

May–June 2015

Lutheran Sentinel

A Publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

"Engage Others with Jesus."



Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
(Psalm 141:2)

In This Issue

- 2 From the President
- 3 Praying to Our Heavenly Father
Because the Victory's Already Won
- 4 I Don't Know What to Pray
- 5 Speaking the Truth in Love!
- 6 2015 ELS Convention Announcement
- 7 Preview of the 2015 Reports to the
Synod Convention
- 10 On the Synodical Scene...
- 11 ELS Historical Society Nineteenth
Annual Meeting
- 12 Pastor, I Have a Question...
- 13 Cross Currents
- 14 ELS Women's Missionary Society,
Pacific Northwest Meets
- 15 Truth Makes Us Free
- 16 Retirement of *Lutheran Sentinel*
Editor



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From the President

Dear members and friends of our ELS:

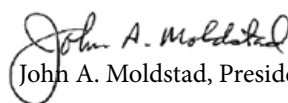
The time for the writing of this column is filled with tension for Christians. 147 Christian students murdered at a Kenyan university. In Iraq and Syria the ISIS terrorists pursue their torture of Christians. At home a debate rages over “freedom of religion” legislation in the state of Indiana. To what extent, if any, can Christian business owners refuse for the sake of conscience to offer their services for ceremonies they regard as immoral (e.g., gay weddings)? Some also wonder what a national discussion on this portends for confessional Bible-believing churches. Will tax-exempt status be revoked for churches that address homosexuality as sin? The world presses in on the Christian community, squelching its life-breath and making the proclamation of God’s Word almost impossible.

But wait! Is that so accurate? The pressure on Christianity is real. But the fallacy is to assume that when persecution arrives, there is less ability for the powerful Seed to be sown and to do its mighty work. Two church festivals in the month of May bring a necessary message for believers in Christ in the midst of the chaos—May 14 and 24 are dates worth remembering.

The first is Ascension Day. The ascension of our Lord Jesus to heaven is confessed by the church in these words: “He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.” This means that our Lord Jesus is no longer in His humiliation state where He willingly chose not to make full use of His power and majesty so that He could be our substitute in suffering and dying to atone for our sins. Jesus is now in His exaltation state where He, even according to His human nature, exercises His full powers and majesty as God—which He has possessed as the Son of God from eternity. This almighty dominion of Jesus assures us that, even in the periods of severe distress for the church, He rules with His divine glory over all things for the benefit of His believers. The Ascension motto is: Rest assured. Christ is in control!

The second May day of significance is Pentecost. This festival highlights the work of the Holy Spirit. As the Book of Acts shows, the Holy Spirit carries out the spread of His Word in our sinful world, convicting people of sin, converting sinners to saving faith in the Redeemer, and changing hearts and minds to follow the new life. He does this even when winds of oppression are blowing strong. In fact, hard times for the early church caused a scattering of the Word like a well-intentioned wildfire (Acts 8:1–8)! The Pentecost motto is: Don’t forget. The Spirit and His Word are on the move!

Believers in the Savior, we need not worry or despair as we pray for the future work of the church. The Triune God of heaven and earth is in control and has a plan for the spread of His Word until the day of our Lord’s great return. When Moses was tempted to give up as he led Israel wandering in the wilderness, didn’t God ask him a stop-and-think rhetorical question? He asked Moses: “Is the Lord’s arm too short?” (Numbers 11:23). So, the church is well-armed!


John A. Moldstad, President of the ELS



Praying to Our Heavenly Father Because the Victory's Already Won

The Bible says, “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). What is this amazing little passage saying? It is saying that God’s love for us in Jesus Christ is “the prime mover.” God loves sinners through Jesus Christ, His eternal, almighty Son, who was conceived and born human. He sent Jesus to deliver all sinners from sin, death, and the devil through His life, death, and resurrection. When the Holy Spirit brings us sinners to faith in Jesus through the Word of God, we come to know God’s love for us. This is a heart-changer. We now love and trust Him, whom we previously hated and distrusted. One proof of our new love for Jesus is prayer. We pray to our heavenly Father who saved us through Jesus Christ. For this reason, Jesus taught us to pray: “Our Father who art in heaven.”

Through faith in Jesus, we pray to our heavenly Father, or to put it more plainly, we speak to Him of our concerns of life in this world, trusting that the Father can, will, and does help us. We speak to Him because He first spoke to us through His Son, the very Word of God. Jesus taught us how to pray and for what to pray, giving form and direction to our prayer life and defining for us what we should expect when we pray; for instance, how our heavenly Father will answer and help us.

Bearing this in mind, let’s touch on two petitions of the *Lord’s Prayer*, namely the Sixth and Seventh Petitions. In these Jesus teaches us how to pray regarding temptation and evil.

