

May–June 2014

Lutheran Sentinel

A Publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

"Engage Others with Jesus."



Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust. Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. (Psalm 143:8)

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From the President

Dear members and friends of our ELS:

Can you imagine three thousand people at your birthday celebration? Pentecost—“the birthday of the New Testament church”—saw about three thousand added to the number of Jesus’ followers on that great day when Peter preached his powerful Law/Gospel sermon and holy Baptism was administered. The Holy Spirit was vigorously at work!

The Holy Spirit is *still* vigorously at work. The age of the apostolic miracles is past, but the age of the Spirit’s working quietly through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments is still with us. It will be so right up to the final Day of Judgment.

Besides bringing lost souls to faith in Christ for forgiveness and the assurance of heaven, the Spirit energizes those whom He has converted with a longing for sanctified living. Our ELS catechism puts it this way: “He through the Gospel makes me a new and holy creature of God with the new spiritual life of faith and the desire and strength for that which is good” (*ELS Catechism*, 2001 edition, p. 146).

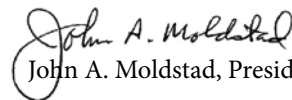
The Holy Spirit alone is the guide who leads us and moves us to produce the impeccable fruit of the Spirit: “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22–24). To be involved in the *good* areas of living means hating and avoiding what is *evil*. That is why Dr. Martin Luther once described the entire spectrum of a believer’s lifespan as nothing but a “beginning of a blessed dying, from baptism to the grave.”

If you have ever toured a large manufacturing plant where many different employees are conducting guided tours at the same time, you know how confusing the situation can become at various points along the way. If you are not listening carefully to the guide you began the tour with, you may easily slip—almost unknowingly—into another group listening to another guide.

Temptations abound for us to follow a demonic guide. We need to stay close and listen to the *true* Guide—the Holy Spirit! Take in His words. Eat at His Table. Associate regularly with others who are eager to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit. The more we absorb the love of our Savior Jesus, the more we will want to walk in the right direction on our tour through life.

Birthday gifts often get shelved over time. The gifts of God the Holy Ghost—the fruit(s) of Spirit—are birthday gifts to enjoy every moment of every living day.

Happy birthday, Christian Church! Let’s celebrate our new life in Christ!


John A. Moldstad, President of the ELS



GOD PROVIDES GOVERNMENT TO PRESERVE ORDER, PEACE, AND LIFE

What would life be like in a world without government? Some might say, “It would be great to be free of taxes, government regulations, etc.” In some countries, citizens long for freedom from cruel dictators. But others might point out that without government, we would not enjoy the freedoms we do have. We would be left to fend for ourselves against crime and injustice.

We get a glimpse of what life might be like without government in the pre-Flood world. “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth” and “The earth was filled with violence” (Genesis 6:5,11). We can picture a world full of Cains slaying their brothers, and Lamechs boasting of revenge seventy times that of Cain, with no one to avenge innocent blood (Genesis 4:8–10, 23–24). The Flood was not to cure the world of sin, but God did demonstrate His justice as Ruler over all. After the Flood, God told Noah: “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image” (Genesis 9:6). Thus, God provided for protection of innocent life through a system of government law and order.

God’s timeless institution is repeated in the New Testament. St. Paul wrote: “There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” (Romans 13:1). God appoints each governing authority with the intention that it should be “God’s servant for your good” (Romans 13:4)—promoting order, peace, and life. In a sinful world, government remains necessary to curb outward evil, at least to some extent, for the protection of life. To this end, the one in authority “does not bear the sword in vain” (Romans 13:4)—referring to government’s God-given duty to protect the innocent, by administering justice to evildoers as well as fighting in just wars.

God instituted government for our good, but it often happens that authorities in office sin against their God-given vocation. Rulers do not always promote the good and punish the bad. Human laws do not always agree with God’s higher moral law—for example, protecting God-given life in the womb and marriage between one man and one woman. Sometimes government persecutes the Church. Yet, Christians are to be subject to governing authorities “for the sake of conscience” (Romans 13:1, 5; see 1 Peter

2:13–14), acknowledging God’s authority over all. If government happens to command disobedience against God’s will, St. Peter says, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Scripture encourages us to pray for good government. When we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” as Luther’s *Small Catechism* explains, this includes “everything needed for this life, such as ... faithful servants and rulers, good government ... peace ... order ... and the like.” What good

would all the daily bread and necessities of life do unless God also provided good government, peace, and order that allow us to enjoy them?

But above all, God’s Word teaches us to pray for government, not merely for earthly life and peace, but that His Gospel of eternal life and peace in Christ may be proclaimed freely. St. Paul brings these thoughts together as he urges our prayers “for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God

our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:2–4). We pray “Thy kingdom come” with the desire “that Your Word, as becomes it, may not be bound, but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ’s holy people” (Collect for the Church, *ELH*, p. 86).

