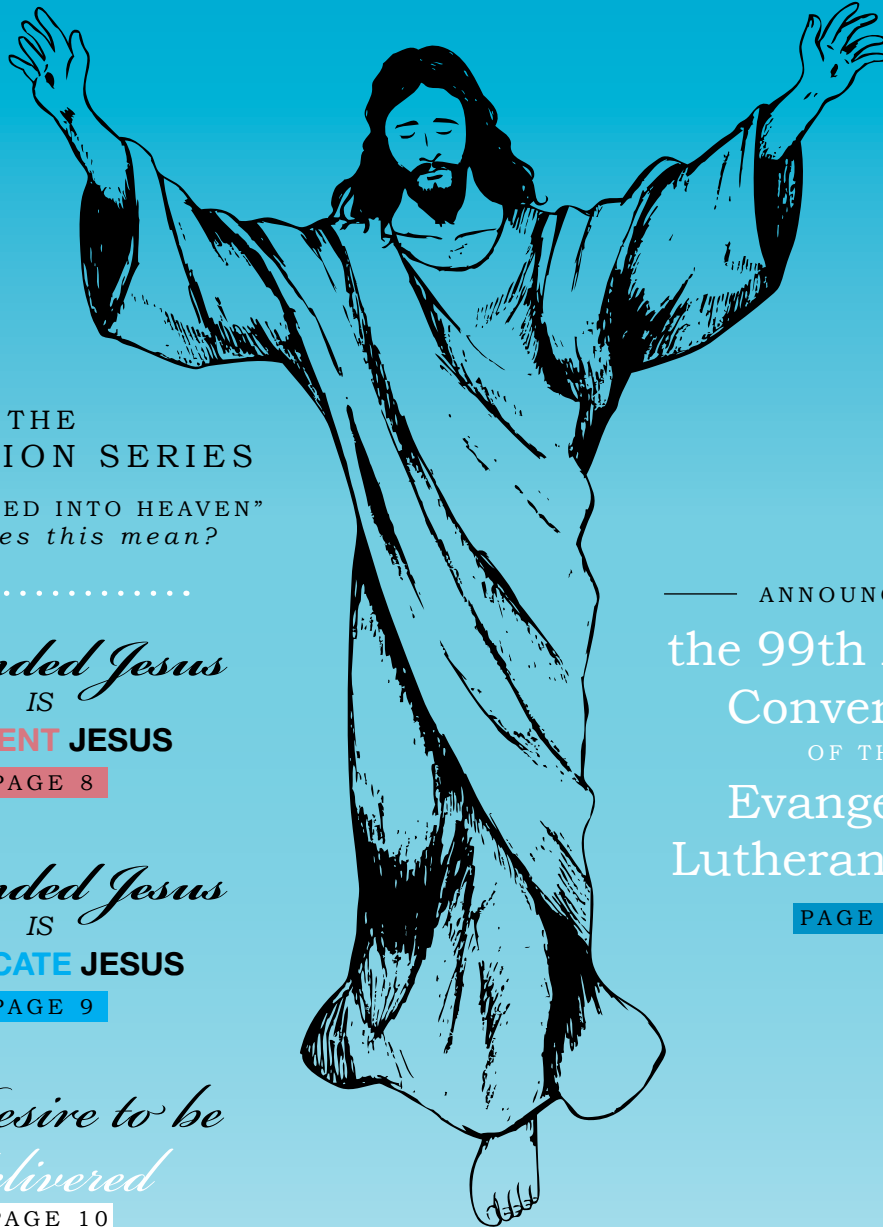


LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD



THE ASCENSION SERIES

“HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN”
What does this mean?

.....

Ascended Jesus
IS

PRESENT JESUS

PAGE 8

Ascended Jesus
IS

ADVOCATE JESUS

PAGE 9

*A Desire to be
Delivered*

PAGE 10

— ANNOUNCING: —

the 99th Annual
Convention
OF THE
Evangelical
Lutheran Synod

PAGE 12



No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. (John 3:13)

Thanks for Thorns

Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

Interesting ironies appear in Scripture. For one, there is the first promise of the Savior (Genesis 3:15). The wily serpent thinks he is able to strike a lethal blow to the woman's Offspring by his venomous bite into the heel. In reality, the death of the Promised One delivers the deathblow to the devil's reign over humanity. Or take another twist. The high priest Caiaphas unwittingly prophesies what Jesus does through his death when he maliciously advocates, *"It is better...one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish"* (John 11:50, 51).