The Sixth Petition reads: “**Lead us not into temptation,**” and the Seventh Petition: “**Deliver us from evil.**” The well-known words of Dr. Martin Luther in his *Small Catechism* define the meaning of these petitions:

Regarding the Sixth Petition: “God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.”

Regarding the Seventh Petition: “In conclusion, we pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens the body and soul, property and reputation, and finally when our last hour comes, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.”

These explanations of Luther contain many truths too numerous to mention in the space of a short article.

Concerning temptations, our sinful hearts and minds—still very active within us—have a different set of expectations regarding our prayers, such as: “If I ask God, He will remove from my life any type of temptation or evil, because, after all, God wants me to be happy, just as I want to be happy also.” However, the Lord’s Prayer does not give us such expectations; nor does Dr. Luther.

When we pray, we must remain watchful, then, and pray *for* watchfulness. Our sinful nature is always tempting us *from within* to misuse prayer. Martin Luther reminds us to pray and to trust that God actively protects us from temptation and from evil, both inside and outside of us. At the same time, this does not mean a total shelter from either. God allows us to wrestle *with* these enemies by Word and prayer. *In God’s Word* we learn that all stand victorious in Jesus, who “manfully” defeated these enemies in our place when He, “God-man,” rose from the grave. *In prayer* we throw ourselves at our Father’s feet and say, “Help me wrestle. Give me victory!” He says, “I have and I will, through Jesus. Trust me.”



Matthew Crick is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Medford, Oregon.

I Don't Know What to Pray

As we went to bed every night, Mom and Dad taught us children to say our prayers. We prayed: “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray Thee, Lord my soul to keep. If I should die, before I wake, I pray Thee, Lord my soul to take. If I should live for other days, I pray Thee, Lord, to guide my ways.”

Now, I am not sure if Mom and Dad were wanting us to pray this prayer so that God would make us better behaved, as we live other days or not. But, I do remember that it helped us children to ask Mom and Dad about God, and they taught us how we should be able to talk to Him about anything and at all times in our lives, and to ask Him for any and everything we needed. Just talk to God. That is what prayer is.

Luther described prayer as the way we communicate with God. And yet it is also true that the Lord knows what we need before we ask it (see Matthew 6:32). Our hymnal describes prayer this way: “Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, Unuttered or expressed” and “Prayer is the simplest form of speech That infant lips can try” (*ELH* 387:1,3).

Some people think that their pastor needs to pray for them, because God will hear it better if it comes from a pastor. But, when Jesus cried out from the cross, “It is finished!” and the temple curtain tore from top to bottom, God was showing that all people can now come to the Lord in prayer, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Because of Jesus’ promise to answer prayer, Christians know that they can ask God for anything they need. Christians need many things to sustain their lives physically and spiritually. The Psalms are prayers for God’s mercy, as well as health or daily bread; for the light of understanding the Word; for peace in times of war; for clean hands and a pure heart; for the bounties of the earth (flowers and trees, fruit and grain)—everything we need for this body and life.

We also need to ask God for spiritual things, such as forgiveness of sins, spiritual strength, help against the temptations of Satan and the deceits of this life, for guidance in our thoughts and minds that we might love and care for others. There really is not any good thing that we cannot ask God to give us.

Though we can ask God for anything, some things may not be good for us. Should we ask for money or wealth, Jesus reminds us “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24). If we are tempted to make wealth our god, the true God may not give us what we ask for.

Jesus’ prayer in John 17 is an example of prayer. He asks

that He glorify the Father by finishing His work of salvation, that He would keep those whom the Father had given to Jesus by faith, that He would keep the disciples from the evil one, and that the truth of the Word may sanctify them (declare them holy by faith in Jesus). Jesus also prays “for all those who will believe in Me through their [the disciples’] word” (v. 20). With these words, Jesus was praying for you and me, that God’s love may be with us. Jesus instructs us that God’s love extends to our enemies: “Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you” (Luke 6:28), so that they may believe the Gospel and be saved. Through the Second and Third Petitions of the Lord’s Prayer, we ask for these things also.

Since Satan is our enemy, should we pray for him to be converted? No, for Jesus said, “The ruler of this world is judged” (John 16:11). Nor should we pray for those who have died, because “it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

Instead, we are to pray for those who live in this world: “I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority” (1 Timothy 2:1–2). God wants us to be “casting all our care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). We should ask God to bless our family and relatives, all believers in Jesus, and the preaching of the Gospel. We also need to pray for everything we need for this body and life and for the Father to guide us all our days until He takes us to His heavenly home. With all these needs, St. Paul urges us to “pray without ceasing, in everything gives thanks” (1 Thessalonians 5:17–18).

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Ev’rything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Ev’rything to God in prayer! (*ELH* 385:1)

Micah Ernst is pastor of Beautiful Savior of the Lake, an ELS preaching station in Osage Beach, Missouri, and Grace Lutheran (WELS) in Columbia, Missouri.