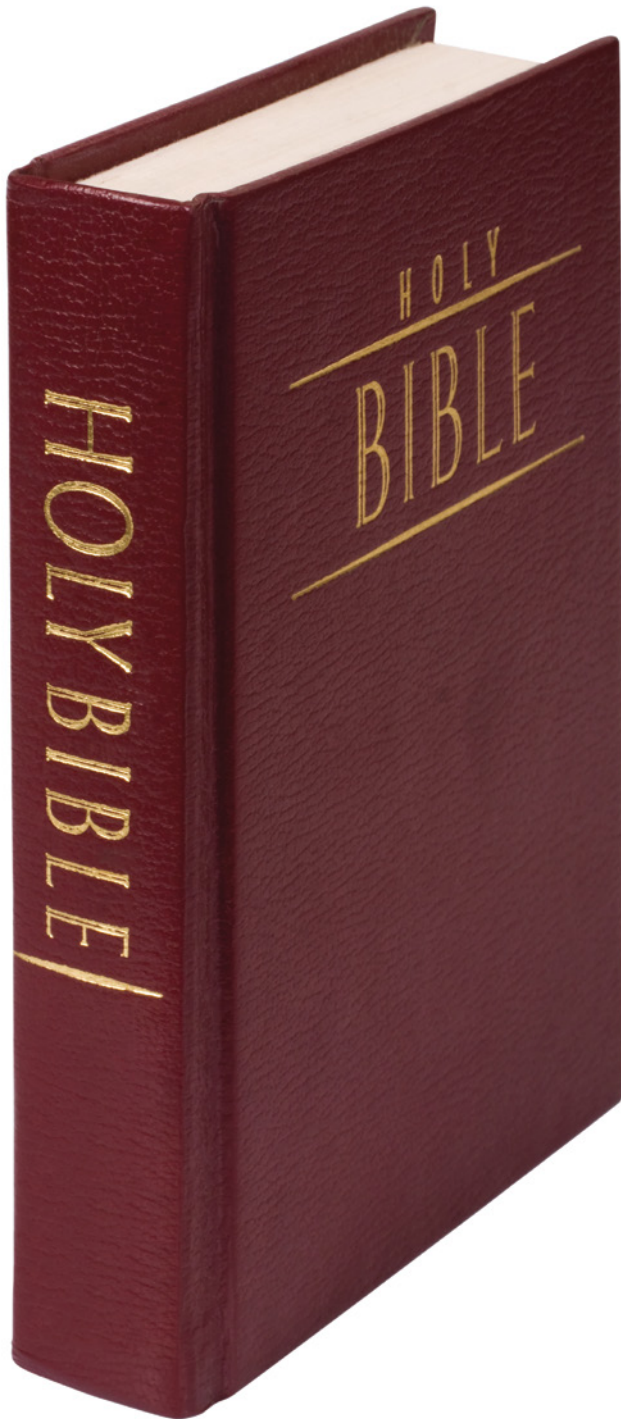
We can be thankful that God provides government to preserve earthly order, peace, and life; especially since Christ, our good King and loving Savior, rules with all authority over heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). He let His innocent blood be shed on the cross to win our forgiveness and eternal life. He sent His gracious flood of Baptism to wash away our sins and claim us for His Kingdom. He who has provided for us eternal life and peace, now orders all things for the good of His Church (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20–23).

That is you and me!

Glenn Smith is pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Klamath Falls, Oregon.



Proclaim the Good News in God's World



“I have good news and bad. Which would you like to hear first?” We all would dread to hear those words from our doctor. How would we react if we heard them from God?

Imagine that God appears to you tonight and says, “If you love me with your whole heart, you will be in heaven.” Is that good news or bad news? Have you loved God with your whole heart? This is bad news! “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). If this was the only word from God, we would all be spending eternity in hell. God’s Law is not the way for sinners to get to heaven.

Now imagine that God appears tonight and says, “Because my Son, Jesus, loves me with His whole heart, you are going to be in heaven.” Is that good news or bad? It is the best news! It is the Gospel. This good news means that in Jesus our sins are forgiven. Sinners, like you and me, can be in heaven with God. It also means that salvation is completely Jesus’ work, not ours. Jesus saves us. We can’t save ourselves.

The difficulty is that people want to mix a little bit of the bad news with the good, a little bit of Law with the Gospel. They do this whenever they make salvation contingent on some action of man, such as a decision, a prayer, etc. When this is done, all certainty of salvation vanishes. Even if we say that God does 99.5% of the work and man just has to do his 0.5%, how can we be sure that we have done all of the 0.5%? We may begin to wonder if we really meant it when we made the decision or if our prayer really came from the heart.

God doesn’t want us wondering if we are going to be in heaven. He wants us to be 100% certain that we will be because Jesus has done all the work. The good news is that we are saved by grace. God in Jesus loves us and forgives. No strings attached. We don’t deserve it. That’s the point! It is simply His free gift to us.

Freely we have received. Freely we can give. When we engage others with Jesus, we are to consciously proclaim the Law and Gospel without confusing them or comingling them. The bad news has its purpose: to show the consequence of sin. It prepares the individual for the good news. Only the Gospel proclaims Jesus the Savior from sin. It alone can create saving faith. It alone can make a person confident that they will be in heaven.

So you have good news and bad news. Use the bad to serve the good. Engage others with Jesus. Confess the good news in God’s Word.

Tim Hartwig is pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in North Mankato, Minnesota.



Objective Justification

Court dramas can be captivating. *Perry Mason*, *Murder She Wrote*, and *Law and Order* captivated television viewers for seasons. The intrigue and suspense generally kept the viewer watching to the end.

In such dramas, a defendant is brought before a judge. The defendant's lawyer pleads his case. He presents evidence, calls witnesses, and seeks to clear the defendant's name. Based on the arguments, the jury has to make a decision as to whether the defendant is guilty or not. If the jury determines that the defendant is not guilty, the judge declares the defendant "Not guilty!" He justifies him and the defendant is relieved.

