

Lutheran Sentinel

A Publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

"Engage Others with Jesus."



It Is Written

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

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From the President

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!”
(Romans 11:33)

Knowing one's limitations is a mark of a scholar. History abounds with smart people. It abounds also with fools preoccupied with *man's* wisdom, not that of the *Heavenly Father*. The day before he died, Dr. Martin Luther, renowned for scholarship even in secular circles, characterized the pittance of human inquiry and understanding compared with divine mystery when he scrawled: “We are beggars; that is true!” (*LW* 54:476).

Luther had in mind the great mysteries of God pertaining to the plan of salvation for us sinful mortals. From what he wrote elsewhere, chief of these mysteries was the blessed **incarnation** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In a 1451 sermon on John 1:1–14, Luther wrote: “Reason stumbles at this article when it tries to measure and comprehend it with its wisdom ... ‘The Word was made flesh.’ Here one must believe, not see, measure, or comprehend.”

No probe of the human mind can ever adequately absorb this deep teaching. God-come-in-the-flesh rocks our bitty brains! But what a beautiful mystery it is to grasp by faith through the Spirit's power as set forth in the revealed Word of God!

We were enslaved in sin. We had no hope. We were doomed as lawbreakers of God's holy will. In His mercy, God carried out a fool-proof plan for our rescue. Not just for the rescue of some but for the rescue of every person who has lived, is now living, or ever will live on this earth. He sent His Son! The Son came to our earth in an astounding and humble way. Conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a lowly virgin, this Baby—fully God and fully man—was brought forth and placed in a manger. This child, who nursed from Mary's breast, was Himself the Maker of the universe!

What good news this is for us! We needed a Savior who would be a fully human substitute so that He could keep in our place the Law that we are unable to fulfill. We needed a perfect replacement who would be able to suffer and die and rise on our behalf and in our stead. We needed a rescuer who would have all holiness and power to be able to save us. This is true Wisdom from heaven: “Christ Jesus ... has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

This Christmas, have a joyful celebration of this profound mystery!



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

"Hail to the Lord's Anointed"

"Of all Montgomery's renderings and imitations of the psalms this is the finest." So commented one authority on this Advent hymn by James Montgomery, based on the seventy-second Psalm. It is felt that he has captured the spirit and "exhibited some of the principal beauties" of the Hebrew poetry itself. Though Montgomery has done so well with it, he revealed in a letter to a friend his humble awe in working with the inspired Word this way, saying that his "hand trembled to touch the harp of Zion." Such an attitude toward the sacred Word has given life and fire to the works of this gifted and consecrated hymnwriter. Let this hymn lead us into the spirit of Advent. We greet the Advent season with a "Hail!"

*Hail to the Lord's anointed,
Great David's greater Son!*

It is a time of joyful expectation. The long promised Deliverer is actually coming. The Christian Church awaits the celebration of the birth of its Deliverer. For when He comes it means the end of oppression and captivity under sin and Satan. It means that help for them is imminent. The work shall be made strong—those who have been sighing over their sins shall be made to sing over their redemption. The darkness of death shall be turned into light of Life. "He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight." (Psalm 72:14)

Sometimes, when speaking of such sublime subjects as this one, the far-reaching impact of the advent of God's Son, poetry succeeds where prose fails. At least, there is vigor and beauty in the Advent scene created by Montgomery:

*He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth,
And joy and hope like flowers,
Spring in His path to birth.*

*Before Him on the mountains
Shall peace, the herald, go
And righteousness, in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.*

The momentum of the Advent season also has a mission undertone, which this hymn brings out so well. It depicts what might well take place in far-off

Arabia, for instance. There a desert ranger dismounts from his beast of burden and bends his knee in worship to the King of Heaven. The dusky native of Ethiopia traverses difficult mountains and desert wastes to see the newborn King. All other kings are insignificant in comparison, for this is "the Lord's Anointed." They, too, shall bow down before Him. The hymn re-echoes the words of the Psalm: "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." (Psalm 72:10-11)

Thus the Advent of this King betokens an overwhelming victory. His foes are to be defeated, His friends are to be eternally blessed. And as this progresses, His kingdom shall increase and His glory become more glorious. The covenant of love that He has made with those who by faith receive Him can never be removed, and for that His name will always be engraved indelibly upon His people.

*The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove;
His name shall stand forever,
That name to us is Love.*

This article, written by the Reverend Paul Madson, is reprinted from the December 1963 issue of the *Lutheran Sentinel*. "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" is hymn 103 in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*.



The Life-Giving Christmas Bread

*I am the living bread that came down from heaven.
If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.
This bread is my flesh,
which I will give
for the life of the world.
(John 6:51)*

Christmas cookies, Christmas candy, and lefse; I am sure we all have our favorite recipes for the Christmas season. The tastes and smells, together with the memories, linger in our minds. Next to the Christmas Eve service and the unwrapping of the gifts, my own particular memory is of all the different homemade Christmas candies. My mother spent the weeks before Christmas making fudge, divinity, Boston cream candy, and a variety of other kinds of candy. On Christmas Eve after the children's Christmas service, we would eat every kind of candy and Christmas goodie imaginable. Christmas candies and cookies might make for wonderful memories, but they really have little to do with the true meaning of Christmas, without the true Christmas bread.