Speaking the Truth in Love!

During 2015, the Board for Home Outreach will present a series of articles with the theme “Be Ready to Give an Answer.” This title is drawn from 1 Peter 3:15: “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” As Christians, all of us are to be on the lookout for opportunities to tell others about Jesus, our true basis for hope in this seemingly hopeless world. It is the Board’s prayer that these articles will help you in your witnessing efforts.

“*You want the truth? You can’t handle the truth!*” So goes the famous line from the movie *A Few Good Men*. As Christians who have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, who *is* “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6), it’s not only important to know the truth, but also just as important how we handle the truth.

For example, if I went to the doctor, and he told me: “Well, the tests are in. Yep, you’ve got cancer, ya big jerk! You should’ve been living a healthier lifestyle. Too bad for you! I’ve gotta run, my golf buddies won’t wait forever.” While it may be true that I have cancer and I should have maintained healthier habits, I think we’d all agree that his attitude and words were highly inappropriate, and I’m probably finding myself a different doctor.

The same thing can be true in a spiritual sense. If I tell someone: “You’ve been a rotten sinner since the day you were born, and you’re going to spend eternity roasting in hell forever, just like you deserve, you big jerk!” followed by a devilish laugh on my part, I’ve probably just blown my opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus with that person—even though much of what I stated was the truth.

We not only need to **know** the truth, but also need to know how to **handle** the truth! The apostle Paul informs us that, as Christians, we are to be “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). It is clear that truth not only needs to be known, but also needs to be partnered with compassion.

The most effective way for us to advertise the Gospel is to conduct ourselves in a way that makes it abundantly clear that Christ’s love has filled our hearts and lives! We are 24/7 ambassadors for Christ, which means our lives need to match up with our words and to reflect the love of Jesus, so that the world, shrouded in the darkness of unbelief, can be exposed to His life-giving light!

Growing in your faith is crucial to you living your faith! Word and Sacraments are the fuel for a dynamic faith that shines brightly like the sun! And it’s the power of God’s Word, along with the knowledge of God’s love for us, that motivate us to follow Christ and proclaim His saving name! For God displayed His love through His Son, who lived perfectly for us

and took His sinless life to the cross, where He became sin for us; a love that caused Him to shed His blood to pay for all our sins, followed by Him rising victoriously on Easter morning for us so that we, too, can rise to a new life.

Knowing God’s truth and flavoring it with the love of Christ—who lives in all believers by faith—enable you to proclaim the glorious truth of God, with true joy and compassion in your heart! And it demonstrates to all that you **CAN** handle the truth!



Rodney Flohr is co-pastor of King of Grace Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minnesota.



Announcing the 98th Annual Convention
of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod
and the 59th Annual Meeting of
Bethany Lutheran College Inc.

“Engaging One Another with Jesus’ Teachings”
June 21–25, 2015, in Mankato, Minnesota

Synod Sunday – June 21

3:00 p.m. – Synod Sunday Service
Speaker: The Rev. Jerry Gernander (Princeton, Minnesota)
Liturgist: The Rev. Robert Harting (Thornton, Iowa)
4:30 p.m. – Supper (free-will donation)

Monday – June 22

9:00 a.m. – Opening Convention Service

Tuesday – June 23

1:00 p.m. – Convention Essay
Essayist: The Rev. Jonathan Madson (Okauchee, Wisconsin)
5:00 p.m. – Memorial Service
Mrs. Helen Guldberg (1923–2014)
Rev. Mark Harstad (1974–2015)
Rev. David Hoyord (1947–2014)
Rev. Herbert Larson (1931–2014)
Rev. John Krueger (1931–2014)
Rev. Jeffrey Londgren (1955–2015)
Mrs. Katherine Oesleby (1915–2012)
Mrs. Naomi Petersen (1929–2014)
Mrs. Lois Weseloh (1921–2013)

Wednesday – June 24

1:00 p.m. – Convention Essay, continued
3:30 p.m. – Anniversaries Observed
Rev. Paul Anderson 70 years
Rev. Harry Bartels 60 years
Rev. James Braun 25 years
7:00 p.m. – Communion Service
Speaker: The Rev. David Thompson (San Antonio, Texas)
Liturgist: The Rev. Peter Faugstad (Tacoma, Washington)

Thursday – June 25

8:30 a.m. – Unfinished Business

Rev. Craig A. Ferkenstad, Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Preview of the 2015 Reports to the Synod Convention

Doctrine Committee

Committee members attended the biennial Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum on October 20–21, 2014, in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Prof. Gaylin Schmeling presented a paper.

The committee will meet with the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations. (CICR) in September 2015, on the topic of church fellowship.