There's another great twist. We see it in the way the Apostle Paul speaks of his "thorn in the flesh." We don't know what it was. Probably a physical ailment of some sort. Suggestions have been offered, including eyesight troubles. Whatever the "thorn," he describes it as a "messenger of Satan" meant to torment him. But what a healthy surprise! The trouble he was experiencing, even while praying fervently three times for its removal, was turning out by God's providence to be a messenger of grace! Remember the Lord's answer? *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Paul easily could have been conceited. He was a popular missionary. He had inside information—receiving visions from the Lord. To ward off any egocentric temptations, the "messenger" he identified at first as evil contained a twist for good, woven by his gracious Savior-God.

Does this happen for you? Is there a deeply challenging stress, one that easily could lead you astray, but by God's grace has been miraculously twisted to bring you even closer to him? No matter what the "thorn in the flesh" is for a believer, each of us, like Paul, can view it as God's gift to keep us in the true faith, —holding only to His grace in

Christ alone for the forgiveness of our sins and for the gift of eternal life awaiting all who trust in His promises (Romans 8:28).

Job showed a twist. Satan's intention was to have him curse the Creator. Through the tragedies he endured, God in his mercy moved Job to "bless" and not curse. Joseph endured pain and loss from his brothers. God in his mercy had him look back and assess: *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives"* (Genesis 50:20).

We have a crucified, risen, and ascended Savior! Shall we be surprised if he weaves an interesting twist into the experiences of our lives? He has everything in his loving control.

So... thank Him also for thorns.

REVEREND
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LUTHERAN SENTINEL

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THE LUTHERAN SENTINEL / MAY - JUNE 2016 / VOLUME 99 / NUMBER 3 / ISSN 0024-7510

PUBLISHED BY:
The Evangelical Lutheran Synod
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

ADDRESS EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
Rev. Paul Fries
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

**ADDRESS CIRCULATION CORRESPONDENCE
and ADDRESS CORRECTIONS TO:**
Lutheran Sentinel
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

**PERIODICAL POSTPAID AT MANKATO, MN 56001
AND ADDITIONAL OFFICES. POSTMASTER:**
Send changes (Form 3579) to
Lutheran Sentinel
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

The *Lutheran Sentinel* is the official publication of the **Evangelical Lutheran Synod** and is published six times per year. The subscription price is \$12.00 per year with reduced rates available for blanket subscriptions at \$10.00 through a member congregation.

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A BRIEF HISTORY

Home Missions
in the ELS**EARLIEST HOME MISSION WORK**

Our history of home missions has ties back to the first pastors arriving from Europe as our nation expanded into a new frontier. The earliest home mission work is very well summarized in the synodical history book *Built On The Rock*.

Pastors such as H.A. Preus, J. A. Ottesen, and U.V. Koren, were typical of the synod's home missionaries. Many of them covered so extensive a territory that, as time passed and as new pastors arrived to share in the work, their labors resulted in sometimes a dozen, two dozen congregations being formed in the area they first served alone. It meant travelling on horseback or on foot. Wading across rivers. Slogging through swamps. Sweating under the hot sun. Feeling cold, biting winds down to their very bones. Trudging through rain and snow.

(*Built On The Rock*, page 9, 1992, Evangelical Lutheran Synod).

The average pastor in the mid-1850s received a \$400.00-per-year salary and many on the frontier lived in simple one-room cabins. To be sure, members of their congregations also provided much of the food and firewood needed to care for the pastors' families.

SNAPSHOTS IN HISTORY

After the reorganization in 1918 at the second synod convention, a Home Mission Board was elected. Soon after the reorganization, there were missions on the East and West coasts. Twenty-five years later (1943), the synod received \$83,000.00 from its sixty-five member congregations. The prior year (1942), the Home Mission Board reported the subsidy support of twenty-one congregations costing \$7,140.00 and salaries for seven missionaries totaling \$9,000.00. We jump ahead another twenty-five years to 1968 and we find eighty-eight congregations with a synodical budget of \$155,000.00. The Home Mission Board budget for that year was \$29,240.00. Ten congregations were receiving Home Mission Board support to varying degrees.

HOME MISSION WORK TODAY

We have seen that from the earliest missions through the snapshots in history that the cost of doing mission work has been on the rise. That trend has not changed. In 2015, the ELS had one hundred and thirty-one congregations and our synodical giving was reported at \$743,652.77. The Board for Home Outreach (BHO) supported one exploratory mission, three home missions, and two congregations at a cost of \$283,000.00. In 2016, the BHO will be working with two of our home missions involved in building projects, and one of our home missions will be buying a plot of land in 2017. The need for monetary support is great and will continue to grow.