There is a hunger for this bread that goes back a long time. As soon as Adam and Eve fell into sin by eating the forbidden fruit, a hunger and a gnawing began to grow in them. Isaiah speaks of this hunger when he writes, "Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare" (Isaiah 55:2). There is a hunger and a gnawing in each person's heart to have union and fellowship with God, which humanity lost in the fall. Each individual is craving that communion with God, even if he doesn't fully realize for what he is searching. He knows that something is missing in his life. He may try to satisfy himself with wealth. He buys himself and his loved ones everything imaginable, as we see all around us this Christmas season. He may spend his time pampering himself, gorging himself with Christmas goodies, and drinking to oblivion so that he gets the "real" feeling of the season. Still all these things will not satisfy, as Isaiah says, "Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy?" (Isaiah 55:2). These things will not satisfy and they are not the reason for the season.

Yet, there is a bread that can satisfy our every longing and desire. That bread is Jesus Christ, the life-giving Christmas bread born at Bethlehem, which means "house of bread." At the fullness of time the living bread came down from heaven. Almighty God became a man to redeem those under the Law so that He could be for us the bread of life. Through His redemptive work Jesus could indeed say, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).



How then can we eat the Christmas bread prepared for us so long ago in Bethlehem, the house of bread? The Christ Child, the bread of life, is present for us this Christmas season in His life-giving Word and in the Holy Sacrament of His body and blood. Here He is present with all His blessings and is received by a simple trust in Him as the Savior, which is worked through those same means of grace.

By eating this bread we will have true peace and joy this Christmas season, peace on earth, good will to men, as the angels sang. Because we are united to Jesus through Word and Sacrament as the branches are to the vine, we know that He is dwelling in us, never leaving us nor forsaking us (John 15:1-5). With Him on our side we are assured that nothing can be against us (Romans 8:31). We will, indeed, be able to do all things through Him as we strive daily to live a more Christ-like life. Jesus is the true Christmas bread that strengthens us in all the struggles of life and gives us eternal life in heaven. Amen.

Prayer: O Father in heaven, we thank You that You have provided the true Christmas bread, Jesus Christ, at the house of bread, Bethlehem Ephrathah. May we each this Christmas season feed on that bread through the means of grace. Then this Christmas will indeed be joyful, for this is the bread of which a man may eat and not die. In the name of the bread of life we pray. Amen.

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Daily Life Under Christ's Sacraments

The human body is a marvel of God's creative wisdom and power. The body has such strength and resiliency. Yet, without the Lord's preservation and provision, the fragile body would not last much past 40 days without food, 8 days without water, or 4 minutes without oxygen. Our bodies are in need, and our God supplies!

The human soul, in comparison, has none of the qualities of the body, no resiliencies, defenses, strengths. Of itself the human soul is dead, lifeless, helpless in transgressions and sins. The soul is powerless to breathe in the breath of eternal life, and even if it could, it has no power to swat away the lord of the flies (Beelzebub) who wants to take eternal life away.

God does for our souls what our souls can't do for themselves. He gives life to the lifeless and breath to the breathless. He breathes into our feeble souls the holy wind, or breath, of the Gospel of the Christ. To souls spiritually dead, He brings spiritual new birth and life. To souls rotting in sinfulness, He brings the fresh air of God's forgiveness. To souls headed for certain doom, He brings sure salvation. Made alive by the Spirit's application of the Gospel of Jesus, our souls, which have no cardiac muscles nor an actual pulse, now beat with a spiritual heart of flesh, no longer spiritually inanimate like stones. And our souls' measurable spiritual pulse is connected to the lifeblood of the Lamb!

Bodies wear out. Physical hearts stop. The soul, however, by the Spirit, goes on and on, from strength to strength, from life to LIFE. But while we are on this side of heaven, the heartbeat of faith will weaken, arrest, and surely die, if not in a continued connection with Jesus, through the Gospel. So Jesus gave us and souls the gifts of the Font and the Table, the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, for our daily use.

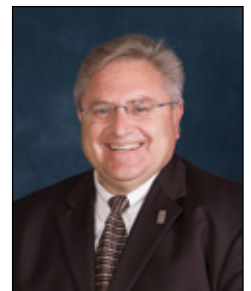
Daily the soul makes use of the sacred waters of Jesus' gift of Baptism through an exercise that our catechism days taught us, that, "[the sinner] in us should by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evils lusts; and that... [the saint in us] daily come[s] forth and arise[s], who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever" (paraphrase, *Small Catechism*, "The Meaning of Baptism"). Those drowning and rising spiritual activities are what Paul taught in Romans 6:4. Because, as Luther observed, "We find out that that original sinner can swim," daily we go back to the Font, daily the sinner is drowned, daily the saint rises with Christ.

And with the Lord's Table Luther taught: "There are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and the world that we often become weary and faint, and sometimes also stumble [Heb 12:3]. Therefore, the Sacrament [of the Altar] is given as a daily pasture and sustenance, that faith may refresh and sustenance, that faith may refresh and strengthen itself [Ps 23:1-3] so that it will not fall back in such a battle, but become ever stronger and stronger" (*Large Catechism*, V, 23-24).

So, daily as we read our Bibles, God speaks to us. Daily His Law shows us our sin, and condemns each of us as sinners. Daily we drown those sins in repentance. Daily His Gospel shows us our Savior, and that His blood and righteousness are our beauty and our glorious dress, are our sure source of forgiveness, comfort, and certainty. Daily we arise with Christ Jesus, alive, as did He on Easter morn. Daily the Law empties us of any self-righteousness and drives to be satiated in our hunger for what the Table offers: the very body and blood of the Perfect Sacrifice, for us ("For you!" the Savior said), given and poured out, in, with, and under the bread and wine. Daily Jesus' words, "In remembrance of me" remind us that He did not die for a faceless humanity, but for each individual, for me. What personalized grace and assurance! Daily that hunger mounts as we look forward to partaking "often." In the *Large Catechism*, Luther advises communing no fewer than four times a year. Because of such a blessed, driving hunger in the soul for the Table that advice is never a maximum but rather a minimum!