The committee reports on an informal meeting between the ELS, WELS, and LCMS on December 9–10, 2014, in Winter Park, Florida. This third meeting focused on church fellowship.

Representatives from the Church of the Lutheran Confession, WELS, and ELS met formally in Waukesha, Wisconsin, on January 30, 2015, and on April 17, 2015.

The committee encourages using the apologetic materials produced by Prof. Allen Quist, who also spoke on apologetics at the 2014 Reformation Lectures.

Future projects: a guide to Bible translations and a Bible study for the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

The eighth triennial convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) was held in Lima, Peru, on May 30–June 2, 2014. Five church bodies in Albania, Finland, India, and Chile became associate members of the CELC. The theme was “We Are God’s Workmanship—Created in Christ Jesus for Good Works,” a study of the doctrine of sanctification. The Theological Commission of the CELC met on May 29, 2014, in Lima, Peru.

Board of Regents: Bethany Lutheran College

The board reports that President Dan R. Bruss will retire on June 30, 2015. In February 2015, the board elected Gene R. Pfeifer as the next president of the college.

At a special service, Bethany observed the anniversaries of 18 faculty and staff.

The board approved adding a Legal Studies major. Sara Traylor is developing a nursing program at the college. Bethany has taken over operations of the city-funded public access TV channels.

In 2014, Bethany remodeled the campus dining center. A new stained glass window titled “The Way of the Cross”

was installed, donated by the high school classes of 1952 and 1953.

The board reported grants from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation, Thrivent Financial, and Bethany Lutheran College Women’s Auxiliary. The college received a total of \$709,872.40 from five estates.

Board of Regents: Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

Ten students were enrolled at the seminary during the 2014–2015 academic year: one junior, two middlers, five seniors, one vicar, and one Master of Arts student.

Concerning evangelism, the seminary has two classes in its three-year curriculum that focus on mission work, offers a class in Hispanic outreach, and hosts a Board for Home Outreach seminar on evangelism.

The annual Bjarne Wollan Teigen Memorial Lectures were held October 30–31, 2014, with the theme: “Apologetics in Lutheranism.”

Other activities included the annual Mission and Ministry Seminar at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, on February 3–5, 2015, and a marriage workshop on February 27–28.

A pastors’ institute was conducted on March 9, 2015, in Okauchee, Wisconsin.

One student graduated from the seminary on May 13, and five vicars received their assignments.

The board reports that \$192,204.24 was received in legacies for 2014, and that various ladies’ organizations have given to the Seminary Fund, Scholarship Fund, and the Student Support Fund.

Board for Home Outreach

The board plans to conduct another series of evangelism retreats in the near future.

The board reports that the Rev. Larry Wentzlaff was commissioned as an Evangelism Missions Counselor on October 1, 2014.

The ELS home missionaries met with the board members in Leander, Texas, on January 25–28, 2015.

The board gave a limited subsidy to Grace Lutheran in Lincoln, Illinois. It also gave reports on each home mission congregation.

Board for World Outreach

The board reports that reductions in funds resulted in restructuring its work in Europe and India. Board members are becoming more active in supervision of affiliates in South America and Europe. The board is reassessing its administrative structure and the need for its involvement in the various mission fields.

The board's Communication Committee coordinates the sharing of information with the auxiliary organizations that help with missions: Helping Hands, Faith Mission Society, Thoughts of Faith, and Cross-stitch.

The board reports on the work being done in the three areas of Asia, Europe, and South America.

Board for Lutheran Schools of America

The board reports that its website is redesigned. It hosted a principals' meeting during synod convention and sponsored an ELS Teachers' Conference in Washington, D.C., on August 7–10, 2014. The board is producing videos that promote Christian education. The board conducted school visits during the year. The board plans to work with the Board for Home Outreach to discuss opening early learning centers in home mission starts.

Board for Youth Outreach

The board reports its findings on a survey of ELS congregations concerning the teaching of Bible History in homes and churches.

The board reports that Bethany is assisting with travel costs to those who attend the 2015 LYA convention at Bethany Lutheran College on July 23–26. The 2014 LYA convention was held in Missoula, Montana. The theme was "I will lift up my eyes to the hills." Attending were 164 youth and 57 adults.

The board is providing support for the 2015 Youth Honor Choir. It publishes *Young Branches* twice a year.

Board for Christian Service

Concerning health insurance, the board reports on the option of using a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) along with current health insurance coverage.

The World Needs Fund received \$15,000 during 2014. The synod sent \$16,000 for Indian Typhoon Relief and Jabalpur Weather Relief. The board gave an additional special offering of \$11,474 to help Shalem with a liver transplant.

In 2014, the board helped eight widows with subsidies totaling \$25,420.

The board has taken on the duty of maintaining a list of deployed active duty personnel in need of spiritual care, along with the duty of establishing spiritual care for veterans of service.