As heirs of the Reformation and heirs of our early ELS missionary fathers, we have a great opportunity to take our ELS's Home Missions well into the next 100 years. How? By generously supporting this anniversary thank offering with our gifts. Remember, this gracious command of our Lord is backed by a gracious promise.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"
(Matthew 28:19-20).

Will you help us support home missions? You will have an opportunity to support this work individually or through your home congregations soon. The other place to show support will be at the annual Synod Convention, June 19-23, 2016. We are asking our pastors and delegates as well as guests to come forward with a gift and/or a promise in support of this offering in order that we may continue to "Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done."

REVEREND
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CONTRIBUTING WRITER
ELS EVANGELISM & MISSION COUNSELOR



QUESTION:

Q

So many people today are replacing the funeral with a “Celebration of Life.” Is that acceptable in our church?

ANSWER:

A

A “Celebration of Life” is an event encouraged by the funeral industry to remember the life of the beloved dead. It is also called a memorial service. More and more, mourners choose a “Celebration of Life” to say goodbye to their loved ones. One local funeral home includes this phrase in its radio advertising: “A funeral isn’t a day in a life but a lifetime in a day.”

Christians mourn, but not as others. We cherish memories of the lives of our beloved who have passed on to the heavenly rest. We shed tears when those we know and love are called home. But we mourn with the hope of eternal life earned for us by our resurrected Savior (I Thessalonians 4:13).

Throughout history, funeral customs have changed. This advice is offered to pastors concerning this matter:

Nowhere in Scripture are we told that believers had any kind of religious service in connection with the burial of the dead (cf Mt. 14:12; 27:59-61; Ac 8:2). The church is exercising Christian liberty when it sanctifies a funeral and burial with the Word of God and prayer. An excellent opportunity for a confession of Christian hope and faith is also involved. For that very reason, however, care must be taken that nothing connected with the burial contradicts this testimony. (The Shepherd under Christ, page 294).

A Christian burial is a privilege of church membership. A Christian burial is a celebration of the life of Jesus for us. Because the wages of our sin is death, Jesus was born to take our nature upon Himself. He lived a perfect life in place of all sinful human beings. He paid the penalty our sin has earned (Romans 6:23). We die only to live again forever in heaven with the Sav-

ior. Memories of our beloved dead do not give us hope. Our hope centers in God’s Son. He paid the wages our sins earned. He suffered death in our stead. He alone took the sting out of death (I Corinthians 15: 55). Because Jesus paid the ransom, we are redeemed. By faith, we live with the sure and certain hope of eternal life. Our confession of hope is generated by our faith in Jesus and what He did for us. Christians confess this faith as our hope.

We gather for the Christian burial to mourn the death of our beloved departed by hearing the hope we have in Jesus. Christian pastors preach Jesus and Him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2). This is the purpose of the Christian burial. We comfort mourners with the good news that Jesus, in whom the beloved dead believed, has procured salvation for our deceased loved one—for us all. We will see each other again before the throne of God. We will be together again in the Resurrection.

We also remember the beloved dead. We celebrate the life of faith lived by the dead believer. Those memories will not dominate the service. It will not replace the preaching of the Gospel. We celebrate the life of Jesus for us and give thanks for the one we mourn.

When pastors lead congregations in worship, they will let the Gospel dominate. They will preach Jesus. If someone calls such a ceremony a celebration of life, the Christian pastor will understand that to mean it is a service in celebration of the life of Jesus for the dead sinner. We will remember the dead with the hope we have in Jesus and be grateful for the love of both.

Celebrating *JESUS* who is *THE LIFE*; this is the good news that comforts mourning Christians and helps wipe the tears from our eyes.



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the *Gospel* according to
ISAIAH

PART 3: ISAIAH SEES THE CHRIST CHILD (ISAIAH 7, 9)

*“Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,
and shall call His name Immanuel.”*

(Isaiah 7:14)b

“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given.”

(Isaiah 9:6)

.....

*Isaiah hath foretold It, In words of promise sure,
And Mary’s arms enfold It, A Virgin meek and pure.*

(ELH 121 v. 2)

Are you thinking the timing is all wrong for this subject? That this belongs better in December? This is 6 months too early! Try 700 years. These words which are a “Christmas Gospel” were written by Isaiah 700-plus years before they took place. Isaiah was enabled to see the Christ.

➤ **READ: ISAIAH 7:10-16**

(You are encouraged to read Scripture portions from your Bible.)