Perhaps what intrigues us about television court drama is that it reminds us of real-life court scenes. Go one step further and it reminds us of guilty humanity in God's court. So, how does guilty humanity fare in God's court? God answered that for us at the empty tomb. It was humanity's "real life court scene." When Jesus rose, God justified all sinners; that is, He declared the world "not guilty."

This is called "objective justification." It is something God has done *outside* of you. The fact that justification is done outside of you is what makes it "objective." It does not depend upon you, your feelings, your works, or your faith.

There are some who object to this. "That can't be," they say. "That's not right. To be sure, Jesus paid for the sins of all on the cross, but He didn't justify all sinners. That would mean all people go to heaven, whether or not they have faith. No. Justification is a reality only when believed."

It is true that only those who believe in Jesus go to heaven, but does that mean justification is dependent upon faith? That is, does it become a reality only *after* it is believed? Or is justification dependent upon God's declaration that all sinners are not guilty? That is, is it a reality already *before* it is believed?

Let's answer that by looking at the first question above: Is justification dependent upon faith? If it is, what happens when your faith is weak? At such times, your conscience is troubled by some sin; and you feel that you have sinned

away grace. Your life is full of affliction; and you feel that God is not for you but against you. You are in your last days; and you feel that God cannot accept you because of your past. There are times in life like this when we *do not feel* like we have much faith, if any at all.

At such times, if justification is a reality only when you feel you have faith, you are in trouble. You are because you will wonder *if* you have been sorry enough; *if* you feel enough faith; *if* you have faith at all. The bottom line, you will wonder *if* justification is a reality *for you*.

There are no "ifs" about it. Justification *is* a reality for you. It is because justification is a reality *even before* you believe it. It's a reality based in the fact that God justified the world when Jesus rose. "[Jesus] was ... *raised for* our justification" (Romans 4:25, emphasis added). That is, on Easter, God declared all sinners "not guilty." "*All* have sinned ... and *are justified* freely by God's grace" (Romans 3:23–24, emphasis added). All is inclusive—that

means, you, too. No one is excluded—not even you.

It all goes to say that you don't have to look to your faith for justification to be a reality. It *already* is a reality. You *are* included among those God has declared "not guilty." It has been done outside of you at the empty tomb. What's been done outside of you, God brings *to* you and makes your own. Through His Word, God declares because of Jesus that you are "not guilty" and you are "justified," since "through one Man's obedience the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life" (Romans 5:18). By that same Word, God also creates faith in us to believe what Jesus has done to save us and "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28).



Timothy Bartels is pastor of Saved By Grace Lutheran Church in Gresham, Oregon.



Family Devotions: An Aid to Youth Retention

Statistics tell us that many youth fall away from the church within a year after confirmation. While it was once thought that many of those same youth return to regular worship attendance in their late twenties or early thirties, current research shows that once young people drift away from the church, it is highly likely they will not return.

What can be done to reverse this alarming trend? The answer lies in the means God has given us to strengthen faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. This trend can be reversed as we gather around His Word and Sacraments.

God has given parents, especially fathers, the task of bringing up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). What follows are some very practical advice and suggestions regarding family devotions.

It is good to have a set time each day for family devotions. For many families the time right after supper works best. For those families with busy evening schedules, a time in the morning or at bedtime might be better.

Secondly, the material you're using must be age-appropriate. Many parents have learned the hard way that devotions without pictures do not hold the interest of little children as easily as devotions with artistic illustrations.

In the third place, while devotions don't have to be "fun," it is wise to find some ways for the children to participate in the devotion time to make sure they understand the story or the teaching at the center of the devotion.

Here are some recommended books that can be used during family devotion time:

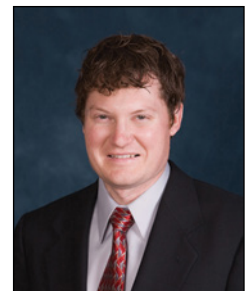
- *A Family Treasury: Classic Bible Stories*; Standard Publishing, 1998. 75 devotions; 1 picture per devotion.
- *The Illustrated Children's Bible*; Octopus Bks., 1980. 145 devotions; 1 picture per devotion.
- *Egermeier's Bible Story Book*; Warner Press, 1969. 280 devotions; 1 picture for every 5 devotions.
- *Jesus, Our Family Guest*; Northwestern Publishing House, 2006. Works best for children in the 7–18 age range; no pictures. Written by Joslyn Moldstad, wife of ELS president.
- *At Home with Jesus*; Northwestern Publishing House, 1992. Works best for children in the 7–18 age range; no pictures. Written by Joslyn Moldstad, wife of ELS president.

- *An Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism*; ELS, 2001. Parents will need to work at bringing the content down "to the kids' level," but this is a great way to instill the main teachings of God's Word and get them ready for confirmation class.
- *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*; ELS, 1996. At the Brooks' home we sometimes work at memorizing hymns during our family devotion time. We might do this especially with Christmas and Easter hymns.
- In the months of November and December we work on memorizing lines and hymns for the Children's Christmas service.

