the life of King David. He was a faithful believer yet also sinned greatly. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, who then became pregnant. In his efforts to cover up his sin, he had her husband Uriah killed by sending him to the front lines.

How can you walk in the Spirit? First recognize that the Holy Spirit has made you a new creation in Christ. He brings you the forgiveness of sins in Baptism and in the Gospel. Through the Gospel He continues to lead you.

Secondly, daily confess your sin to God and hold fast to Jesus and His salvation. There were many times I sinned against my father. But I knew that though my father might be angry with me, he loved me and would welcome me with open arms and forgive me. When you have sinned do not run away but come near to God. Remember how David responded when confronted by Nathan. David said, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:13).

Finally, live as a free child of God. You are free from the judgment your sins deserve. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ (Romans 8:1). You do not live under the burdensome weight of God’s impossible Law anymore. The Law is there to convict you when you sin. It shows you what is God-pleasing, but the Law never could and never will empower you to do what God desires. Rather the Holy Spirit is walking with you empowering you through the means of grace. He bears witness through the Gospel that you are God’s child (Romans 8:16). He prays to the Father for you (Romans 8:26). The Spirit leads you to the green pastures and still waters of the Gospel to nourish and empower you in your walk. So God is at work in you to will and to do His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).



Mark Rogers is pastor of Scriptural Lutheran Church in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.



On the Synodical Scene...

Mission Society Meets in Naples

The semi-annual meeting of the Florida Women's Mission Society was held at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Naples, Florida, on March 9, 2013. The meeting opened with hearing the church bell choir and with a devotion by the host pastor, the Rev. Greg Schmidt. The rally theme was "Make Disciples of All Nations." Pastor emeritus David Lillegard spoke to 55 people about our synod's mission in Chile from its beginning to the present. The Rev. Herb Huhnerkoch gave an update on news from the Florida circuit, emphasizing the growth of Christian day schools in Florida.

After lunch, the people heard the children play bell chimes and sing, conducted by Julia Schmidt. During the business meeting, the attendees elected Marilyn Schneider of Peace, Kissimmee, as vice-president. Mary Ann McKay spoke about the Our Savior's project of supporting an orphanage in India, encouraging the other congregation ladies to do the same. The Rev. Peter Heyn ended the meeting with a devotion.

Submitted by Ione Lillegard, President



St. Paul Lutheran Celebrates 125 Years

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lengby, Minnesota, celebrated its 125th anniversary on September 16, 2012. The morning service was followed by a meal at the Lengby Community Hall. A video highlighting members and events of the past was shown after the meal.

The anniversary service was held at 2:00 p.m. The Rev. Joseph Burkhardt, now pastor at St. Helens, Oregon, preached the sermon and the current pastor, the Rev. Mark Faugstad, served as the liturgist. The Rev. Shawn Stafford read letters from former pastors of the congregation and from synod officials. After this service, the Ladies Aid served a meal in the church basement.



As part of the anniversary, the congregation produced a cookbook, a picture directory, and a video. The congregation also painted the church interior, recarpeted the sanctuary, installed new wainscoting and trim around the sanctuary, and members reupholstered the communion rail and kneeler.



Front row (L to R): St. Paul members Jeanette Fenske, Esther Lomen and Phronie Olson. Back row (L to R): The Reverends Mark Faugstad, Shawn Stafford, Joseph Burkhardt.

Rev. Burmeister Installed in Florida

The Rev. Andrew Burmeister was installed as pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Lakeland, Florida, on April 7, 2013. The Rev. Peter Heyn served as liturgist and Rev. Matthew Moldstad as lector. The Rev. Michael Dale preached the installation sermon based on John 21:15-19 with the theme "Preach the Cross through which Christ Provides for the People's Needs." The Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch, Circuit 1 Visitor, performed the rite of installation. Mrs. Janice Thomas served as organist, and the Our Savior choir sang "Seek Ye First."

After the service the Ladies' Guild of Our Savior, with the assistance of many members of the congregation, served a superb dinner to all the assembled members and guests.



Front row (L to R): The Reverends Matthew Moldstad, Timothy Schmeling, Andrew Burmeister, Michael Dale, Herbert Huhnerkoch. Back row (L to R): The Reverends Luke Willitz, Chris Dale, Peter Heyn, Richard Winters (retired WELS pastor), Charles Keeler.

Keeping Our Baptism/Confirmation Vows

For every Christian believer, there was a day when life changed—a day in which each was transformed from an enemy of God dead in his or her sins into a living, believing child of God’s family. On that day of Baptism, or later in affirming the covenant of Baptism in Confirmation, each were asked, “Will you by the grace of God, continue steadfast in this covenant of your Baptism, even to the end?” The sponsor, and later you, answered, “Yes, I will.”