The prophecy of the virgin birth came in the midst of a political crisis. Isaiah's country, Judah (the Southern Kingdom), was being attacked by Israel (the Northern Kingdom) along with Israel's new friend Syria. The king of Judah was tempted to make friends with the reigning world super-power, Assyria.

This would mean joining with heathen idol worshippers in the interest of worldly peace and physical safety. In this moment of crisis, God sent the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz with an invitation to ask God for a sign (v. 10). He was calling upon Ahaz to trust God. Ahaz refused: "I will not ask!" He refused to trust God.

The prophet Isaiah then spoke the words of promise: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." This is the Gospel. He calls us by the Gospel, in the midst of our political crises and darkness of this age, to be enlightened with (dwell in the light of) His gifts.

Luke 1:30-35, and Matthew 1:18-23, show this coming true in precise detail. The angel tells Joseph and Mary that Jesus is conceived by the Holy Spirit. Although He received true human flesh from Mary, He did not receive a sinful flesh. He was conceived holy, for us. He remained without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He purifies our sinful flesh and cleanses our conscience. When we eat His body in the Lord's Supper, and our flesh is joined with His flesh; and when we drink His blood in the Supper, which cleanses us from all sin, we see that He is truly Immanuel – "God with us."

➤ **READ: ISAIAH 9:2-7**

(You are encouraged to read Scripture portions from your Bible.)

Perhaps you know by heart the beautiful names given to Christ: Wonderful (nothing more wonderful than sins forgiven!), Counselor (bringing true consolation), Mighty God (destroying the work of the devil), Everlasting Father (you are His child by baptism), Prince of Peace (bestowing peace with God).

But the greatest part is that Isaiah – who earlier had seen that a virgin would give birth – does not say that unto the virgin Mary is the Child born, but: "Unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given." This is what the angels said: "Unto you is born ... a Savior."

Martin Luther said: "This is for us the hardest point, not so much to believe that He is the Son of a Virgin and God Himself, as to believe that this Son of God is ours. He who does feel it has become another man. Truly it is marvelous in our eyes that God should place a little child in the lap of a virgin and that all our blessedness should lie in Him. This Child belongs to all mankind." (*The Martin Luther Christmas Book, 23*)



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NEXT ARTICLE (PART 4) IN THE SERIES: **ISAIAH SEES THE SUFFERING SAVIOR**

Ascended Jesus IS PRESENT JESUS

Jesus is not far away. The fact that Jesus ascended into heaven does not mean He is now lightyears away from earth. Jesus is near.

.....

Jesus loves me! He is near. He is with His Church so dear. And the Spirit He has sent By His Word and Sacrament.
(ELH 179 v.4)

The proximity of Jesus is not only about His divine nature, who He is as true God and His omnipresence, but also includes His human nature, who He is as true Man, born of the Virgin Mary. The whole Jesus, not a divided Jesus, is near us. His One Person and two natures, divine and human, are not divided; His human body is not in a galaxy far, far away. He, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who suffered, died, was buried, rose again, and ascended into heaven, is as near as His Word, as near as His Baptism, His Absolution, His Body and Blood in His Supper. This is the great comfort our Lord desires us to know, to receive, to believe.

The truth of the presence of Jesus Christ with us here and now is not a truth subject to the prying of the human mind as it attempts to measure the distance from earth to heaven using a universe-sized caliper. It is a truth revealed to us in God's Word, one which is received by faith. It is a truth that brings us the great comfort of knowing that the One who promised to be with us always is doing just that: *being with us right now.*

There are many enemies of Christ and His people that work to create distance between the Good Shepherd and His flock. Much of that satanic work

is directed at creating doubt about the promises of Jesus. To quiet doubts, we hear the voice of Jesus, brought to us by the work of God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings us God's Word and blessed Sacraments. Through those God-given ways of bringing divine mercy and forgiveness to each of us, the Holy Spirit does His work of calling, gathering, enlightening, and sanctifying the whole Church on earth and keeping it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

This comfort is necessary in this world filled with trial and struggle, with doubts and fears. Jesus did not shy away from letting His disciples know what their future held as they followed Him. "*Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy*" (John 16:20). We have the Comforter, the very One Jesus promised to send (John 14:26, 16:7). By this Comforter we receive joy that replaces our sorrow. We receive forgiveness to cover our sin, salvation to replace our condemnation, life to replace death—all given to us through the Word of God, the washing of regeneration, the Body and Blood of Jesus, given and shed for you for the remission of sins.