A Christian soul cannot go 4 minutes, let alone 8 or 40 days without the power of God unto salvation, the Gospel, found in the Sacraments. Spirit-given faith is never static. It is either decreases or it increases. A daily connection to the Sacraments prevents the former and produces the latter, with effectiveness to live in righteousness and purity today and in the endless day!

David Russow is pastor of Redeeming Grace Lutheran Church in Rogers, Minnesota.



Drawing Close to God: By Law or by Gospel?

Three women sat in the corner of the coffee shop, talking about holiday plans, sharing, supporting.

Alice, the youngest of the three, was still a newlywed. **Beth** had celebrated her 10th anniversary last summer, while **Claire** and her husband were fast approaching 30 years.

Alice: This big Thanksgiving meal scares me to death!

Beth: Why? It's just another meal.

Alice: There's so much to do, and I want it all to go right. What if the turkey is dry? What if the mashed potatoes are lumpy? I don't even know how to make green bean casserole. What if I mess this up? What if Alan is sitting across the table wondering if the whole marriage was a mistake?

Beth: If he's not grateful for all the time you put in, the next time you serve him mac-and-cheese! That's how I handle Bob. I make sure he knows everything I do. Husbands might forget, or they just might not notice. I say that our men need to be reminded of how lucky they are!

Alice: Claire, what do you think?

Claire: Honey, was "a perfect Thanksgiving dinner" part of your wedding vows to Alan?

Alice: No, of course not. Why?

Claire: What did Alan say? Not what do you think he might have meant, or what are you afraid of; what did he say?

Alice: He promised he'd love, honor, comfort, cherish ... sickness and health ... for better and for worse ... till death parts us. Why?

Claire: Then believe him. Take him at his word. No one forced him to marry you. Trust that he really meant all those things apart from a perfect Thanksgiving dinner. Do your best; look for recipes, ask advice, borrow stuff, but don't make the mistake of mingling your cooking next Thursday with his love for you.

In these friends we see two approaches toward marriage:

- At first Beth sounds like the complete opposite of Alice, but take away Alice's fear and replace it with pride, and she is Beth. Both of these women have mingled the unconditional vows of their marriages with their daily

behavior. Alice lives in uncertainty, unsure of her husband's love. Beth lives in defiance and arrogance, convinced that she has earned her husband's love. Neither attitude is what marriage really is.

- In contrast, Claire believes the promises that were freely made to her, promises that have nothing to do with how well she can prepare a turkey.

How do you approach God? The natural way is the way of works, the way of behavior. Like Alice, this approach might manifest itself as fear and constant worry that you haven't done enough to have God love you. Scripture answers that fear very simply: you haven't. Like Beth, this approach shows itself in pride, mistakenly thinking that you have been good enough, devout enough, sincere enough to have God love you. Again, you haven't.

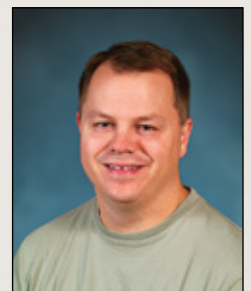
The natural approach is the approach of the Law, but whether we are afraid that we haven't done enough or confident that we have, the truth is we haven't. Another word for this is "ourselves," and that is no way to approach God.

Claire's attitude is what Christian marriage really is, and Claire's attitude is what the Christian faith really is: Trust in God's promise, have faith in the words He has said, believe that He means exactly what He says.

Your God has made you promises—promises confirmed in your Savior. "For all the promises of God find their 'yes' in [Christ]" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

This is the path of life; living, loving, and even cooking Thanksgiving dinners, confident of God's love for us.

Tony Pittenger is pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church in Port Orchard, Washington.





On the Synodical Scene...

Church Building Improvements at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Indianola, Iowa

The exterior of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church building recently underwent a renovation. Before (right) and after (left) pictures first show the church building without its steeple, in the process of having its old siding removed, then the finished project with new siding, new windows, and a steeple. Also pictured is one of Good Shepherd's elders, Robert Goodrich, who helped lead the congregation through the renovation. The congregation thanks the Lord for His blessing of a place to worship that is now even more beautiful. Good Shepherd is located in Indianola, about ten miles south of Des Moines, Iowa. Indianola is a city of about 15,000 people. The congregation began in 1999 and has fifty-three members.



ELS Women's Mission Society, Southern Minnesota Region

The Southern Minnesota ELS Women's Missionary Society Rally was held on Saturday, October 26, 2013, at Bethany Lutheran Church in Luverne, Minnesota. Pastor Andrew Palmquist opening the meeting with a devotion and the program followed. Nick and Kerry Laper, administrators for Gift of Life, spoke about their work with pregnancy and life centers and the medical clinic on wheels in the country of Ukraine. The Rev. Paul Fries, ELS Communication Director, gave an overview of the seven foreign mission fields of the ELS, and Prof. Mike Smith spoke about our ELS mission work in the United States. Entertainment and a delicious meal were provided by the Bethany Lutheran Ladies Aid, and a history of the congregation was presented by Dorothy Goeske. Over \$10,000.00 in offerings were collected by the group and distributed to missions and to Cross-stitch.



(Above) Rally attendees at Bethany Lutheran Church. (Right) Nick and Kerry Laper.



ELS Women's Mission Society, Pacific Northwest Region

Eighty people attended the 36th annual ELS Women's Mission Rally hosted by Parkland Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Washington. The rally theme was "Engaging Others with Jesus."