So, how are you doing with that promise? If you are like many other Christians, you might feel a bit guilty about how faithfully you have kept that promise—maybe even a bit worried. So many times we fall short of perfect holiness before God. Actually, we are continually short of perfect holiness in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Some of you may look at your life and realize that you have pretty much abandoned the faith that you vowed to keep. Perhaps you may even be embarrassed by how long it has been since you testified to your faith with worship in God’s house and how long it has been since you tasted the body and blood of your Lord in His Supper. Have you spent time daily in your Bible and prayer since you repeated your Baptism/Confirmation vow? Does the rest of the world around you see that you are one of God’s children in faith? Are you truly living your vow?

We all have to admit that we fail. However, the main covenant of Baptism is not our vow, but the vow of God above. Baptism is never about what we do. We come to Baptism as unwashed, filthy sinners covered in the stench of death, and there is nothing you or I can do to change that. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves acceptable to God. But, God is merciful. For your benefit, He sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue you from the muck of sin that made you God’s enemy. Jesus lived and died on your behalf. On the cross, Jesus took the awful condemnation and death you had earned so that His Father could justly declare you forgiven.

Dear friends, in your Baptism, God made a covenant with you that all of your sins are forgiven and remembered no more, because Jesus took them all away on Calvary. Your merciful Father in heaven planned this from the beginning. He wanted you to be returned to Him as a clean and holy child. Therefore, when God claimed you as His own child in Baptism, He also credited you with the perfect holiness Jesus lived on your behalf.

All of this is why Christians are concerned with continuing steadfast in the Sacrament of Baptism, because in Baptism we receive God’s covenant promise that He has forgiven our sins and blessed us with an inheritance of salvation and eternal life. Thereafter, in repentance, we return to God’s covenant and receive His repeated assurance that we are forgiven.

Just like the father celebrated at the prodigal son’s return home, God is ever ready and willing to welcome you with open arms, ready to rejoice with the whole company of heaven for each and every sinner that repents.

If you are unsure where you stand with God today, return to your Baptism. Return to worship and repent of your neglect of God’s covenant and receive again His promise that all your sins are forgiven for Jesus’ sake. Come and hear the Gospel in Word and Sacrament through which the Holy Spirit reassures you that the Lord has forgiven you, has washed you clean of all impurity, and has made you His own dear child with an inheritance of joy and peace in His heavenly home.



Mike Muehlenhardt is pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

Synod Convention Preview Reports

Doctrine Committee

Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum (ELCF) was held on October 22–23, 2012, in Mankato, Minnesota. The first paper, titled “The Two Kingdoms Revisited,” was presented by Prof. Erling Teigen. The second paper, titled “Brotherly Admonition in the Ministerium,” was presented by the Rev. Earle Treptow.

The Theological Commission of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) met on May 28–30, 2013, in Mequon, Wisconsin. The triennial convention of the CELC will be held in Lima, Peru, in 2014.

The committee lists five reasons for not using the NIV (2011) translation and recommends the use of the New King James Version (NKJV), English Standard Version (ESV), An American Translation (Beck, AAT), and the New American Standard Bible 1995 (NASB 95).

The synod president and the Centennial Committee have asked the Doctrine Committee to produce a Bible study for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the 100th anniversary of the synod. The committee also is working on producing an updated brochure explaining the differences between the ELS and ELCA for use in our congregations. In addition, the committee continues to study the issues of the times, e.g., homosexuality, feminism, the “church growth” movement, the “emergent church” phenomenon, “contemporary worship” practices, and government encroachment on religious liberty.

Board of Regents: Bethany Lutheran College

The board recognized the anniversaries of 16 faculty and staff at a service on February 13, 2013. Three personnel joined the faculty this past year. Enrollment was 598 students. During the 2012–2013 academic year, Dr. Steve Reagles filled the Erling M. Bolstad Chair in Contemporary Culture and Christianity, and Dr. Shane Bowyer filled the Glen Taylor Chair of Business and Leadership.

The college graduated 22 students in December 2012 and 92 in May 2013.

On October 12–14, 2012, the College hosted 125 attendees at the Media Outreach in World Missions Conference sponsored by the Christ in Media Institute. In May 2013, Bethany held its first international film festival.

Grants to the college were made by the Bethany Lutheran College Women’s Auxiliary, the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation, and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. During 2012, estates totaling \$353,611.57 were received.