Jesus is not far away. He comes to us in the ways He gives us to know and find Him—not just anywhere, but where His Word is. There we are to find Him, His promises, and thereby to be comforted, confident in the Christ-for-us.

O grant that in Thy holy Word We here may live and die, dear Lord; And when our journey endeth here, Receive us into glory there.
(ELH 511 v. 9)



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Ascended Jesus

IS

ADVOCATE JESUS

.....

“I’m not very good at prayer.”

So Christians often criticize themselves, perhaps comparing their prayers to the flamboyant offerings of the preachers they see on television or YouTube. Jesus had harsh words for the flamboyant pray-ers of His day, the Pharisees. “They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long” (Matthew 23:5). In one of his parables (Luke 18:9-14), Jesus approved of the humble, repentant prayer of a tax collector, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner,” compared to the audacious prayer of a Pharisee, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.”

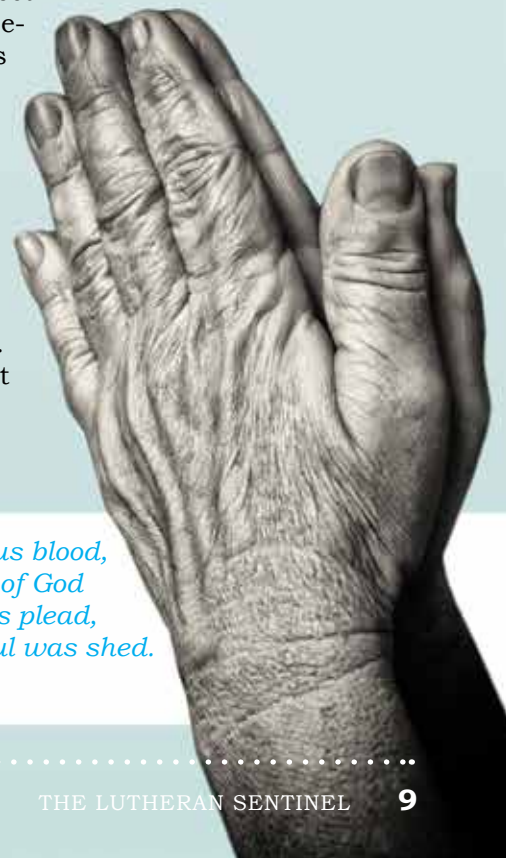
Prayer acceptable to God is prayer offered in humility, repentance, and faith. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise (Psalm 51:17). The effectiveness of prayer is not dependent on well-polished words, dramatic gesture, pain-inducing postures, or manipulated emotions. Prayer is not effective because of our efforts, but because of the effectiveness of Christ’s redeeming sacrifice. There is no secret formula of words, repetitions, or phrases that can make your prayer more powerful. Christ’s invitation to pray, coupled with his promise to hear and answer our prayers, empowers our prayers. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Whether you realized it or not, your prayers offered in faith in Christ have always been powerful and effective. Your prayer may be simple and hurried, like Peter’s prayer as he began to sink be-

low the waves: “Lord, save me” (Matthew 14:30). But that little prayer was immediately effective! Answering those three short words, Jesus took Peter by the hand and saved him from drowning.

The hardships of living in our own weakness-of-flesh sometimes makes conscious prayer impossible. You sleep through the night without consciously praying, yet God still watches over you. The day may come when dementia, Alzheimer’s, coma, or the hour of death will make you physically and mentally unable to pray, but even then, prayers persist on your behalf. Scripture teaches that the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, and even when we do not know what to pray for, “the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Romans 8:26). And because Jesus has risen from the tomb and ascended into heaven, you have an Advocate with the Father who constantly intercedes for you (Romans 8:34).

You do know how to pray. You can be confident that God loves to hear your prayers and He promises to answer. And best of all, behind and beyond all your prayers you have God the Holy Spirit praying for you. You have Christ, your Advocate with the Father, interceding for you in heaven, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Take comfort in that knowledge!



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*Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
Which at the mercy seat of God
For ever doth for sinners plead,
For me, e'en for my soul was shed.*
(ELH 432)

A Desire to be Delivered

St. Paul writes:

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.... Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.”

(Philippians 1:21-23).

.....

Paul’s desire to depart and be with Christ is a desire all Christians share. We have a desire to depart because this sinful world is dominated by the devil and His evil forces. In this world, we often do not fit in and have a desire to depart and be with our Savior in heaven. Our prayer is the prayer Jesus taught us in the Seventh Petition: “Deliver us from evil.” And to that Luther adds what this means: “We pray in this petition, as the sum of all, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil of body and soul, property and honor; and at last, when the hour of death shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.”