Worship Committee

The committee is working on producing audio files of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* for congregations without organists, a Bible study of the Divine Service, and a wedding planning resource book.

Centennial Committee

The committee reorganized after the death of its chairman, Prof. Mark Harstad. The board republished *Growing in His Mercy*, a booklet about the history of the synod for use by youth and confirmation classes.

The committee plans a Bible study for fall 2017 and a special service for use in ELS congregations in fall 2018. Also planned are two commemorative issues of the *Lutheran Sentinel*, a book, and a video.

Anniversary Offering Committee

The committee is working on producing materials for the Anniversary offering starting at the 2016 synod convention. The goal of this special offering is to support two new home mission starts, one in 2015 and another in 2017.

Planning and Coordinating Committee

Concerning the ELS Strategic Plan adopted in 2011, the committee presents its assessment of how the eight goals of this plan have been met.

The committee proposes a 2016 congregation contribution budget of \$760,000, with any offerings over \$725,000 being allocated to the Board for Home Outreach.

Board of Trustees

The board approved the president's nomination for the editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel*. The board reported that the rate of return in 2014 for all investments was 3.60%, with a distribution percentage of 3.25%.

In 2014, the escrow account for Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Cold Springs, Minnesota, was converted to a loan. Another loan was granted to Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Madison, Wisconsin.

The board reports that the ELS congregation contributions allowed for \$4,620 to be used by the Board for Home Outreach.

The Missions Advancement Project, Inc. reports that \$440,000 was received from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation for special projects. The same foundation provided a grant of \$450,000 for ELS program funds and \$50,000 for special projects.

The board reports a total of \$ 468,934.42 was given to the synod from three estates.

The Giving Counselor reports that a video about the importance of supporting the work of the synod was produced. Other materials are available on the website.

Concerning the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, additional materials teaching stewardship will be produced.

Synod Review Committee

As part of its review of the current synod bylaws and guidelines, the committee proposed revisions to the bylaws of Lutheran Schools of America, Inc., and Guidelines for the Board of Education. These guideline revisions required additional changes to guidelines for the Board of Trustees and the Nominations Committee.





On the Synodical Scene...

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Pastors' Institute

The annual Pastors' Institute of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (BLTS) has been held in various locations throughout the country in order to make it possible for more of our pastors to attend. This year the institute took place at Holy Trinity in Okauchee, Wisconsin, on March 9, 2015.

The first portion of the institute was a presentation titled "Concordia, Discordia, Et Irenicum: The Reception of the Book of Concord in Seventeenth Century Braunschweig Lutheranism." This presentation demonstrated how the Book of Concord was received in the northern German states. It explained some of the conflicts involved in the acceptance of the Book of Concord in Lutheran lands, which would be a factor in the Syncretistic Controversy of the seventeenth century. It was given by Dr. Timothy Schmeling of Bethany Lutheran College.

The second segment of the institute was titled "Church of the Lutheran Confession: Then and Now," centering on the origin and recent history of the CLC. This presentation was given by BLTS President Gaylin Schmeling.



(Left to right): Scott Schwertfeger, Bernt Tweit, Robert Otto, Timothy Schmeling, Robert Oberg, Michael Willitz, Robert Brown, Andrew Schmidt, Stephen Ristow, Jonathan Madson, Thomas Heyn, David Young, Mark Bartels, Michael Lilienthal, Eugene Kock, Mark Marozick, Daniel Hartwig, Tyler Voigt, Gaylin Schmeling, and Peter Bockoven (not pictured: Jon Bruss)

Installation in Oregon

The Rev. James Wilson was installed as co-pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Sutherlin, Oregon, on March 15, 2015, at a 4:00 p.m. service. Members from the congregations in North Bend, Myrtle Creek, and Grants Pass, Oregon, were present. The Rev. Steven Sparley preached the sermon and performed the rite of installation. Also participating in the installation were the Reverends Frank Fiedler and Matthew Crick. The Rev. Wilson was installed to serve with the Rev. Fiedler. The ladies served a meal after the service and celebrated Mrs. Ann Wilson's birthday as well.



(Left to right): Rev. Matthew Crick, Rev. Frank Fiedler, Rev. James Wilson, Rev. Steven Sparley

"Hearts for Haiti": A Short-term Mission Project

This project was one way for people loved by God to show that love to others in need. Mrs. Dawn Harting received a grant from Thrivent Financial to make dresses and quilts (quilts that fold into pillows) for orphans in Haiti. She enlisted women of several churches in the Iowa circuit and others to help. Women from Richland Lutheran Church, Thornton, Iowa; Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Mason City, Iowa; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Indianola, Iowa; and Peace Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota, spent hours together at various meetings buying supplies, cutting patterns, and sewing. This summer the completed gifts will be delivered to Haiti by Mrs. Linda Petersen of Roseville, Minnesota, who is an assistant to the Rev. Terry Schultz, the WELS missionary to the people in Haiti.