Board of Regents: Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

Six professors taught seminary classes during the 2012–2013 academic year. Eleven students were enrolled—five juniors, two middlers, one senior, and three vicars. The board reports that the seminary offers three evangelism classes, plus an evangelism seminar presented by the Board for Home Outreach members and a class in Spanish.

The annual Pastors’ Institute on “The Divine Liturgy and Its Use” was held at Vero Beach, Florida, on March 2, 2012. The Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures were held on October 25–26, 2012, with the theme “Bible Translations for the 21st Century.” Other educational opportunities were offered through the annual Mission & Ministry Seminar at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, on February 5–7, 2013, and a Seminary Marriage Workshop. The seminary will hold a vicar workshop on May 15, 2013, and its graduation and call service will occur that evening for two graduates, Jesse DeDeyne and Benjamin Wiechmann.

Legacies and gift annuities totaling \$523,960.03 were given to the seminary during 2012.

Board for Home Outreach

The board was restructured with the following positions: Chairman, Vice-chairman, Chaplain, Secretary, Financial Coordinator, Missionary Care Coordinator, Site Selection Coordinator, Resource Coordinator, Outreach Strategist, and Property Management Coordinator. The Board focused its efforts on two priorities: evangelism training and establishing home missions.

Board members conducted six two-day evangelism retreats for nine synod circuits. Video DVDs of the retreat sessions are available.

The Board called the Rev. Kyle Madson to begin exploratory work in Weatherford and Hudson Oaks, Texas. He will be installed on May 19, 2013. The Board reported on the following home missions: Hope Lutheran Church, Leander, Texas; Hope Lutheran Church, Farmington, Minnesota; Redeeming Grace, Rogers, Minnesota; Faith Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas; and Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Holland, Michigan.

Board members and home missionaries met in Florida for a Home Mission Seminar. The Board issued five calls to serve as its Evangelism/Missions Coordinator, and all have been declined. The Board will work to fill this position.

Board for World Outreach

The Board for World Outreach (BWO) oversees missions in Asia, Europe, and South America. The board reported details of the work being done in these three areas. The Rev. Steven Petersen serves as the BWO administrator. Mission work is supported by auxiliary organizations: Helping Hands, Faith Mission Society, Thoughts of Faith, the BWO Communications Committee, the Christ in Media Institute, and Cross-stitch.

Because of a great reduction in outside funding, the board proposes a restructuring in its relationship with the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia, and the Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India.

Board for Lutheran Schools of America

The board recognizes the service since 2006 of the Rev. Edward Bryant and Mr. Allen Labitzky, both of whom resigned in 2012. A survey of ELS schools showed that non-member students are a growing part of the student totals. For three years at synod conventions, the board has hosted a meeting for principals to share ideas.

In the future, the board plans to visit all ELS schools by spring 2014. An ELS Teachers Conference will be held on August 7–10, 2014 in Washington, D.C. The board plans to produce videos that promote Christian education. The board is discussing the development of early learning centers at home mission starts. A pilot program titled “I’m Called” was used at Mt. Olive in Mankato, MN, to promote a sense of community within Lutheran schools. It may be used in other ELS schools.

Board for Youth Outreach

The board continues its work of conducting an annual youth convention, producing *Young Branches*, supporting youth retreats and summer camps, and reviewing Sunday School and VBS materials.

The 2012 ELS Lutheran Youth Association convention was held at Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 26–29. The convention theme was “From Beginning to End: You Are Mine.” The 2013 convention will be in Winter Park, Florida, on July 25–28, under the theme “You Are the Salt of the Earth.”

The Board also supports summer youth camps and the Youth Honor Choir.

Concerning confirmation instruction, the board recommends the continued memorization of the *Small Catechism* and Bible passages as well as learning Bible history and facts.

Board for Christian Service

Regarding health insurance, the board is studying the ramifications of the health care laws on existing insurance plans.

During 2012, the World Needs Fund received \$37,420. The synod sent \$7,257 to various projects, especially for relief after Hurricane Sandy, \$5,500 to individuals dealing with disasters, and \$2,100 to supply Christian counseling through the Clergy Assistance Program. The Board distributed \$37,765 for matching the funding of pastors’ and teachers’ pensions.

The board supplied seven widows with a monthly subsidy.

The board recommends that guidelines be established for the board to serve ELS military personnel.

Laymen’s Equalization Committee

The committee reports receipts of \$19,298.96 and expenditures of \$20,791.17, leaving a balance on February 28, 2013 of \$4,470.65.

Planning and Coordinating Committee

This committee recommends a 2014 congregation contribution budget total of \$760,000.