Our Lord has ascended into heaven. And we want to be with Him where, as St John writes, “*God Himself will be with them.... And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away*” (Revelation 21:3-4).

Jesus has ascended to heaven and we have the certain hope of joining Him one day. Our hope is certain not because of our own righteousness, but rather because of Jesus’ righteousness. Jesus earned that righteousness for us when He took all our sins and the sins of all people on Himself and

went to the cross where God punished Him in our place. And now in Him we have the forgiveness of all our sins—forgiveness that we can claim as a free gift by faith alone.

When we join Jesus in heaven, our prayer “Deliver us from evil” will be fully resolved. And Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven. For He has told us so in His Word: “*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also*” (John 14:1-4).

Jesus has ascended to heaven, yet we are still with Him by faith. St Paul writes: “*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory*” (Colossians 3:1-4).



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Accidentally LUTHERAN LYRICS

WHEN A POPULAR ARTIST OR SONGWRITER, PROBABLY BY PURE ACCIDENT, GIVES EXPRESSION TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN KEEPING WITH LUTHERAN CONFESSION.

.....

SONG: SOMETHING IN THE WATER **ARTIST:** CARRIE UNDERWOOD **YEAR:** 2014

*Got washed in the water, washed in the blood
And now I'm changed -- And now I'm stronger
There must be something in the water*

That is Really Something!

“Show your work.” That was the common refrain we heard from math teachers at many levels. The correct solution to x was something, but if you didn't understand and couldn't demonstrate what brought you to that solution, the answer was of minor value. You may even get no credit at all.

“There must be something in the water.” This lyric from the 2014 blockbuster hit by pop/country star Carrie Underwood references Christian Baptism. In doing so, this lyric arrives at a Biblical solution: there is indeed something in the water. What remains highly ambiguous (if not missing altogether) is the Biblical and very Lutheran “arithmetic” delivering one to that something-in-the-water solution.

Our math teachers were interested in “shown work” for good reason. There's an inherent danger in having an answer without the “arithmetic” to support it. That danger is called innovation. Innovation can be good in its proper place: technology, agriculture, medicine, etc. But in very objective matters, like math and Baptism, innovation is not good.

Vital, then, that we get behind the “something” to the objective arithmetic of Baptism. The lyric offers a few by-products of the water: a changed-ness and a newfound strength. These effects, while noteworthy, are still effects and not the solution to the “something” posited.

The Gospel, however, doesn't offer ambiguous results of water-Baptism: a changed-ness and newfound strength. It does not expect us to be innovative in solving for how things changed and how this new strength comes about. In the Gospel, God shows all His Baptism-work.

Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38).

Baptism is God's solution and He leaves no need to compute for the “what” of Baptism's “change” or the “how” of Baptism's “strength.” God's Word does all the Gospel arithmetic. It shows all its work. We are naturally steeped in our own sin and death. But God baptizes sinners. He changes our status with Baptism. With Baptism, God adds the blood of Christ to our sin-steeped souls. The result is forgiven sinners—ones who have not shiny outward appearances, but clean consciences before God's Law.

The strength behind this change is not magic water. It is the name attached to the water: baptized... in the name of Jesus Christ. That name is precisely the “something” that's in the water God has given in Baptism. That name takes this lyric, true as far as it goes, and subtracts from it all the ambiguity. In that name, we who are baptized have subtracted from us all that is properly our own: sin, guilt, and death. In that name, we who are baptized have added to us all that properly belongs to the Named One: righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

There is most certainly something in the water of Christian Baptism. It is certainly not some innovation we bring: a sincerity of heart or a decision of mind. Jesus is in that water. His death is there (Romans 6:3) to take from us all our sins. His name is there (Acts 2:38) to garb us in His righteousness, to secure to us a clean conscience before God (1 Peter 3:21). That is really “Something,” isn't it!



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SYNODSYNOPSIS

ANNOUNCING

the 99th Annual
Convention
OF THE
Evangelical Lutheran
Synod

the 60th Annual
Meeting
OF THE
Bethany Lutheran
College, Inc.

the 1st Annual
Meeting
OF THE
Lutheran Schools
of America, Inc.

“Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done: Give Thanks to His Name”

JUNE 19-23, 2016
MANKATO, MINNESOTA

SYNOD SUNDAY: JUNE 19

3:00 pm: Synod Sunday Service
SPEAKER: Rev. Shawn Stafford (Hartland, Minn.)
LITURGIST: Rev. Chris Dale (Port St. Lucie, Fla.)
4:30 pm: Supper

MONDAY: JUNE 20

9:00 am: Opening Convention Service

TUESDAY: JUNE 21

1:00 pm: Convention Essay
ESSAYIST: Rev. Timothy Hartwig (Mankato, Minn.)