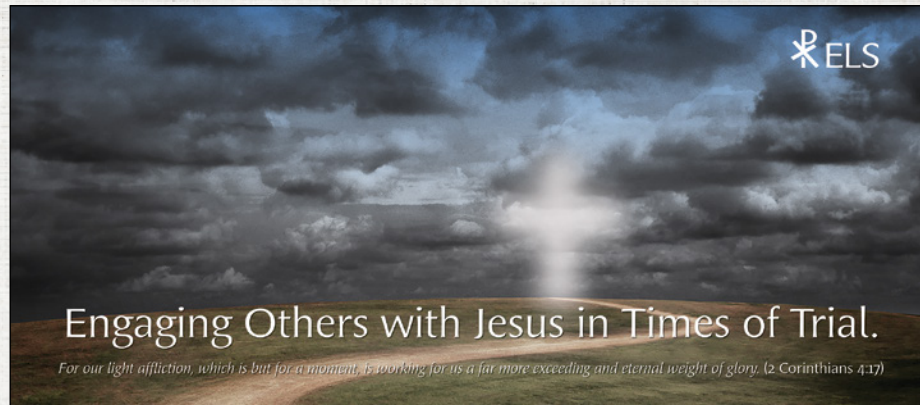
Devotional Recommendations for Adults

- *Meditations*; Northwestern Publishing House. I like these because there are scripture, a devotion, and a prayer—all within 5 minutes, with optional further reading in the Bible if you have more time.
- *Laache's Book of Family Prayer*; Lutheran Synod Book Company, 2000. These are daily devotions that are loosely based on the three readings that you would have heard in church the previous Sunday.
- *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*; Concordia Publishing House, 1986. Written by C.F.W. Walther, this is a "must read" for any serious student of Lutheran theology.
- Any biography of Martin Luther (I'm sure some can be found at the library) will help you grow in your understanding and appreciation of God's Word.

Matthew Brooks is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Parkersburg, Iowa, and Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Iowa.



**Announcing the 97th Annual Convention
of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod
and the 58th Annual Meeting of Bethany Lutheran College Inc.**



**“Engaging Others with Jesus in Times of Trial”
June 15–19, 2014, Mankato, Minnesota**

Synod Sunday—June 15

- 3:00 p.m.—Synod Sunday Service
Speaker: The Rev. Timothy Zenda (Princeton, Minnesota)
Liturgist: The Rev. Luke Ulrich (Mankato, Minnesota)
4:30 p.m.—Supper (free-will donation)

Monday—June 16

- 9:30 a.m.—Opening Convention Service
Chaplain: The Rev. Nicholas Proksch (Holland, Michigan)

Tuesday—June 17

- 5:00 p.m.—Anniversary Service
Speaker: The Rev. Christopher Dale (Port St. Lucie, Florida)
Honorees:
- | | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Frederick Schmugge | 65 years |
| James Olsen | 50 years |
| Mark Harstad | 40 years |
| Robert Otto | 40 years |
| Daniel Basel | 25 years |
| Richard Tragasz | 25 years |

Wednesday—June 18

- 9:00 a.m.—Convention Essay
Essayist: The Rev. Thomas Rank (Scarville, Iowa)
7:30 p.m.—Communion Service
Speaker: The Rev. Bradley Kerkow (Leander, Texas)
Liturgist: The Rev. Timothy Buelow (Carthage, Missouri)

Thursday—June 19

- 8:45 a.m.—Convention Essay continued

*The Rev. Craig A. Ferkenstad, Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Synod*

Board and Committee Reports to the 2014 Synod Convention

Doctrine Committee Report

The committee thanked Mr. Paul Tweit for his years of service. It reported on the 2013 convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in New Ulm, Minnesota. Committee members also met with the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) on September 27, 2013. It plans to send representatives to the October 20–21, 2014, Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum.

The triennial convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) will be held in Lima, Peru, on May 30–June 2, 2014. Five essays on the doctrine of sanctification will be presented.

An informal meeting was held with representatives of the WELS and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod on December 10–11, 2013, in Tucson, Arizona, where they discussed church and ministry. Another meeting is planned for the fall of 2014.

The committee has produced a brochure “Are We So Different?” which deals with the differences between the ELS and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), two documents on apologetics “Proclaiming the Truth of Jesus to a Postmodern World” and “Ten Truths about Evolution,” and a study of the “Two Kingdoms.”

The committee intends to produce a guide for Bible translations soon. It is also working on a Bible study in conjunction with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the 100th anniversary of the ELS.

Report of the Board of Regents—Bethany Lutheran College

On February 10, 2014, the college observed the anniversaries of 23 faculty and staff members for their years of service. Five people were added to the college staff. The 2013–2014 enrollment was 576 students. In 2013, Teigen Hall underwent renovations. A comprehensive athletic field use plan was developed.

Grants to the college came from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation and Thrivent Financial—\$16,681, and from the BLC Women’s Auxiliary—\$12,500. Five estate gifts to BLC totaled \$60,384.47.

Report of the Board of Regents—Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

The board reported that twelve students were enrolled during the 2013–2014 year: three juniors, five middlers, three seniors, and one vicar. The seminary held two commencement services: one on December 5, 2013, with Paul

Webber graduating and another on May 14, 2014, at which Paul Lange graduated.

The seminary curriculum is incorporating outreach to non-Christians as well as Hispanic outreach. The Mark Bartling estate gave the seminary a collection of Lutheran Reformation materials.

The 2013 Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures featured lectures on “Confessional Lutheranism’s Answers to the Challenges of Modern Society,” presented by Prof. Mark Harstad and Prof. Harold Senkbeil.

The seminary’s Annual Pastors’ Institute was held at Faith Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Texas, on March 6, 2014, at which Pres. Gaylin Schmeling presented “The Stoeckhardt Centennial.”

The seminary reports receiving seven legacies totaling \$917,490.70.