Board of Trustees

The board oversees the work of the Rev. Daniel Basel (Giving Counselor) and Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft (Business Administrator). The ELS Foundation Committee reports that the rate of return for all investments in 2012 was 12.07 percent.

The board approved the purchase of six acres in Leander, Texas, for \$605,000, the land purchase in Farmington, Minnesota, and helped with loans for Gloria Dei in Cold Spring, Minnesota, and Redeemer in Scottsdale, Arizona. Abiding Shepherd in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, refinanced its loan so that the synod no longer co-signs the loan.

Concerning the Synod Archives: During the year, archival items belonging to Bethany Lutheran College were transferred to its new archive department.

The board’s funding request through Missions Advancement Project, Inc. (MAP) of \$585,000 was approved. This represents a considerable reduction compared to past support.

The 2013 Program Funds grant totals \$500,000.

The synod received a total of \$107,877.88 in estate money and \$40,000 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

The board approved a funding request of \$48,500 for the synod’s centennial observance in 2018.

Centennial Committee

The Committee recommends that the 100th anniversary of the ELS have as its theme “Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done: The Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Our Heritage of Grace.” The committee plans to produce a Bible study for the fall of 2017. The Rev. Craig Ferkenstad is to publish a pictorial history of the synod. A video of the synod’s history is under consideration. The committee also proposes a two-year anniversary thankoffering and that an ad hoc committee be appointed to study this offering.

Synod Review Committee

The committee was assigned no projects during 2012. The committee recommends that it be directed to conduct a review of the *Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* and report to the 2014 convention.

Ad Hoc Committee on Military Matters

The 2012 synod convention recommended the study of establishing a monument and developing a military ministry. A committee of five people was formed. The committee recommended that a plaque or monument be established near the flag pole at Bethany, that pastors be trained to provide counseling to military personnel, that a newsletter to congregations on military issues be developed, and that resources from other Lutheran bodies be used in this work.

Reports compiled by the editor

Pastor, I Have a Question...

Question: *My spouse has Alzheimer's disease and is under the care of hospice. They have asked me to prepare an Advance Directive and a DNR in case first responders should be needed. Should I?*

Answer: Our gracious God gives us life. He keeps us alive as long as He wills. He values human life. Jesus, God's Son, lived, died, and rose again to rescue all sinners from death. By faith in Jesus, God considers us to be holy. God gives us the sure and certain promise of eternal life through Jesus. By Baptism, God recreated us in His image. Jesus ascended into heaven to prepare a place for each of us. There, we will live forever. He will take us home when He wills. We trust the Lord.

"Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord'" (Job 1:20-21).

God gives us tools to preserve life. Doctors, nurses, medicine, surgery, hospitals, and all types of treatments are God's gifts to preserve our lives. The primary goal of medical treatment is to cure and repair our bodies. There are other goals when cure is not possible; stabilization and preparation for death.

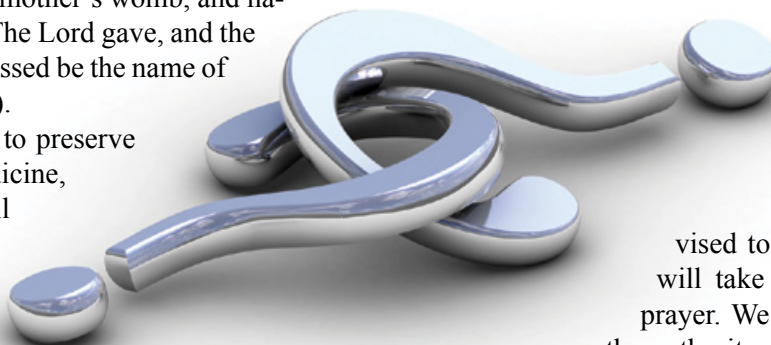
Hospice is God's gift for patients preparing for death. A time may come when our doctors believe further treatment will not be successful or worse, it might be painful and become a threat to life. With our doctor and advisers from hospice, we decide what treatments we want performed on us when a cure is no longer possible when death draws near. Hospice focuses on "comfort care" or "palliative care" when our lives are near the end.

An Advance Directive is a legal form. Each state regulates it. It is also called a living will. While we are in our right mind, we decide whether we want life support, food and water and comfort care when we are terminal or at the end of life or in a persistent vegetative state.