WEDNESDAY: JUNE 22

1:00 pm: Convention Essay
3:00 pm: Anniversaries Observed:
65 years..... John Moldstad
55 years..... David Lillegard
50 years..... Wayne Halvorson
50 years..... Thomas Kuster
50 years..... Erling Teigen
50 years..... Richard Wiechmann
40 years..... Erwin Ekhoﬀ
40 years..... Theodore Gullixson
40 years..... Thomas Westendorf
25 years..... Richard Fyffe

7:00 pm: Communion Service:
SPEAKER: Rev. Tim Buelow (Carthage, Mo.)
LITURGIST: Rev. Luke Ulrich (Mankato, Minn.)

THURSDAY: JUNE 23

8:30 am: Unfinished Business

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

BETHANY LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Pursuant to the guidelines of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod for calling a professor to the seminary (cf. Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary II.A.2), the Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, herewith issues to the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod a call for nominations to a professorship.

The nominees must be ordained clergymen of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or of its fellowship.

Nominees are to be qualified primarily to teach Old Testament, which requires expertise in the Hebrew language. They shall have a secondary qualification in Symbolics (Confessions of the church) and Church History. In addition to this, they will serve as the supervisor of the Senior Research Project program.

Nominations are to reach the undersigned by June 1, 2016.

BOARD OF REGENTS' SECRETARY
PAUL CHAMBERLIN
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ELS HISTORICAL SOCIETY TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING

SYMPOSIUM ON ELS HOME MISSIONS THROUGH THE YEARS

SUNDAY: JUNE 19

Bethany Lutheran College / Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center

SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY:

3:00 pm: Synod Sunday Service, Trinity Chapel

4:15 pm: Synod Sunday Dinner

5:00 pm: Registration

6:00 pm: Symposium, Sig Lee Theatre

- *Early Home Mission Work in the Norwegian Synod* / Rev. Bernt Tweit
- *"An Oasis in the Desert"* / Rev. Professor Michael Smith
- Reflections from congregation members in Hope Lutheran Church, Leander, Texas

7:30 pm: Historical Society Business Meeting

OUTREACH

CELC CONFERENCE IN COLOMBIA

ELS Board for World Outreach members Vicar Matt Behmer and Pastor Tom Heyn, along with Pastor Jaime Cortez and Pastor Segundo Gutiérrez from our Peruvian church and Ariel Arriagada and Mario Gálvez from our Chilean mission, traveled to Medellín, Colombia, for a regional meeting of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC). The conference theme was "United Under the Cross of the Ministry." There were representatives from Colombia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and the United States. The conference included studies based on Daniel Deutschlander's Theology of the Cross and featured the work of Academia Cristo, an online ministry platform that reaches over 330,000 people every day. New liturgical settings and hymns in Spanish were also introduced to attendees. Most importantly, the conference provided many opportunities for collaboration, encouragement, and fellowship.

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What if My Calling Means **KILLING?**

“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.”

Genesis 9:5–6 (ESV)

God said this after Noah exited the ark. Man’s sin had so grieved God that He sent the flood. Sinful as they were, His promise to come as the Seed of the Woman was still on the table. Clearly, God loves every single human life.

What, then, of those whose vocation is to kill? These church members, friends, and family serve in the military and law enforcement. While killing isn’t their only mission, they must always be ready and even have special training for this grim work.

How do God’s children reconcile their killing work with His value of human life? We visited with six ELS & WELS people in this line of work: an Air Force fighter-jet pilot, an Army helicopter pilot (and former Ranger), three Army Special Ops soldiers, and a civilian police officer. We asked if they would be willing to share their thoughts about **three questions**. Those questions and their candid responses follow and they allow the rest of us to: 1) see the difficult work they do for us, 2) resolve to support them in any and every way we can, and 3) pray “Come quickly Lord Jesus.”



1. You are familiar with the command “You shall not kill.” Yet the work you have chosen could easily put you in a position where you are expected to do exactly that. How have you reconciled this seeming contradiction?

Taking life is a terrible thing, dramatized and downplayed by movies, books, etc., which does a disservice to the gravity of the decision. I go back to the ways that taking a life is “ok” either in defense of life or as sanctioned by the state (as taught in confirmation class).