Report of the Board for Home Outreach

The board plans to develop outreach materials and to serve as a clearinghouse for evangelism ideas. It is publishing monthly outreach newsletter articles for congregational use.

In 2013, the board adopted Grace Lutheran Church (Madison, Wisconsin) as a mission congregation. Partial year-long subsidies were supplied to Grace Lutheran Church (Redmond, Oregon) and King of Grace Lutheran Church (Waukon, Iowa).

The board reported on the activities of eight mission congregations it supervises. The board continues to call for the position of Evangelism/Missions Counselor. The board reappointed the Rev. Timothy Hartwig to a three-year, Type B term, pending synod ratification.

Report of the Board for World Outreach

The board oversees the work of ELS missions in three areas: Europe, South America, and Asia. It also coordinates with the efforts of Helping Hands, Faith Mission Society, and Cross-stitch to promote missions. Due to a reduction in funds, support for the work in Europe and India has been reduced.

The Asia committee reports on the training of national pastors for India. Fourteen men were ordained in January 2014. In South Korea, Amanda Johnson is teaching English at the Canaan Lutheran Academy. During last year, 63 students attended ELS and WELS high schools. Sung Gyu Choi, a 2011 Bethany Seminary graduate, began serving a vicarage in December 2012.

The Europe committee reports that the Ukrainian Lutheran Church is under the sponsorship of the WELS. The board will continue to own and manage the International Charitable Fund “Gift of Life” program, now 20 years old. Two national pastors serve in the Czech Republic, and Martin Luther School has 200 students. In Latvia, eight national pastors serve six congregations and 800 souls.

The South America committee reports that membership in Peru is 2,000 souls. Five students are in their seminary at Lima, Peru. The Rev. David Haeuser and his wife Ruth have been in Peru for 25 years. Rev. Terry Schultz continues teaching in the Amazon via the Internet. In Chile, the outreach effort is among the middle class. There are one vicar and six other seminary students. Renovation of the chapel in Linares continues. Chelsea Dietsche continues her work of teaching English to 31 students and Aaron Langraff teaches in a nearby city.

Report of the Board for Lutheran Schools of America

The board recognized the service of Mr. Shu-Ting Lai, who accepted a call into the WELS. The board is working to publish online teaching resources on its website. It met with Prof. Jennifer Wosmek of Bethany Lutheran College about her “I’m Called” program, which is a social skills training program incorporating Lutheran faith elements.

The board announced the startup of Columbia Lutheran School in The Dalles, Oregon, in the fall of 2014. The board will conduct an ELS Teachers’ Conference on August 7–10, 2014, in Washington, D.C. It plans to produce short videos that promote Christian education. The board is working to develop early learning centers in home mission starts.

Report of the Board for Youth Outreach

The board continues to conduct annual youth conventions, produce its Young Branches magazine, support area youth retreats and summer camps, and make presentations to Bethany Seminary students.

The 2013 ELS Lutheran Youth Association (LYA) Convention was held on the campus of Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, July 25–28. The theme was, “You Are the Salt of the Earth.” 248 youth and chaperones attended. The 2014 LYA Convention will be held in Missoula, Montana, July 24–27. The theme will be “I Will Lift Up My Eyes to the Hills.” The board also gave financial support to the 2013 Youth Honor Choir.

Report of the Board for Christian Service

The board recognized the service of Mr. Herb Berg, a board member for 12 years.

The board reported that the World Needs Fund received donations of \$19,322 in 2013, with a fund balance of \$48,886.01. Aid was given for tornado relief in Illinois and Texas, and to the Philippines after a cyclone. The board sent \$43,331 in donations to fund Shalem’s liver transplant and another \$4,000 to help with his operation.

The board continues to be informed about health insurance issues and pension plans. The board reports that seven widows of pastors and teachers receive subsidies totaling \$26,040 per year.

The board recommends passage of guidelines for its work with active duty servicemen and veterans.

Report of the Worship Committee

The committee is working on recording portions of the Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, Bible studies relating to Lutheran worship, and other resources for using the Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary. The members also are working on resources for wedding planning.

Report of the Laymen’s Delegates Equalization Fund Committee

The committee reports that total receipts for 2013 were \$19,466.09 and total disbursements were \$23,936.74, with a balance in the fund of \$2,123.55.

Report of the Anniversary Offering Committee

The committee recommends that the special 2017–2018 anniversary offering funds both support new home missions and aid Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary to train candidates for these missions.

Report of the Centennial Committee

The committee is planning an observance of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation (1517) and the 100th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (1918). The observances will begin with the 2017 convention and conclude with the 2018 convention. The anniversary theme is “Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done: The Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Our Heritage of Grace.” Prof. Andrew Overn designed the anniversary logo.

Report of the Planning and Coordinating Committee

The committee submitted an assessment of the eight goals related to the synod’s vision statement. The committee proposes a 2015 budget of \$760,000, with funds in excess of \$725,000 be given to the Board for Home Outreach.

Report of the Board of Trustees

The board proposes a resolution to transfer all real estate and buildings to Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. It proposes an amendment to the synod bylaws and guidelines to reflect the change made by the proposed transfer.

The board co-signed an additional LACE loan for Peace Lutheran Church, Kissimmee, Florida, for school expansion. It reports that the synod is no longer a co-signatory on a loan for Peace Lutheran Church, North Mankato, Minnesota.