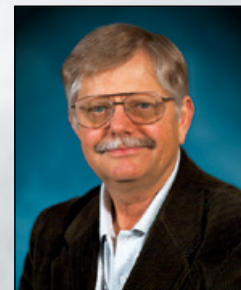
A DNR (do not resuscitate) instructs EMTs (emergency medical technicians) about the treatment we want if our heart stops. Our doctor must also sign this form. It means that we do not want CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). EMTs will do everything else to help.

CPR is a great gift of God. We are encouraged to learn the techniques. But CPR is not always beneficial. It works best for those who are generally healthy otherwise. According to three separate medical sources patients in nursing homes experience a 0 to 2 percent survival rate when undergoing CPR. Those who are already frail may suffer dangerous injuries in the process. These injuries may lead to a more painful death in the hospital.

Christians are well advised to prepare a living will. We will take the matter to the Lord in prayer. We don't want to try to usurp the authority of God. We submit to His will. Times come when we must let go. While we are in our right mind and to relieve those who love us we can express our desires. Should we be required to make these decisions for those we love, we will also consult with the Lord in prayer. We will seek His will in His word. We will consult with our doctor and our pastor. We will examine our hearts to ensure that our motives please God. And we joyfully commit our bodies and souls to the Lord's gracious care.



Send your questions to:
Pastor Charles Keeler
117 Ruby Lake Dr.,
Winter Haven, FL 33884



Charles Keeler is pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Winter Haven, Florida.



Cross Currents

Popular Christianity

Four days after the bombings at the Boston Marathon and on the day that the citizens of Watertown, Massachusetts, spent locked down in their homes as their city was searched for the second suspect, Joel Osteen was interviewed on HuffPost Live.

In it, he was asked how he would comfort the family of the slain Massachusetts Institute of Technology campus police officer. He replied: “There’s not a lot to say to them, except to pray for them. I’ve been in situations like that... and a lot of times you just sit there with them and weep with them. You let them know they’re going to make it through, but I don’t know if words ever can be the right thing. Except that, you know what, there is the hope of heaven. Be strong. Remember the good.”

To be fair, Joel Osteen was put somewhat on the spot. He didn’t know the faith of either the officer or his family and so could not really speak with certainty as to what he would say to them. What is interesting, though, is that throughout the rest of the interview neither the name of Jesus Christ nor His work of redemption was mentioned—not once in over nine minutes!

This is the popular form of religion in the United States these days; a religion that is commonly labeled “Christianity,” but that is anything but. Evidence for this can be found in both the popularity and the message of Joel Osteen.

In a sermon (which was coincidentally preached on *Rogate* Sunday when the focus is on prayer), he said: “When God sees you showing your dependency on Him like that (when you constantly pray and thank Him for His blessings)...that’s what’ll cause Him to make your life easier.”

Wow. Want more? Here you go: “If you’ll acknowledge God *before* you get to the mall, He’ll find you the best deals. If you’ll acknowledge God *before* you get to the gym, He’ll give you a better workout. If you’ll acknowledge God *before* you go into that meeting—(say for) ten seconds under your breath: ‘God give me Your favor. I need your blessing.’—that meeting will go better. Jesus put it this way: (John 15:5) ‘Without Me you can do nothing.’”

In this “sermon,” yes, Jesus’ name was mentioned... four times, but *never* in the sense of being the world’s Redeemer. Of course, to speak about Jesus as a Savior, he needed to have mentioned our *need* for a Savior first. But he didn’t, unless you need someone to save you from standing in a long line at the grocery store.

And this is really the kind of savior this seemingly new and improved (really, old and damnable) kind of religion claims as its own. One who will pave the way (make the crooked way straight???) for you to have a good life now, never once mentioning the death you must face in time and eternity on account of your sins (Genesis 3:6: “So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” [emphasis added]). And because neither sin nor its consequences are mentioned, so also the life Jesus lived and the death He suffered to take your sin and guilt away are left out as well.

Those who preach like Osteen seek popularity at the expense of the truth. They “give the people what they want” and benefit greatly from it. Our Lord, though, calls us by His Word, *not* to success in this life, but to faithfulness; a faithfulness that He provides and strengthens by His Gospel and Sacraments.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

James Braun is pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Yelm, Washington.



President Moldstad Speaks at the Emmaus Conference

The sixth annual Emmaus Conference again featured the presence of three Lutheran church presidents: Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) President Rev. John A. Moldstad, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) President Rev. Mark Schroeder, and Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison. This is the third year that all three presidents were together. In 2011, Pres. Schroeder spoke on the topic “Walking Together with Jesus.” In 2012, Pres. Harrison’s presentation dealt with “The History and Prospects of Lutheran Free Conferences.”