ELS Historical Society Nineteenth Annual Meeting

Symposium on the Liturgy and Agenda of the 1913 Hymnary

Sunday, June 21, 2015
Bethany Lutheran College
S. C. Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center
Anna John Silber Recital Hall

Schedule for the Day

3:00 p.m. Synod Sunday Service, Trinity Chapel
4:30 p.m. Evening Meal, College Dining Facility
5:00 p.m. Registration
6:00 p.m. Symposium

Roots of the Liturgy in the Church of Denmark and Norway – Prof. Erling T. Teigen
Traditions and Practices Brought to America – Seminarian Andrew Soule
Development of the 1913 Hymnary – The Rev. Peter Faugstad

7:30 p.m. Society Business Meeting
Refreshments and social time – YFAC Gallery

Mail with payment to:

**ELS Historical Society, Ottesen Museum
6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001**

Voting Membership

_____ \$10/year: Individual
_____ \$15/year: Husband and wife

_____ Lifetime Membership \$200

Associate Membership

_____ \$15/year: Individual
_____ \$25/year: Institutional
_____ \$5/year: Student

_____ Special Gift

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Pastor, I Have a Question...

Question: *In our Sunday service it sometimes says, "Therefore with angels and archangels." I can only find one archangel in the Bible (Michael). Are there other archangels?*

ANSWER: St. Paul wrote: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

The Book of Jude states: "Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'" (Jude 9).

You are correct. Although there is a multitude of angels in the Bible—"Myriads and myriads" (Revelation 5:11)—Michael is the only angel that the canonical Bible calls the Archangel.

The Archangel is the chief or first Angel. He rules over the other angels. It would make sense that there is only one.

Yet, the Jewish religion has several; and, remember, the apostles were raised in the religion of the rabbis. Other ancient Jewish books spoke of more than one archangel. The apocryphal book Tobit lists Gabriel and Raphael as archangels.

The Roman Catholic Bible includes Tobit, calling it "deuterocanonical." Deuterocanonical books are books not in our Hebrew Bible. Roman Catholics consider them to be canonical. Dr. Luther included them in his translation, but more as an appendix. We do not consider them to be on the same level as the sixty-six canonical books. They are not a part of the inspired and inerrant word of God. Nonetheless, they are useful for devotional reading.

Another Jewish book, Enoch, is labeled "pseudepigrapha," meaning that the named author did not write it. This book calls archangels "Watchers." Up to seven of them are listed in chapter 20. The Book of Revelation provides an interesting parallel: "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets" (Revelation 8:1-2). And yet this canonical book does not call these seven angels archangels.

When we gather for worship and receive the Holy Supper, heaven and earth come together. As God's Word

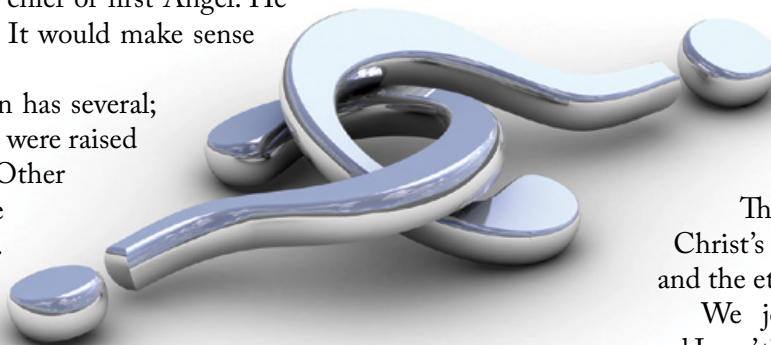
is taught and His Sacraments are administered, God comes to be with us in a very special way. We gather before His throne and join the multitude of heavenly host praising His holy name. This adds joy and comfort to our worship. We know angels join us in our praise as we approach the holy God to receive His holy meal.

Angels went with Jesus throughout His life in this world. Gabriel announced His birth, and shepherds heard the sound of angel voices inviting them to see the newborn King. Angels were with Jesus as He endured the temptation of Satan in the wilderness. The eternal God became human to rescue us all from our temptations and sins. The

sky turned black the day He died. Heaven couldn't look at what He had to suffer to pay for our sins. The angels were present on Easter.

They triumphantly proclaimed Christ's resurrection, our justification, and the eternal life we have by faith.

We join the angels in worship around Jesus' throne, even while we continue our walk to the promised glory. We sing the angel hymn of Isaiah's vision of heaven from chapter 6, verses 1-3, as we prepare for His holy meal: "Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory" (*ELH*, pg. 51-52).



Send your questions to:

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Cross Currents

Doctrine and Covenants Section 132:62: “And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.”