The Rev. Randy Van Mehren spoke to the GEM (Greet, Encourage, Meet) meeting about Grace Lutheran Church, an ELS mission congregation in Redmond, Oregon. The revised constitution was also discussed. The Rally was opened by the Rev. Peter Faugstad leading the group with the Office of Prime. He spoke about the meaning of eating and drinking to the glory of God and how to put our faith into practice, concluding by the group singing, "All Glory Be to God on High."

The Rev. Glenn Obenberger welcomed attendees to Parkland, explaining that Parkland Lutheran Church was the first ELS church in the Northwest.

Society President Kay Kassulke opened the morning business meeting with a quotation from Dr. Martin Luther: "Believe in Christ and do whatever needs to be done in your profession."

The Rally members voted to have the History (quilt) banner stay with this year's host congregation, and the Logo banner, along with the scrapbooks, go to the next host congregation.

Election of officers was held. Jan Sparley (Grants Pass, OR) was re-elected Vice President, Kathy Ronholt (Port Orchard, WA) was elected Treasurer, and Brenda Muehlenhardt (Klamath Falls, OR) was elected Christian Growth Chairman. They will serve with current President Kay Kassulke (Medford, OR) and Secretary Cindy Black (Myrtle Creek, OR).

Next, the Rev. Glenn Obenberger talked about evangelism, speaking about the courage it takes to step outside our culture (and our comfort zone) and to reach others with Jesus. God will bring people into our lives with whom we can share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Dennis Behr from Oregon, Wisconsin, spoke about engaging veterans with Jesus. The Rev. Steve Petersen showed slides about our foreign missions and gave a mission update.

During the afternoon business meeting, Grace Lutheran Church of Redmond, Oregon, and Resurrection Lutheran Church, North Bend, Oregon, were chosen as our 2014 mite offering recipients.

The Rev. Daniel Basel, the ELS Giving Counselor, spoke about "giving options" for spreading the Gospel. Kathy Kahler, the outgoing Christian Growth Chairman, spoke about getting to know Jesus and why we believe our Redeemer lives.



(Left to Right): Mission Society Officers Barbara Cogswell, historian; Kathy Ronholt, treasurer; Cindy Black, secretary; Kay Kassulke, president; and Jan Sparley, vice president.

The Rev. Alex Ring closed the Rally with the singing of hymns. Before leaving, the attendees were invited to tour Evergreen Lutheran High School's new campus.

The next Pacific Northwest Mission Rally will be on September 27, 2014, at Christ Lutheran Church in Klamath Falls, Oregon. The theme will be "We Share God's Gift of Life!"

Submitted by Barbara A. Cogswell

Pastor, I Have a Question...

Question: *Didn't Jesus have to ascend into heaven on Good Friday to keep His promise to the thief, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise?"*

Answer: Jesus promised the repentant thief that they would be together in Paradise that day. Then, Jesus died: "And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last" (Luke 23:46). After Pilate determined Jesus was dead, he gave Jesus' body to Joseph of Arimathea for burial. His body went to the grave, awaiting the resurrection on the third day, while His soul went to His heavenly Father. The repentant thief did not join Jesus in that grave, but his soul also entered heaven.

On the third day, Jesus' body was vivified. His spirit returned to His body. He appeared—body and soul—to His people on earth. Luke reports Jesus' ascension: "The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He **was taken up**, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during **forty days** and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:1–3, emphasis added). Forty days after Easter, with body and soul Jesus returned to the right hand of the Father in heaven.

The Bible teaches that death is a separation. There are three types of death: spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

When God sculpted man from the dust of the earth, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Adam became a living man. The Hebrew word for "breath" is variously translated as "the Holy Spirit," "wind," "spirit," and "soul." To animate His principal creation, God gave humans a soul. We have both a body and a soul.

God commanded the first couple not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil under penalty of death. When they disobeyed God, Adam and Eve did not die physically (temporal death), but they died spiritually. Because of their sinful nature, they—body and soul—were separated from God (read Romans 5:12 and Ephesians 2:1–5). All people have inherited their spiritual death.

Because of our inherent sin, we will die physically (Romans 6:23). Physical death is the separation of body from the soul: the body goes into the grave, and the soul goes to its eternal reward.

If we die physically while we are spiritually dead (being separated from God because of unrepentant sin) we will suffer eternal death. This is hell—separated from God for eternity.

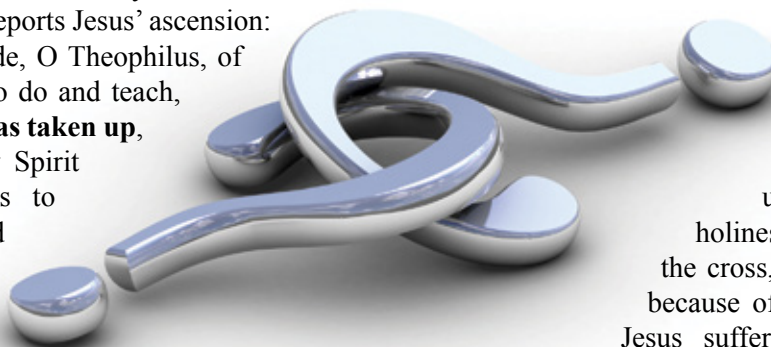
If we die physically, having been made alive by God through faith in Jesus, our soul will go to be with the ascended Jesus in Paradise.

Jesus was born truly human, and He is always true God. He was born with a body and a soul. By living a perfect life for us, Jesus provided the only holiness that avails before God. On the cross, Jesus paid our debt to God because of our sin. As our Substitute, Jesus suffered eternal death—the hell that we earned (Mark 15:34). When He died

physically (John 19:30), His soul went to Paradise, and His body was buried in a borrowed grave. The thief also died; his body was buried, and his soul was translated to Paradise with Jesus, just as He promised.