This year, over 80 people, members of all three synods, gathered to hear Pres. Moldstad deliver his paper on “Unity in Controversy—Controversy in Unity” concerning the Election Controversy and its impact on Lutheran unity. While this controversy in the 1880s mostly troubled the Norwegian Synod and caused a split, Pres. Moldstad showed how the WELS and LCMS became caught up in the discussion. With the dawn of a new century, new ideas

for fostering union also arose. Pres. Moldstad detailed how the merger of the three largest Norwegian Lutheran church bodies was accomplished through compromising the truth. Instead of teaching that God has elected people to enter into heaven through faith in Jesus, the opponents maintained that God foresaw that people would believe and chose them.

During discussion, Pres. Mark Schroeder identified three lessons to draw from the Election Controversy: 1) See the beauty and comfort of God’s grace, 2) Understand the nature of heresy and controversy, and 3) Establish unity under the right kind of discussions. Students from nearby Evergreen Lutheran High School attended the Friday session.

All three synod presidents agreed that unity in doctrine and practice is a worthy goal, but that much work needs to be done before real unity can be recognized.

By the editor

ELS Historical Society Plans June Meeting

The 2013 annual meeting of the ELS Historical Society will now meet on Synod Sunday beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Sigurd K. Lee Theater in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center. This year, the meeting will feature a play written by seminary student Michael Lilienthal titled *The Oak Trees Still Stand*.

This play depicts a 1919 court case in Worth County, Iowa, that developed when Pastor A.J. Torgerson sided with the minority while most of the Northwood, Iowa, congregation he served voted to join the 1917 merger of Norwegian synods. Pastor Torgerson continued to live in the parsonage. The merger group contested this and the case ended up in court. While the merger group declared, “The majority rules,” Pastor Torgerson argued that they had remained faithful to the doctrine of the Old Synod and had right to the property. Actors portray prominent men and their teachings to inform people about the people, events, and discussions of almost 100 years ago.

The schedule for Synod Sunday is as follows:

3:00 p.m.—Synod Sunday service in Trinity Chapel.

4:15 p.m.—Picnic on the Campus Green.

5:30 p.m.—ELS Historical Society business meeting and presentation of the historical background for the play, Sigurd K. Lee Theater, Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center.

6:30 p.m.—*The Oak Trees Still Stand*, Sigurd K. Lee Theater, Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center.

7:45 p.m.—Intermission, with lemonade and cookies.

8:00 p.m.—Discussion with the playwright, cast, and others.

The Unity of THE Faith

It has been well documented now, how infrequently families dine together; all at one table, all at the same time, all for the same meal. Perhaps they eat at the same time and at the same table but the meal is fast food so everyone in the family is having it *Burger King*-style: **their way**. Perhaps everyone is eating the same cuisine and even at the same time, but one in front of the TV, two others on their phones, and another standing at the counter while cleaning up the dishes. Our intentions are good—having family dinner *together*—but in an effort to cater to each one’s perceived needs, we have forfeited both dinner and its *togetherness*.

The Christian church at large (and Lutheranism is certainly not immune to this) has suffered much in the past half-century or more from similar “best-of-intentions.” God’s Word often likens our weekly Sabbath rest to a family meal. Christian pastors, parents, and grandparents alike would enjoy nothing more at this meal than to have every member of the family from every generation present. Our sin-filled fear, however, is that the food (God’s Word) or its presentation (the liturgy, preaching, and hymns) won’t be able to keep all parties at the table. So the churches have offered as many different ministry menus and serving styles as possible, convinced that our innovations to the menu and presentation will effect unity upon the Church family. The present-day picture of our churches, however, looks very similar to the family dinner table previously mentioned. Even with our best intentions, the Church (yes, us included) has been forfeiting the saving contents of **the faith** *and* the togetherness which that faith (Christian teaching) alone brings.

Dear fellow concerned parents and grandparents, God’s Son lived, suffered, and died, not only to save us

from our calculated and devious sins, but also from our “best-intention” sins as well. And this forgiveness and life is given to the Church—the **whole** Church—boomers and babies, Gen-Xers and the “Great Generation” alike. This forgiveness of sins and eternal life is packaged as a one-size-fits-all in the person and work of Jesus for sinners. This is **the faith**. It’s not grandparent’s faith or youth group’s faith, the working woman’s faith or pastor’s faith. Jesus for sinners is **the faith** “delivered once for all time to God’s holy people” (Jude 3). What a joyous unity that belongs to the Church! God’s forgiveness for sinners in Jesus—that is a meal upon which every sinful soul from **every** generation is meant to dine.