A total of \$460,000 from the Missions Advancement Project was distributed to foreign mission work in three areas. The Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation is giving a total of \$450,000 in grants to synod work and \$25,000 to two projects. In 2013, Thrivent Financial also granted a total of \$40,000 for three projects. The board reports that it received a total of \$440,881.24 from six estates.


Concerning stewardship, Giving Counselor, the Rev. Daniel Basel, reported on the distribution of 150 copies of a guide for setting up a congregational planned giving program. Each month pastors receive information on congregational contributions. He has also attended evangelism retreats to promote stewardship.

Report of the Synod Review Committee

The committee's report reflects its review of the Synod Handbook. It recommends guideline changes to convention agenda, the election of a nomination committee, the Bylaws of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. and the Board of Trustees, the Department of Archives and History, the duties of the Board of Trustees, the synod Bylaws for application for membership, Bylaws for the duties of synod officers, the Pastor's ordination and installation, and the reports to the convention.

A View from the Pew

Acts 8:1–8



We anticipate spring and look forward to dandelions. You look at the stalk and beautiful yellow bloom in front of you. You shake your head in dismay, perhaps even in anger, knowing that they will multiply and interfere with the plans that you have for your lawn. Then you see the blooms that were yellow yesterday but today are white. You tear them off. The seeds fly all around and you know that each seed will bring another plant. Now, think of yourself as being Saul the persecutor and the dandelions seeds are the Christians that you hate. As he persecuted, the seeds of the Christians, like the dandelion seeds, spread all around and took root.

Norman Werner is a member of King of Grace Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minnesota.



On the Synodical Scene...

Mission Rally Meets in Arizona

The ELS Women's Circuit 11 Mission Rally 2014 was held at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Lake Havasu City, Arizona, on February 8th. The theme for this year's rally was "Today's Seed Brings Tomorrow's Harvest." There was a total of 56 people in attendance.

The Rev. Richard Fyffe from Family of God Lutheran Church, Fort Mohave, Arizona, gave the opening devotion based on Matthew 13:3.

Our guest speaker for the morning session was the Rev. Steve Petersen, ELS Board for World Outreach. A slide presentation was given on the many mission projects that are supported by Cross-stitch in Europe, Asia, and South America. We also viewed a video of a presentation given by Rachel Kerkow at the ELS Convention this past summer. She spoke of the Kerkow family moving to Cedar Park, Texas, to begin exploratory mission work. Her talk "Boots, Bugs and Bless Your Heart" outlined the many challenges and successes they had in establishing a church and family home there.

During the lunch hour, Kathy Borchert, a member of Our Saviour, gave a very interesting presentation about her years living on the White River Apache Indian Reservation in Arizona where her father was a missionary school teacher. On display were many articles of clothing, jewelry, baskets, pictures, and artifacts from the reservation. Of great interest to the group was a cookbook from the reservation that con-

tained Indian food recipes as well as German recipes. Also in the book were lists of Indian words and their meanings.

After a delicious lunch provided by the ladies of Our Saviour and served by the Lutheran Girl Pioneers, the afternoon session opened with a devotion given by the Rev. Samuel Gullixson from Our Savior Lutheran Church in Bishop, California. The "Office of Sext" was followed and the devotion was based on 1 Corinthians 3:4-9.

Dr. William Kessel was the guest speaker for the afternoon. Dr. Kessel is the chairman of the WELS Administrative Committee for Native American Missions. He was born and raised on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in the White River Mountains where his grandfather and uncle served as missionaries. He spoke of the many challenges that missionaries face in their work on Indian reservations. He stressed the importance of understanding the culture to be an effective missionary and gave numerous examples of this with the Apaches.

The Rally funds collected totaled \$1,242.00 and were designated for Cross-stitch. The 2015 Mission Rally will be hosted by Family of God Lutheran Church in Fort Mohave, Arizona.

The Rally concluded with a devotion given by the Rev. David Jay Webber from Redeemer Lutheran Church, Scottsdale, Arizona. His devotion was based on Matthew 13:24, "The Parable of the Weeds."

Submitted by Pam Barry, Rally Secretary



Pastor, I Have a Question...

Question: "Your response to the question of deliberate sin in the 2013 Sept/Oct Lutheran Sentinel really hit home. My adult child is willingly committing this sin. My question is how do I live my life and have a relationship with her knowing that she practices ways of the world? How do I calm my soul, spirit and mind and bring peace so I can live out my days rejoicing in the crown of life I will receive?"

Answer: Jesus told us to take up our cross as we follow Him. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24, see also Matthew 10:38). By His cross Jesus paid the debt each sinner owed to the Holy Trinity. He took all our sins as if they were His and died our death. In exchange, He gave us His holiness by which God will judge us. God proclaimed a world of sinners to be not guilty. By true repentance we are God's holy people.

Not all repent and believe. Jesus sorrows for those who refuse or turn their backs on His love, who do not repent. It is His will that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

This is our cross. God commands us to love all people. We sorrow that so many reject the only Savior and the eternal life He earned. We will especially sorrow when those we raised in the faith live in unrepentant sin. Christians shed many tears for those they love longing for their repentance. This writer has felt this sorrow too and is most sympathetic.