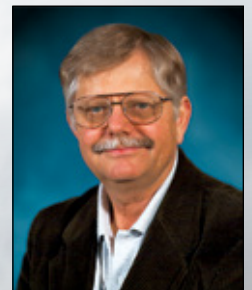
We have that promise also: When we die in the faith, our souls go to be with Jesus. Then on the day of resurrection, Jesus will reunite our souls and bodies so that we might live with Him forever in heaven.

Jesus ascended into heaven forty days after Easter and not on Good Friday. He removed His visible presence from His disciples. He will return at the consummation of all things.



Send your questions to:

Pastor Charles Keeler
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Winter Haven, FL 33884



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

2013 Reformation Lectures

The forty-sixth annual Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures were held at the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center, Mankato, Minnesota, on October 31–November 1, 2013. These lectures are sponsored jointly by Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

This year there were two presenters. The first lecture was given by Prof. Mark Harstad of Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. Prof. Harstad grew up in Watertown, Wisconsin, where his father served as chaplain at Bethesda Lutheran Home. He is a graduate of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin (1970), and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (1974). He served congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) in Madison, Wisconsin, and Brewster (Cape Cod), Massachusetts. Professor Harstad holds the M.A. degree in Hebrew and Semitic Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison (1974) and completed the course work for a doctorate in the same field. He has taught courses at the college and seminary levels in History, Biblical Hebrew, and Religious Studies, specializing in Old Testament studies. He has also made six trips to Latvia where he conducted lecture programs on Confessional Lutheranism, teaching exegetical courses in the School of Theology at the University of Latvia and courses in Biblical Hebrew at the Augsburg Institute in Riga. Over the years he has served on various boards and committees of the ELS including the Doctrine Committee and the Catechism Review Committee. He currently serves on the board of the ELS Historical Society, and the ELS Centennial Committee. Prof. Harstad and his wife of 39 years, Peggy, are blessed with four children.

The second presenter was the Rev. Dr. Harold Senkbeil. Harold Senkbeil was born in Ortonville, Minnesota, in 1945 to Harold and Enid Senkbeil and raised on the family farm near Bellingham. He received an A.A. from Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota (1965), a B.A. from Concordia Sr. College in Ft. Wayne, Indiana (1967), a B.D. from Concordia Seminary in Springfield, Illinois (1971), and a Masters of Divinity (1978) and S.T.M. (1986) from Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana. He was honored with the *Servus Ecclesiae Christi* award (CTS, 1988) and

received the Doctor of Divinity, *Honoris Causa* from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri (2001). While in the pastoral ministry, the Rev. Senkbeil served parishes in Mahnommen and Morris, Minnesota, Madison and Elm Grove, Wisconsin, and Ft. Wayne, Indiana. His academic service includes a variety of positions at each of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) seminaries in St. Louis and Ft. Wayne. He currently serves as the Executive Director for Spiritual Care for DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel. Following his 31 years as a parish pastor, he served as Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana (2002–2008). He has served the LCMS in a number of capacities, including the South Wisconsin

District Board of Directors (1989–1997), the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (1998–2002), and the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis Board of Regents (2011–present). Pastor Senkbeil is the author of several books, such as *Sanctification: Christ in Action* (NWPB, 1989), *Dying to Live: The Power of Forgiveness* (CPH, 1994), and several others. He and his wife Jane were married in 1971, and are blessed with three children and three grandchildren

The theme of the lectures was “Confessional Lutheranism’s Answers to the Challenges of Modern Society.” The first lecture, given by Prof. Harstad, was titled “The Christian’s Vocation in the Three Estates: Family, Church, and Society.” The second lecture, presented by Dr. Senkbeil, was titled “The Christian Faces Contemporary Challenges.”

The Reformation Lectures were a study of the three estates and their relationships with modern society. In the Reformation Luther provided structure for social life by using the three estates originating in the Middle Ages: those who provide nourishment (*Nährstand*), those who ensure order (*Wehrstand*), and those who teach God’s Word (*Lehrstand*). Luther indicated that people have responsibilities in all three estates. Understanding one’s duty in each of these estates will help one meet the challenges of modern society.

The complete lectures will be published in the March 2014 issue of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*.



(Left to Right): The Rev. Donald Moldstad, Prof. Mark Harstad, the Rev. Dr. Harold Senkbeil, Pres. Gaylin Schmeling.

Koreans Learning God's Word at Holy Cross Lutheran School

The 2013–14 school year is already underway at Holy Cross Lutheran School on Milwaukee Street in Madison, Wisconsin. When the doors opened on August 21, teachers and students were excited to welcome some very special guests—five students from South Korea.

These students came to the United States through two different programs. **Albert**, 4th grade, is a student through Privileged Schools of America (PSA), a Madison-based organization founded in June 2012. According to the operations manager, Skyler Vadner, PSA gives international students an opportunity to see American culture, expand their English skills, and broaden their horizons by experiencing a variety of American activities. Children in this program are housed as a group in a home run by PSA in Madison.

The other four students, **Jaewon**, 1st grade; **Seo-Jin**, 2nd grade; **Teddy**, 3rd grade; and **Daniel**, 3rd grade, are living in Madison with a family of Korean descent—the David Jung family of Cottage Grove. David, his wife, Katie, and their four sons are Christians, and they spent a year living in South Korea and using the English language as a tool in ministering to children of low-income families. When they returned to America, they decided to host Korean students in their home so they could learn English and learn about Christianity while experiencing a taste of American childhood.