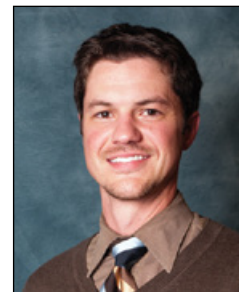


Series Title: *Growing Up into Christ*

This series is produced on behalf of the ELS Board for Youth Outreach. The aim of the series is to invest in the youth of the ELS by building up the households and parents of those youth in the “unity of the faith” (Ephesians 4:13). While there are many cultural chasms between adults and adolescents, the body of Christ (the Church) provides us one marvelous location where post-pubescent teens and parents are meant to be together: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5)—in short, together Growing Up into Christ.

NEXT TIME: “No More Rag Dolls ”

Kyle Madson is a Home Missionary in Weatherford/Hudson Oaks, Texas.



Centennial of *The Lutheran Hymnary*

The Lutheran Hymnary was my grandfather's book. He was born in 1916 right after the *Hymnary* was printed (1913) and just before most of the Norwegian Lutherans in America united to form a new church body. The congregation in Scarville, Iowa, where he was a member, continued to use the 1913 *Hymnary* until the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (1996) was published three years after his death.

Early in the twentieth century, the three major Norwegian Lutheran synods began working toward union, and a joint hymnbook project seemed like a natural step in this direction. The preface of the new hymnbook spelled out the reasons for this collaboration: "The considerations which prompted the creation of the joint committee were, chiefly, the common need of an adequate and satisfactory English hymn book; the fact of a common faith and confession as well as a common inheritance of Lutheran hymnody; the probability of getting a better hymn book through united endeavor than by separate effort; and finally, the desirability of a common hymnary, especially in the event of a union of the Church bodies concerned."

For the first time, many hymns beloved by Norwegian Lutherans were offered in English, such as "Like the Golden Sun Ascending," "Behold a Host, Arrayed in White," and "Built on the Rock." The *Hymnary* also contained the Bugenhagen order of service used for centuries by Norwegians and Danes. Many good translations of German Lutheran hymns were included as well. Because of the time-consuming and difficult task of translation, the hymnbook committee selected numerous English hymns by non-Lutheran authors. Some of these were welcome additions to the Lutheran worship tradition, but others were not retained in later Lutheran hymnbooks because of their weak content.

The congregations of the reorganized Norwegian Synod (now called the ELS) used *The Lutheran Hymnary* until the Synodical Conference produced *The Lutheran Hymnal* in 1941. Some congregations of the ELS adopted this book. Others lamented the absence of the Bugenhagen order of service and the lack of Scandinavian hymns and kept using the 1913 *Hymnary*.

In 1996, the Worship Committee of the ELS produced the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*. This book brought together the best hymns of the Scandinavian and German traditions, while also retaining the liturgies unique to both. Comparing the 1913 *Hymnary* to the 1996 one, 55% of the hymns are the same. Comparing the 1941 *Hymnal* to the 1996 *Hymnary*, almost 70% of the hymns are the same.

My grandfather never saw a copy of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*. But he would have been glad for a book that retained the best of Scandinavian hymnody while also bringing back other good Lutheran hymns that had been lost. For the Christ-centered hymns and liturgy we continue to enjoy, we sing with the Norwegian Lutherans of old: "God be praised for His glad tidings!"

Peter Faugstad is Associate Pastor of Parkland Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Washington.



Drones: God Is Looking

Many people are worried about a growing and unwanted intrusion into their privacy. People have sued Google to remove photos of their property. Many worry about how pictures taken by Google Glass can invade their privacy. Others worry about how much private information can be found on the internet. There are the drones that can photograph outdoor events below and can also use rockets to kill. Information that we may place on Facebook pages can be used to steal our identities or money from a bank.

We live in an Information Age, with access to a mountain of words and photos on almost any subject. But many are concerned about who receives the information and how they can use it to destroy lives and reputations, or steal money.

We should be concerned about access to information that can destroy our reputation or our identity online. God has forbidden anyone from “bearing false witness against his neighbor,” which would include internet trolling, stealing identities, and stealing passwords.

But how would we feel if there was someone who knew everything about us? Someone who knew our darkest secrets, who remembered our hidden sins, who could look into our most vile thoughts? No, it’s not our mother or social websites on the internet. God Himself knows our every thought, word, and deed. David wrote, “For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether” (Psalm 139:4). In another place, “There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13).

If we could read the thoughts of others, it would become an intolerable burden. The mind is a cesspool of evil, as Jesus says, “**Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies**” (Matthew 15:19). How can God deal with knowing all the wickedness and evil thoughts of all people on earth? And being aware of all this filth and corruption, why does God not destroy us all? He would not need any drones to do it.