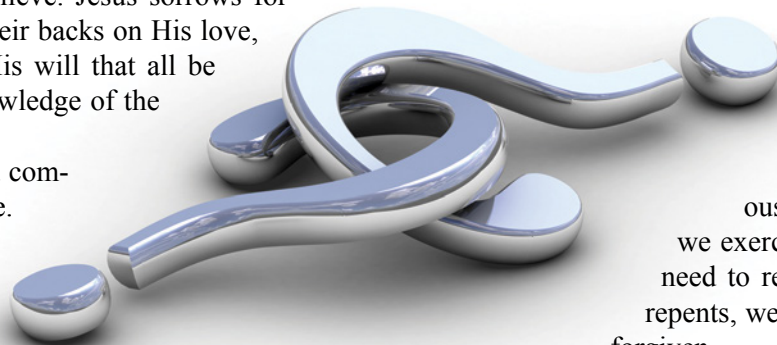
We especially love our children. As you did, Christians do what we can to raise them in the truth of God's love in Christ. We cling to the promise of Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."

Jesus loved us when we were not loveable. His love does not ignore our sin. It cost Him His life. He calls us to repentance by means of His Word. As a faithful believer, you have made God's Law clear to your child. God's Law is working on her heart. You have also made clear to her the good news of God's mercy. We find comfort that the Holy Spirit moves souls to repentance by means of God's Word and Sacraments. It is not in our power, apart from the word, to change hearts. We must resist the temptation to overuse God's Law as if we can force someone to repentance. We must leave that in the care of the One who loves us.

Jesus loves us with patience. We trust God's grace for ourselves. We trust God's grace for those we love, even the unrepentant. With regular prayer, we place their souls before the throne of grace, imploring our great Intercessor to plead on our behalf. Christian love will dominate our interactions with the impenitent. We could wish they repent now, but it may take time. With patience, we continue to trust that God will hear our supplications.

In some drastic cases, love might move us to avoid the sinner. A family enduring the persistent disruption of an alcoholic might well avoid that soul, for his sake, to demonstrate how serious unrepentant sin is. When we exercise this strong love, we will need to remember that when the soul repents, we must treat them as holy and forgiven.

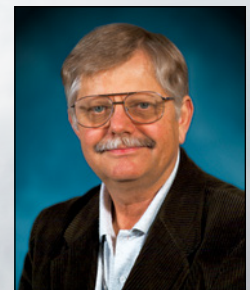
God is always in control. His will shall be done. He wills that all repent and come to faith. Live your life with confidence that God will answer your prayers. In the parable, the father of the prodigal waited patiently. When his son returned, the angels in heaven joined him as they celebrated a lost soul who was found. Thanks be to God.




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

Ukrainian Lutheran Church

By the time you read this, the situation that is still simmering between Ukraine and Russia may have been resolved. If you think back to February and March you might remember our sister in Christ, Olesia Zhukovska. She had been performing acts of mercy as she gave medical care to those who were injured in the protests in Kyiv, Ukraine. While doing this, she was shot in the neck by a sniper and nearly died from her wound. Thankfully, she received excellent medical care and is well on her road to recovery.

There was even better news than this, though. V'yacheslav Horpynchuk, Bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, said in an update he sent out: "On Sunday both Olesia and her mother received the Sacrament of the Holy Communion at the hospital."

What a remarkable thing! She who shed her blood in service toward others, was herself strengthened and made whole by the shed blood of the crucified and risen Christ. Her Lord had first been merciful to her. She, in turn, was merciful to others. Then Jesus comes to her again and fills her with His mercy.

The prayer of thanks after the Communion liturgy directs us to pray:

"We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through these salutary gifts, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through them *in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another*; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever" (*ELH*, p. 83, emphasis added).

Here we ask God that, by His gifts, He move and strengthen us to keep the two tables of His Law: Love God ... love neighbor. It is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, by Jesus' *real presence* among us *especially* with His holy body and blood that we are joined to Him and to one another and we then act as He does. We become merciful. Even in the face of this world's evil and *contrary* to our own evil desires, we are made merciful.

In that holy Supper, in the Gospel and Baptism, those are where we are given hope even though a young woman helping others (wearing a bright red cross on her smock!) nearly was killed by a sniper's intentionally placed bullet. Seeing her picture, *anyone* might be inclined to despair, but we do not, just as by God's grace alone *she* did not.

This is why it is important that the work of Jesus Christ's Church continues unabated. Though there may not be riots in *our* streets, there is still so much death around us. Satan takes aim and, it seems, more often than not finds his mark ... and he shoots to kill. The sins of selfishness and unbelief invade our lives, and it seems that many are left wounded along the way, left wounded to die.

When we look at things from a numbers perspective, we see that the workers at this time are few. Our Evangelical Lutheran Synod along with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod are experiencing a shortage of pastors. As I write, there are currently ten pastoral vacancies in the ELS. Ten places where there is no permanent shepherd doing the work God has called His Church to do. Ten places where the injured in Jesus' flock and those of this world may not be getting the care they need. Ten places where those dying may not be given hope to counter despair. Our Lord said, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2, emphasis added).

Thanks be to God that Olesia has a faithful shepherd. A shepherd, who even had she died, had faithfully prepared her for that day whenever it may come. A shepherd who—in the way the Church has worshipped for millennia—acted as a steward of the mysteries of God and distributed His grace to her ... just as has been done for you.

James Braun is pastor-elect of Trinity Lutheran Church in Brewster, Massachusetts.