These five students are not the first foreign students that Holy Cross has had the privilege to educate. Last winter, PSA enrolled four of their very first Korean students at Holy Cross; the school also hosted students from South Korea in 2007, and a group from the Czech Republic in 2004. Holy Cross Principal Tim Schubkegel said, “We feel that hosting students from other countries is a great opportunity to open our students’ eyes to a culture from another part of the world. It lets them experience first-hand that children from other nations with different backgrounds have many similarities, abilities, and aspirations as they do.”

Even though there are many similarities between American and Korean children, David Jung said the approach to educating children can be markedly different. “In Korea, everything revolves around studying,” he said. “They have their fun, but not in the same way we do here in America. There is a lot of competition and pressure.”

Jung and Vadner hope that the interactions the students have with their new classmates can help them experience how life and

learning can be fun. “As a new company focused on education, it was very important who PSA partnered with,” said Vadner. “When we met Principal Schubkegel and the teachers, we heard their excitement for learning and teaching students from different cultures. We knew our students would receive a great education as well as opportunities to participate in sports and other awesome events I don’t believe we would get at a bigger school.”

Last year, a 7th grader from Holy Cross, Luke DePrey of Sun Prairie, became good friends with Colin, a Korean student through PSA. Luke’s mother, Beth, said he would come home from school almost every day with stories about Colin. “He also started taking an interest in the Korean language and enjoyed getting help from Colin with specific words and phrases,” she said.

“I never thought that he would be interested in learning Korean, so as parents this was fun to watch.” The DePrey family also hosted Colin and another PSA student at their home for a spaghetti dinner and later went to the PSA dorm house for an authentic Korean dinner.

“Having a foreign exchange student was really fun,” said Luke. “He became good friends with most of the class, and some of my classmates and I still keep in touch with him through Skype.”

Albert will be at Holy Cross through the beginning of October, and the other four will stay through the middle of September. Both programs, however, plan to have more students come to Madison later in the school year and enroll at Holy Cross. “We want to provide the best possible environment for these children,” said Jung. “They and their

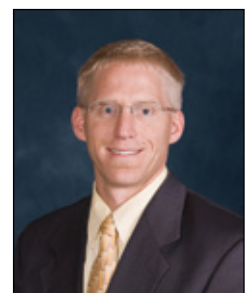
parents are so hungry for the English language—if they learn it in a Christian environment, all the better!”

Vadner agrees: “The principles that are the backbone of a Holy Cross education are very important to us,” he said. “We see them through the character of students and families that we’ve come into contact with. It’s been an awesome experience working with this school.”



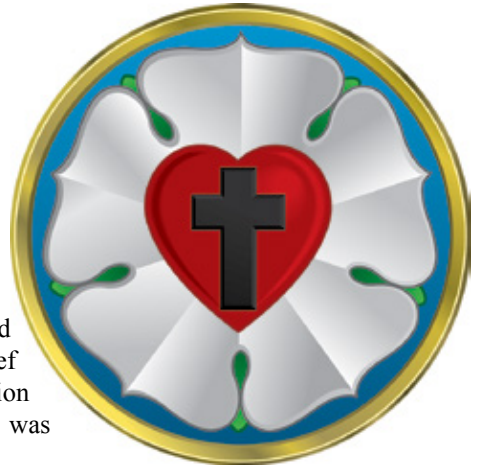
(Front Row, L to R): Jaewon Seo (Albert), Jae-Won Lim, Seo-Jin Kim, Yea-Chan Ko (Daniel), and Tak-Su Lee (Teddy). (Back Row, L to R): Beth Krause (5th–6th grade teacher), Principal Tim Schubkegel, Linda Marozick (1st–2nd grade teacher), and Camilla Dashcund (3rd grade teacher)

Bernt Tweit is co-pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin.



Laying the Foundation

Martin Luther—1513



When an emergency called a pastor away, a layman was asked to conduct the Bible class that gathered the next morning. Later he told his pastor that he had never studied the Bible as intensely as he had that evening. Teachers understand the rigors required for planning their lessons.

Martin Luther had received the title Doctor of Theology and was now considered a teacher of the church by the religious authorities of his day. He now occupied an influential position in the organized church within Saxony, a strategically important territory of the Holy Roman Empire, governed by Frederick the Wise. He was given an office in an upper story of Wittenberg's Black Cloister, overlooking the Elbe River. As had been his custom as a monk, he threw himself into his new duties with uncommon vigor.

Luther began his Biblical instruction at the university with lectures on the Psalms in July or August 1513. He wrote marginal notes on the sides of the text. Existing notes reveal that at the outset he treated the text according to the common method of interpretation practiced in medieval times, which made use of a confusing fourfold understanding. This included the literal meaning and three additional layers or applications of the text. An example of this is found in his lecture on Psalm 69:1–3: "The first three verses are understood in a fourfold way. First, literally about the suffering Christ. Second, about the holy martyrs, His members, following His example, and suffering similarly in the flesh ... Third, in a tropological way, namely, that the Christian acknowledge himself to be in sins and miseries ... Fourth, it is a prophecy concerning the misery of the church which it appears to be experiencing in our times." However, in his printed preface to the Biblical text (after citing Moses, Zechariah, Peter, and Paul) Luther clearly states: "From these we draw the following guideline for this dark, yet holy labyrinth: Every prophecy and every prophet must be understood as referring to Christ the Lord, except where it is clear from the plain words that someone else is spoken of. For thus He Himself says; 'Search the Scriptures ... and it is they that bear witness to Me' (John 5:39)." This overarching principle was stated clearly as the foundation for understanding the Bible and arose out of the inspired text itself.