It was right there in front of them. There, in what they consider God’s Word (as spoken through Joseph Smith), was not only the justification but also the command for plural marriage among the Latter Day faithful. But, for many years, it was taught that Joseph Smith did not participate in polygamy—that he was married once and only to his beloved Emma.

When the Latter-Day Saints (LDS) church could control most of the information their members were able to access regarding church history, doctrine, etc., it was not difficult for people to believe what they were told about this. With the advent of the Internet, though, things have changed dramatically.

Just recently, the official website of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints actually admitted that Emma was not Joseph’s only wife. In a belated attempt to “get ahead of the curve,” it was decided that it was better to present a more accurate, though sanitized, version of this part of their history.

The response from among the faithful to this revelation was described in a November 10, 2014, article in *The New York Times*: “Joseph Smith was presented to me as a practically perfect prophet, and this is true for a lot of people,” said Emily Jensen, a blogger and editor... She said the reaction of some Mormons to the church’s disclosures resembled the five stages of grief in which the first stage is denial, and the second is anger. Members are saying on blogs and social media, “This is not the church I grew up with, this is not the Joseph Smith I love.”

An understandable reaction, to be sure.

This *Sentinel* article, though, is not about Mormon polygamy; the issue here is understanding the nature of those of the true Christian faith who have gone on before us.

The Christian Church has over the centuries produced histories of the saints called “hagiographies.” In these, the believers of the past are portrayed in the best way possible... and go well beyond even what the Eighth Commandment requires regarding the “best construction.” Often ignored are the foibles, the mistakes, and the outright sins these men and women committed, so that the Christian faith is portrayed in the best light possible.

This is something we *all* do. At funerals, Christian pastors are sometimes accused of doing violence to the memory of the deceased by speaking about them as—wait for it—“sinners”! In film, as Martin Luther stands before the Emperor in Worms, a soft glow is cast upon his face as the music swells and he declares: “Here I stand. I can do no other!” all while his times of weakness are ignored. The rotten nature we have is sometimes excused or ignored in those examples from Scripture that are well-known, as indicated by the surprised response to my stating that in all likelihood Abram was an idol-worshiper when the Lord called him out of Ur.

With these new revelations about Joseph Smith, there will be some who will lose their trust/faith in the way of salvation taught by the Mormon church. May that be, as God so wills. But that’s the danger of not being honest about who the saints were who have preceded us in death, and with whom we are.

As God’s Word teaches, “ALL have sinned, and have fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23, emphasis added). ALL. No one—other than our Lord Jesus—is excluded. That truth must daily be proclaimed and hourly be confessed. This is precisely why our hope is not in these people and not in ourselves. May it never be so! No, we are redeemed by God’s Son. Our Savior alone is Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Redeemer. He alone has done everything necessary for us to be saved. We cannot even add to it to make it more sure.

The psalmist wrote: “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish. Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God” (Psalm 146:3–5).

No matter what you might learn about Abraham, Peter, Paul, Luther, or even your pastor, then, trust not in them, but in the Word of God spoken BY them that gives you the TRUE story of your salvation in Christ Jesus.



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

ELS Women's Missionary Society, Pacific Northwest Meets

A fall mission rally was an engaging mix of experiences with the theme, "We Share God's Gift of Life." Over 40 attendees gathered at Christ Lutheran Church in Klamath Falls, Oregon, for the Pacific Northwest region's 37th annual rally on September 26–27, 2014.

Friday evening's "Greet, Encourage, Meet" (GEM) time included a hearty soup supper as participants enjoyed fellowship with both new and old friends. The Rev. Matthew Crick spoke about being a missionary in Medford, Oregon. He spoke of connecting to your church's community. For example, he is a cross-country coach at the high school across the street from the church.

Saturday's program opened with a devotion by the Rev. Glenn Smith, who encouraged listeners to remember to trust in the Lord for results of mission work. Next, listeners were held spellbound as Tatiana Currie shared her experiences in the former Soviet Union, such as when the KGB burst into her grandmother's apartment on hearing rumors that she owned a Bible. The technology of Skype allowed attendees to hear directly from Nick and Kerry Laper of Gift of Life in Ukraine, along with a deaconess who travels with mobile medical and dental clinics. The children of the Rev. Glenn and Maria Smith sang songs they had prepared. Erica Jacobsen shared information about Columbia Lutheran School, a classical Lutheran elementary school that opened in the fall at Bethany Lutheran Church, in The Dalles, Oregon.

Vice President Jan Sparley led the business meeting. Attendees voted for Columbia Lutheran School and the orphanages in India as mite recipients for 2014–2015. Three officers were elected: Kay Kassulke (Medford, OR), President; Brenda Hackett (Lakewood, WA), Secretary; and Matilda Kahler (Hood River, OR), Christian Growth. Barb Coggs well announced her retirement as Historian, after nearly four decades of dedicated service. Erica Jacobsen volunteered as her replacement.