Only once did God remove all but a few of the human race from the earth. In the days of Noah, “The Lord was very sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man whom I created from the face of the earth, both man and beast’” (Genesis 6:6–7). The humans alive at the time mocked Noah for building the ark—until God sent rain on the earth to flood and destroy everything except what was on the ark.

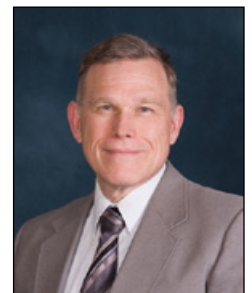
Then God promised never to destroy the earth with a flood. Though God knew that “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Genesis 8:21), God promised to send His Son to be a savior. This Son would deliver mankind from the eternal punishment of sin by taking all sins upon Himself and suffering death on the cross to pay the penalty for sin.

In spite of everything God knows about how wicked we are, God had mercy upon us, gave us His Holy Spirit to create faith in our hearts through Baptism and the Word, enlightened our hearts as we studied His Word of truth, and kept us in the true faith through His Word and Sacraments.

Therefore, with Jeremiah, we should say with astonishment, “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not” (Lamentations 3:22). “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities” (Psalm 103:10). For “with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (Psalm 130:7–8). The redemption God required meant that the Messiah “was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken” (Isaiah 53:8). Because of the Messiah’s work of salvation, David writes, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity” (Psalm 32:1–2).

All of these passages that clearly teach about the wonderful mercy and forgiveness of God are from the Old Testament. When Jesus rose from the dead, He “opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” about all the things that Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms said about Jesus and His work of salvation (Luke 24:44–45).

The Bible also says, “The Lord knows those who are His” (2 Timothy 2:19). God does not need drones to spy on His people. He does not need the internet to get our address or telephone number. Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27). The Bible also states, “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:9).



Theodore Gullixson is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin.

A Dream Comes True in Tacoma, Washington

Evergreen Lutheran High School opened its doors in DuPont, Washington, on September 26, 1978. The dream of establishing an ELS/WELS Lutheran high school in the Pacific Northwest finally became reality for countless families. Their prayers were answered with a leased campus in DuPont. In 1988 the DuPont campus was closed because the City of DuPont sold the property and Evergreen moved to the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (HTLC) campus where it leased space. For the past 25 years Evergreen has resided at the HTLC campus. Currently both the Lutheran grade school and Evergreen have run out of space.

On December 18, 2012, the dream of a new and expanded campus for Evergreen was fulfilled with the purchase of an almost new high school campus in Tacoma, Washington, for \$4.6 million. This purchase brings with it the clear challenge of meeting the financial obligations associated with following through on this decision. Over \$1.2 million has already been committed and that much again is needed to fully stabilize the next phase of occupying the new campus.

God has blessed Evergreen with this purchase. It is centrally located to serve all ELS and WELS Lutheran elementary schools and congregations in the Puget Sound area. The 54,000-square-foot modern facility, built in 2005, has enough space for the high school to expand. The facility increases Evergreen's ability to educate the whole person—academically, spiritually, and physically. The 30-acre campus will have room to provide student housing in the future.

Most importantly, Evergreen will also have the opportunity to improve recruitment of community and international students, many of whom will hear about their Savior Jesus for the very first time. It will draw students internationally from locations including Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and China. Through this program students will hear

God's Word, and the seeds of faith will spring to life.

Here are just a few of the ways our new campus will provide students and their families an unparalleled experience in education and spiritual growth:

- The eleven classrooms will provide sufficient space to relieve crowding and enhance program offerings. The additional facilities will provide opportunities in the arts, technology, and sciences. There will be adequate office space to accommodate school administration, student health facilities, counseling services, and parent conference sessions.
- This campus meets and exceeds our goals by providing dedicated music and theatre rooms. The theatre room is also a multipurpose room that can be used in a variety of ways serving drama club, choir, band, and chapel. The campus has two computer laboratories, two science laboratories, a dedicated arts classroom, and our very first library.
- The new campus will truly provide a high-school-caliber gymnasium and athletic facilities, enhancing athletic opportunities for Evergreen students and ELS and WELS elementary schools. The gymnasium has a remarkable full-size basketball court that can be reconfigured to two full-sized basketball or volleyball courts. It also has fully equipped boys' and girls' locker room facilities. The gym can also be used for any major event that will seat over 1,000 attendees.

Stan Bauer is the Development Director at Evergreen Lutheran High School in Kent, Washington.