Luther concluded his first series of lectures on the Psalms in 1515. In 1515–1516, he gave his first lectures on Romans. These early lectures reflected the fourfold method of interpretation that had characterized the Roman Church for centuries. Then in 1516–1517, he delivered his first lectures on Galatians. It is clear from the written notes taken by students during these lectures that Luther had abandoned the traditional fourfold interpretation of Scriptures and replaced it with the contextual, literal meaning and the fact that Christ is the self-identified subject of the entire Bible (The Grammatical–Historical–Christological Interpretation). With this transition, the cloud of pagan, philosophical, and medieval

elements, which had obscured the chief teaching of justification by faith alone, was burned away.

The new principles of interpretation that Luther employed in his dogged study of the text soon revealed the true light and power of the Gospel. This led to what is called his "Tower Discovery," where he clearly understood "the righteousness of faith" as God's gift, distinct from the righteousness of works. In his *Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings* of 1545, Luther himself refers to the discovery in 1518 as having taken place in his study at a time when he was engaged with his second series of lectures on the Psalms. Some scholars have placed it within the 1518–1519 time frame. Others have dated the "Tower Discovery" to as early as his first lectures on the Psalms (1513–1515). These first lectures on the Psalms, for instance Psalm 36:6 and 71:19, seemingly corroborate this early date despite the fact that Luther's recollection of the full clarity of the revelation and his methodology indicates a slightly later date. Although the precise date is difficult to ascertain, it must be said that once Luther began to employ the method of interpretation presented by the Bible itself his tower experience was inevitable, as well as its aftermath, which took shape in the Reformation. One followed the other as surely as the full light of the sun follows the dawn. The study of the Bible was moving back to its ancient foundation.

In our times, a fog of popular human philosophies and assumptions hostile to the plain reading of the Scriptures has returned to lectures, writings, the media, and our own temptations. The church and the Christian need to guard against these philosophies and assumptions.

Give thanks to God that the light of the Gospel still shines brightly among us, for with it the Spirit is given and by it alone the church and the Christian are drawn to heaven. Not even the gates of hell can prevail against it. Give thanks also that we can read a good translation of the Bible and understand the plain meaning of Paul's letters to the Romans and the Galatians and teach our children as Luther taught his students. The teachers and students of the true church all rest and have always rested in the same truth and shine with the hope that is in them.

Thomas E. Smuda is pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Deshler, Ohio.



Hope in the Christ-Child

Nihilism—a philosophy of skepticism that holds that all values are baseless and that nothing can be known or communicated. Nihilism repudiates commonly held theories of morality or religious belief. By their insistence that moral and religious ideas apply only to oneself, postmoderns represent a form of nihilism. With such a philosophy, people are majoring in deconstruction of many values that once were held dear and true.

The stepchild of nihilism is hedonism, the idea that the value of a good life is a devotion to pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The modern entertainment industry promotes this philosophy as young stars outdo each other to shock the senses with outlandish clothes, filthy words in their songs, and unconventional lifestyles. Rejecting God's values, people on television and the internet have been advocating for pedophilia, pornography, illegal drug use, adultery, incest, and abortion. There is no shame anymore.

But what do nihilism and hedonism produce? Their stepchild is despair. For whatever fun and good feelings the world may give, it eventually takes them away and replaces them with emptiness, hopelessness, ill health, bitterness, anger, and despair. And the grandchild of despair is a negative culture that influences people of all ages to join gangs, engage in gambling, abuse alcohol and drugs, and abuse others. These destructive behaviors bring even more misery into the lives of the people who engage in them. Nihilism, hedonism, despair, and hopelessness do not help people have a merry Christmas.

Jesus entered this world at a time of despair and moral laxity. The Jews had mostly given up on the idea that the Messiah would come, the pagan Greeks had abandoned their ancient gods for other philosophies, and the Romans increasingly pursued the hedonistic life within their empire.

Though descended from mighty kings of Judah, Jesus was born into poverty in a stable. He was born to bring a positive message to a world filled with sin, despair, and

death. He was born to give hope to all people who are burdened with the results of sin and the prospect of death. He was born to establish peace with God and to give eternal life to those who believe in His work of salvation.

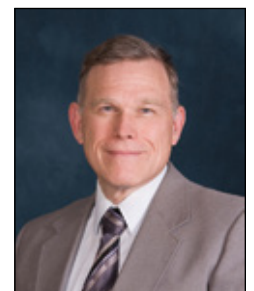
Now Jesus was not born to be a rebel who rejected God's Law. He came to establish the Law by keeping it perfectly for all people. Jesus was not born just to make our earthly lives better. He said that His coming would bring persecution and trouble from the world upon those who believe on Him. Jesus was not born just to entertain us or give us pleasure. Indeed, St. Paul wrote that he rejoiced in adversity because of the spiritual blessings God gave him through faith. Jesus did

not come just so that we could learn to be self-sufficient. He was born so that we would humbly admit our constant dependence on God for all things temporal and spiritual.

Jesus' birth gives us true hope for real happiness—both in this life as we rejoice in God's forgiveness and in heaven as we glorify Christ's name with the choirs of angels. Happiness in Jesus' birth and salvation is the principal reason why Christmas hymns, songs, and carols are so joyous. These hymns celebrate the wonderful grace of God in sending His Son to be our

Savior from sin and death.

The Christmas season gives us Christians an opportunity to show forth our joy in the hope that the Christ-child gives us through His life, death, and resurrection. Amid the nihilism, despair and hopelessness of people living in the world, Jesus' birth proclaims God's will to provide salvation for all people and His promise to give believers in Jesus the joy and peace of heaven.



Theodore Gullixson is an ELS pastor emeritus living in Mankato, Minnesota.