BETHANY

LUTHERAN COLLEGE

Nominations for the President of Bethany Lutheran College

Nominee

Erik Ankerberg, PhD

Rev. Mark Bartels

Rev. Edward Bryant

Rev. Erwin Ekhoﬀ

Scott Gostchock, PhD

David Grabitske

Rev. Prof. Mark Harstad

Rev. Timothy Hartwig

Dan Johnson, PhD

William Kessel, PhD

Prof. Peter Kjeer

John Kolander, PhD

Jason H. Lowrey, PhD

Ryan MacPherson, PhD

Rev. Don Moldstad

Philip G. Mowry, JD

Prof. Thomas Nass

Prof. Andrew Overn

Gene Pfeifer, PhD

Allen Quist

Rev. Thomas Rank

Rev. Alexander Ring

Rev. David Russow

Scott Schneider

Michael K. Smith, PhD

Rev. Steve Sparley

Rev. David Jay Webber

Eric Woller, PhD

Nominated by

Scarville Lutheran Church, Scarville, Iowa
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Okauchee, Wisconsin

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Audubon, Minnesota

Parkland Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington
Bethany Lutheran Church, Port Orchard, Washington
Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota

Holy Scripture Lutheran Church, Midland, Michigan

Board of Regents

Heritage Lutheran Church, Apple Valley, Minnesota

Parkland Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington

Norseland Lutheran Church, St. Peter, Minnesota
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Audubon, Minnesota

Board of Regents

Peace Lutheran Church, North Mankato

Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota
Peace Lutheran Church, North Mankato, Minnesota

Board of Regents

Holy Scripture Lutheran Church, Midland, Michigan

Heritage Lutheran Church, Apple Valley, Minnesota
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Audubon, Minnesota
Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota

Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota

Peace Lutheran Church, Lakeland, Florida

Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Audubon, Minnesota

Heritage Lutheran Church, Apple Valley, Minnesota
Peace Lutheran Church, North Mankato, Minnesota

Faith Lutheran Church, Clara City, Minnesota

Scarville Lutheran Church, Scarville, Iowa
Forest Lutheran Church, Forest City, Iowa
Parkland Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington

Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota

Norseland Lutheran Church, St. Peter, Minnesota

Board of Regents

Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota
Peace Lutheran Church, North Mankato, Minnesota
Zion Lutheran Church, North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

Parkland Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Audubon, Minnesota

Peace Lutheran, North Mankato

Ask the Lord of the Harvest

In 2010, some who graduated in June from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary did not receive a call until the fall. There just were not enough openings for the five graduates.

Four years later, the situation is reversed—our synod has many congregations without pastors and only one May graduate to fill the vacancies. And it may take two or three more years before those vacancies can be reduced in number.

This lack of seminary graduates could affect plans to start new mission congregations. It can also affect the smaller congregations of our synod, if they are unable to obtain a pastor. Souls can be lost. Congregations without a pastor can experience a lack of direction in their church work. Outreach activities may not be done.

It is a fact that other Lutheran synods are experiencing a similar shortage of seminary graduates. But this should not make us complacent about the future.

While God moves men to decide to study for the ministry, we should be encouraging young men with God-given gifts to prepare for this most important vocation. High school and college-aged men are concerned with their future work. The world will encourage them to seek out work that has the highest paying salaries, or a job that gives the greatest chance for promotion. And this may mean attending a more prestigious college.

How can we encourage a study for the ministry? Speak to the young men in your congregation about the important work of a pastor. Talk about how blessed you are to have a faithful pastor who proclaims the truths of God's Word. Tell about the pastoral privilege of being able to baptize children, instruct the young, teach the Gospel to the lost, and comfort those who are sick or dying.

When you encourage the pastor whom God has given you and speak well of him to others, you can also help young people be more aware of the blessings God gives through this work.

Young men also think of marriage and families and how to support them in this changing economy. It does not encourage them to consider the ministry when they know about young ministers who struggle financially, or where their wives have to both work and rear children in order to support their families. Your financial support of your pastor and his call to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments will also encourage other gifted men to attend our seminary.

Finally, consider what would happen if no pastoral candidate was available and you had no local worship services. Would you travel 30 to 50 miles every Sunday to another Lutheran church? Or if you were to compromise and attend a non-Lutheran church or one that was not faithful to the Gospel, would you hear about Jesus as the only way to heaven? Would you be comforted through Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Very likely not!

Our prayers to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers—pastors, missionaries, and teachers—into the harvest of souls are vital for our hearing God's truth in the future and for others who do not yet know about Jesus. The Lord of the Church promises to answer those prayers.



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

Bethany Lutheran to Open School This Fall



An unexpected opportunity has led to Bethany Lutheran Church in The Dalles, Oregon, opening a Christian day school this fall. After extensive research, the church's school research committee had decided to recommend that the church open an Early Learning Center, with a view toward eventually adding kindergarten, then older grades. There is more demand for pre-school child care in the area than for private elementary school, making it easier to build a critical mass of students from the community when starting from scratch. However, the administrator of a local parochial school approached Bethany's pastor, Jesse Jacobsen, mid-year to say that they were potentially closing their school and to investigate whether the church might be willing to provide an educational option for their current students. The

Bethany voters decided to move ahead, making Bethany's school possible much earlier than anyone expected.

The new school's name, Columbia Lutheran School, reflects that it is a choice for families throughout the Columbia Gorge. It will use a classical curriculum, which sets it apart from other schools in the area. The church is currently working to create name recognition for the school by participating in the city's annual Cherry Festival parade and also a children's fair, holding a huge rummage sale at the church/school, and building an online presence, such as its Facebook page www.facebook.com/ColumbiaLutheranSchool and school website www.ColumbiaLutheranSchool.org. Please pray for God to bless this opportunity!