Lunchtime included a *Jeopardy!* game, with categories like "Hymn Tunes" and "Past Rallies." Afterward, the Rev. Larry Wentzlaff, the ELS's new missions counselor, shared updates about the synod's world and home missions. Barb Coggs well spoke about the "Joy of Serving" and read a poem she had composed, with the same title as the Rally's theme. Participants viewed the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) evangelism

movie, "Come Follow Me." To close, attendees sang "God's Word Is Our Great Heritage." The ladies of Christ Lutheran Church offered goodie bags to pack for the drive home.

The next rally will be held September 25–26, 2015, in Lakewood, Washington.

Submitted by Erica K. Jacobsen



(Left to right): Officers include Matilda Kahler, Brenda Hackett, Jan Sparley, and Kathy Ronholt.



Truth Makes Us Free

At Jesus' trial, Pontius Pilate asked, "What is truth?" It does not surprise us that a pagan would ask such a question. What is astounding is that many people in academia, the media, and everyday life are still asking this question. In this post-modern climate, truth is only personal—whatever people experience, decide, or feel.

This post-modern philosophy challenges us because it seems to destroy the very foundation of our faith. If truth is only experienced, it cannot be revealed. Especially, religious truth cannot be known. Therefore, everyone is to live according to their own "truths" and not impose their "truth" on others.

Whether or not Noah had to deal with such "post-modern philosophy," we are not told. However, when Noah warned the people that God would send a flood, the people clung to their own truth—there is not enough water to flood the whole world. They regarded their science and knowledge superior to God's revelation. After the rain started falling, their philosophy and truth failed them, and they all drowned.

Modern science has declared that such a worldwide flood was impossible, and it never happened. The story about Noah is just a retelling of ancient myths from other cultures. And while God has promised that He will never send another flood to cover the world, people today forget that Jesus promised to return at the end of the world, when all people will be judged according to His Law. Modern science declares that life after death is a myth, that this world will end billions of years from now—or never—and that heaven is another myth.

The prophets sent to Judah tried to warn the people about God's judgments. Jeremiah especially suffered persecution because the people and king would not listen to him. They reasoned that Jerusalem was God's chosen city, with God's temple in it. Therefore God would protect them for the honor of His name, even if His chosen people worshipped idols and lived wickedly. They would not listen to God's Word, and many were killed when the Babylonians captured and destroyed Jerusalem.

In the past 100 years, scientists and researchers have discovered many wonderful facts about the universe and world that we live in. Medical researchers have discovered new therapies and medicines that have made life better for millions of people. New discoveries are being reported every day—from barren planets in our galaxy to the nature of the three quarks that make up protons and neutrons.

While these discoveries have brought many changes to modern life, they do not tell the whole story. Because people's vision and testing equipment is limited, scientists cannot examine everything to say that they see the whole picture and know the whole truth about life, the world, and our universe.

God did not leave it up to mankind to discover the truth about God—for our sinful nature blinds us to the truth and people tend to create gods like themselves. God took it upon Himself to reveal truth to the human race. We confess these revealed truths with the words of the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds.

God's purpose in His revealed Word is described by John: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). The truth we need to know and believe is that Jesus bound Himself to suffer death in order to set sinners free from sin and that He promises a life that will never end (see John 5:24, 6:40).



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

Retirement of *Lutheran Sentinel* Editor



Rev. Theodore Gullixson

Twenty years ago, in August 1995, I received a telephone call asking me if I would be interested in becoming the next editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel*. I attended the first of many ELS Board for Publications meetings in November 1995 as editor. The first issue that I produced was January 1996.

Since that time, the *Lutheran Sentinel* work has changed from working with paper to computers, changed from receiving articles in the mail to mostly electronic media, changed from a black and white publication to full color, and changed from a magazine produced every month to one issued every other month.

With my recent retirement from the full-time public ministry, it is also time for me to retire from the work as editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel*. The magazine needs younger men to continue to bring the Gospel message to the people of our synod. I will continue working until the July/August 2015 convention issue.

I wish to thank those who have helped me during the past twenty years as part of the *Lutheran Sentinel* staff: the Rev. Wayne Halvorson, the Rev. Paul Madson, and the Rev. Robert Harting. Many others should be thanked, especially those on the former Board of Publications, the proofreaders, the writers of

the regular “Pastor, I Have a Question” and “Cross Currents” columns, and the Rev. Paul Fries as graphic designer.

I also thank the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod for letting me serve them as the editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel*. I pray that this publication may continue to be a blessing to many people as the synod enters its second century of proclaiming Christ to the world.

Yours in Christ,

Theodore G. Gullixson