Bethany Lutheran College

National Auxiliary Day 2013

The Bethany Lutheran College (BLC) Women's National Auxiliary met on Monday, September 23, 2013, on the BLC campus. Nearly 60 friends of the College enjoyed a day filled with musical performances, informational presentations, and enjoyable fellowship.

A special chapel service featuring the music of the Bethany Concert Choir started the day. After chapel, Bethany Student Senate President William Soule brought greetings from the student body to the group. Soule is a junior at BLC and is a member of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) congregation in Princeton, Minnesota.

BLC Athletic Director Don Westphal spoke to the group about the role of athletics at Bethany. ELS President John Moldstad and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary President Gaylin Schmeling also spoke to the group.

After lunch in the College Dining Center, current Bethany students and the Mary Martha Singers treated the group to musical performances. The group also heard from BLC President Dan Bruss. Auxiliary President Joy Struck conducted a business meeting. Joy is from the ELS parish in Norseland, Minnesota.

Officers were also elected:

- President – Lois Johnson
- Vice President – Carol Petersen
- Treasurer – Becky DeGarmeaux
- Secretary – Cheryl Harstad

What a blessing the BLC Women's Auxiliary has been for so many years. This group that originally spent hours on the campus prior to each year's opening to paint and varnish has been one of Bethany's most consistently supportive groups. The Auxiliary has helped purchase many items through the years including:

- Choir robes
- Furniture
- Kitchen items
- Production studio items
- Theater items
- Art department supplies
- Black box theatre renovation
- Funding of the Dorothy Theiste Auxiliary Scholarship Fund



Photo by David Norris

The National Auxiliary membership have supported special projects and scholarships at Bethany for over 80 years, and they again voted to assist the college with \$12,500 for projects during the upcoming year. Without the generous support of the Auxiliary, so many projects would go unfunded. Bethany Lutheran College is grateful for all the Auxiliary does to make the College a truly special place.

Steady Enrollment for Fall 2013 at BLC

Bethany's enrollment numbers for fall 2013 have been released. Bethany's official enrollment numbers reported after the 10th class day were as follows:

Enrollment:	<i>Full-time Students</i>
Freshmen	211
Sophomores	130
Juniors	124
Seniors	111
TOTAL	576

Students who are members of ELS churches make up nearly 16% of the Bethany student body (92 students). What a tremendous blessing it is to have such a large number of ELS students attending BLC! Other Lutheran church bodies are also well represented at Bethany. Students from WELS congregations number 126 (22%) and LCMS students number 103 (18%). It is interesting to note that while most Bethany students come from the Upper Midwest, students also come from 28 states and 9 foreign countries.

Lance Schwartz is director of Institutional Communication at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota.

Make Your Life the Best Ever!

“Best Night Ever!” In the midst of slow-motion scenes of silent jumping, laughing, and smiling in the TV commercial, with lively music in the background, these three words flashed across the screen to capture our attention as viewers and lure us to gamble at their casino! Who wouldn’t want the best night ever? Who wouldn’t want to be a winner? Couldn’t it happen to us?

However, should we Christians go? Is winning at a casino really the best for us? Is there more to winning than just easy money? What might happen to us if we win a lot of money? And couldn’t we just as easily lose it all?

As a retired Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) pastor of 40 years and a compulsive gambling counselor at a large hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for over a decade, I have some insights that a lot of people don’t know concerning what is called “the hidden addiction.”

The apostle Paul left us a thought that we can readily apply to gambling: “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).

Is repeated gambling at a casino, or horse track, or poker table, or pull tabs at a bar (where we may be drinking alcohol and picking up another addiction), or gambling online really being done to the glory of God? Or is it done more so for our own glory and for our own pleasure and benefit? Couldn’t we better spend our time with our families, or at our jobs, or engaging in healthier activities? Are there better ways to make use of our money, such as paying the mortgage, rent, bills, and automobile expenses, buying food and clothing, giving to the Lord, etc.?

I have counseled a lot of people who had the worst night at a casino. They have spent 5, 10, 15, 20, or more years ever chasing false hopes, buying the lie, losing their value of money and their good decision making! Some people gamble to escape life or relieve boredom. They do not realize how self-destructive gambling can be to one’s relationships, job, character, ethics, faith, financial stability, purpose of life, self-esteem, and will to live! Why would someone choose a behavior that, in order to sustain it, they have to become compulsive liars and lose the trust of everyone?

Might we step back even before all the problem gambling and its dire consequences get rolling and apply further words of the apostle Paul to our lives? “Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me—but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Since a random big win on our part does not indicate our skill or good luck (there isn’t such a thing), and since denial and naiveté are so intertwined, are we perhaps putting ourselves in harm’s way? A big win or a “best night ever” can tempt us so much that we don’t use good judgment and may not see the train of addiction barreling down the tracks to run us over! Because pathological gambling can develop in anyone, we may be better off not taking the risk and using our time, talents, and financial resources in ways that clearly thank and honor the name of Jesus!

Words from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are worth considering: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day will have enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:33–34).

Jesus tells us that when we have Him and the salvation He earned for us on the cross as our first priority, He will give us what we really need in our lives, such as peace with God, our daily necessities, and security. Making use regularly of the Gospel in the Word and Sacraments and serving Him in our lives, churches, and communities will make us available for Him, rather than gambling, to bless and keep us! If we should find ourselves or our loved ones slipping into trouble with gambling, there is help available through professionally trained gambling counselors (1-800-333-HOPE) and the support group Gamblers Anonymous (GA). Make your life the best ever—in Jesus!

David E. Koeplin is a WELS pastor emeritus and is the program manager and main counselor at the intensive evening outpatient Gambling Treatment Program at a large university hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is a member of Heritage Lutheran Church (ELS), Apple Valley, Minnesota.