This was one of the first questions I asked when I was going through Bible Information Class. (Pastor said) that God gave the government the sword to defend His people and that being on the tip of that sword is God-pleasing. I haven’t looked back since.

I remember sermons talking about this. In Somalia, I recognized I was sent by the government and that in some cases it was a matter between soldiers on my left and right and them. Often times there isn’t a distinct thought process on the battlefield and the training becomes automatic.

When first joining the service, I did not know how to reconcile the two and had to ask my pastor. I did not want to be joining a profession that was inherently wrong.

2. We grant that the cause is just and the actions are justified. Even so, can you comment on challenges or temptations with which a Christian might be confronted?

A temptation in combat is to undervalue the life that I am taking rather than fulfill the responsibility that God has given me. It is a slippery slope for sure. I have been fortunate to be able to turn it on and off when I transition from overseas to home. Some are not so fortunate.

War is ugly, raw, exhausting violence that in some cases turns into moments of survival. We’ve seen American atrocities such as in Abu Ghraib or urinating on enemy bodies. It takes a tremendous amount of courage to address a band of brothers in scenarios like that after all that you have endured together.

Hard situations bring out the best and worst in people. The current enemy our nation faces is pretty evil, but in the end they are sinful human beings (like us). In these extreme situations, a Christian must be aware and manage the feelings of anger, fear, etc., and avoid the temptations that accompany them.

*In your blest body let me be / E’en as the branch is in the tree / Thy life my life supplying.
P. NICOLAI*

3. Even when the cause and the action are just, many warriors—Christian and non-Christian—are haunted with feelings of guilt and remorse. How would you console someone with such feelings?

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I think I would try to help them understand that their service was not in vain. Our soldiers over the past 14+ years have seen and done things that no person should have to see or do. Many of them are experiencing these things in their late teens, early twenties. I think the most important thing to do is to listen to them, let them know how important and valued their actions are, and point them to the cross.

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I believe most people will have those feelings throughout their lives even if they were justified. One may frequently arm chair quarterback; this goes for bad as well as the right decisions. Whether it's detaining someone or making the decision to not kill an enemy combatant who surrenders at the last minute, knowing they have caused harm to your organization, there can be many difficult decisions in combat.

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Point someone to the Gospel, though, and remind them that Jesus died for everyone's sins, even theirs. There are also similar stories in the Bible that may be helpful: David, Joshua, etc.

PRAYER:

Thank You, Lord God, for giving us men and women willing to carry such heavy burdens for our safety! Help us to help and encourage them. Amen.



LUTHERAN SENTINEL

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REMEMBERING: OUR MILITARY FALLEN ON MEMORIAL DAY AND EVERY DAY

When we really step back and look at our lives here in America compared to other countries, it doesn't take long to see countless blessings. We know all of these are from God's grace. A significant aspect of giving thanks to God for such blessings is remembering those who have sacrificed their lives on our behalf and remembering their families as well.

Just over one million U.S. men and women have died during service in wartime and about 42 million people have served in the military in service to their neighbor. As Christians, we know that Memorial Day is not a religious holiday. It is, however, underestimated by Christians if known merely as a three-day weekend, the end of the school year, or the beginning of the camping season and the start of summer cookouts. Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who died in service to our nation.

Although several cities and towns claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day, Waterloo, New York, was

officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966. Regardless of the exact date or location of its origins, one thing is clear—Memorial Day was a product of the Civil War and a desire to honor the fallen. One documented case was in the spring of 1866 in Columbus, Mississippi. After an elderly mother had decorated with flowers the graves of her two sons killed in battle, she walked to the corner of the cemetery and placed her leftover flowers on the grave of an unknown Union soldier.

"What are you doing? That's a union soldier's grave!" yelled a Southerner. "Yes, I know that, but I also know that somewhere in the North a mother or young wife mourns for them as we do for ours," responded the mother.

This compassionate and humbling deed of decorating military graves with flowers set into motion what became Decoration Day and then evolved to our current Memorial Day as we remember our nation's military fallen.

In addition to remembering and reflecting on the fallen military veterans, we can show honor to the fallen by supporting and encouraging the living. One way to do this is through our new Lutheran Military Support Group (LMSG). This newly-formed ELS & WELS veterans' partnership is requesting each congregation to have a veteran liaison to lead initiatives for organizing ways to help military veterans and their families. Memorial Day and Veterans Day are especially good times to show your support through your volunteering or donations of support.

To learn more go to:
www.LutheranMilitary.org

Finally, please do remember in prayer and with thanksgiving those who are serving our country, those who have served, and their families.

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