

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD



**SYNOD
CONVENTION
2017**

DETAILS **pg. 15**

LYA17

REGISTRATION DETAILS

pg. 15

THE CROSS:

- **As God's Foolish Throne**
- **And Our Own**
- **As Fountain of Christian Life**

pgs. 8-11

IT IS WRITTEN:



"Jesus Christ and Him crucified..." (1 Corinthians 2:2)

Always Finding Our Center

Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

Anniversaries seize our attention. They can make us think and thank. The 500th anniversary of Lutheranism gives us plenty to ponder and thankfully treasure. In particular, this applies to a church body bearing the name of the great Reformer.

Members of our synod could compile quite a list of valuable gifts bestowed by the Lutheran Reformation. The catechisms, the Bible translation of *Die Heilige Schrift*, commentaries by Luther, the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, the writings on the Sacraments, the bold stand on God's Word alone, the wonderful hymns, devotions, and sermons, even the humor and wit of Dr. Luther are things we hold dear. But one treasure rises above all and makes us most grateful. We hold high Luther's passion for transmitting the chief teaching of the Bible. We sinners are justified – declared forgiven, holy, and righteous – on account of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this good news is received by faith in order to have everlasting life in heaven.

No greater doctrine can be proclaimed by the pastors, teachers, and missionaries trained under the guidance of a Lutheran synod than what the Apostle Paul has clearly set forth in Romans: *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus* (3:23-24).

During Lent, we are driven to the cross to see how all our sins have been put on the Lamb of God sacrificed in our place. Therefore, we do not bear them. Christ has borne them for us! In his

comments on Isaiah 53, Luther stresses how the article of justification not only brings comfort but also strikes down any kind of self-righteousness. He writes under Isaiah 53:11:

Therefore we must diligently observe this article. I see that there are many snorers treating this article. They are the ones who consider these words the way a man does who looks at his face in a mirror (as James says, 1:23f.) The moment they come upon another object or business, they are overwhelmed, and they forget the grace of God. For that reason you must most diligently consider this article and not allow yourself to be led astray by other teachings, occupations, or persecutions. (LW 17:231)

To be centered in the proclamation of justification is what we wish and pray for at all times. Sadly, many churches that once carried this Reformation treasure today fail to unveil it continually in pulpit and classroom. We ask our members and friends to pray pointedly that the “paradise-opening” doctrine for the young Martin Luther always attains and retains its scriptural prominence in the sanctuaries, educational institutions, and activities of our beloved Evangelical Lutheran Synod. By God's grace, may it be so.

REVEREND
JOHN A. MOLDSTAD
PRESIDENT, ELS
jamjr@blc.edu





LUTHERAN SENTINEL
MAR-APR 2017

HOME MISSIONS

4 Spotlight on Home Mission:
Divine Mercy Lutheran Church
REV. KYLE MADSON

2017 STUDY SERIES: APOLOGETICS

6 Jesus' Outrageous Claims
and Apologetics:
"Who do people say that I am?"
REV. DAVID THOMPSON

THE CROSS SERIES: 1

8 The Cross: As God's Foolish Throne
REV. JOE ABRAHAMSON

THE CROSS SERIES: 2

10 The Cross: and Our Own
REV. EDWARD BRYANT

THE CROSS SERIES: 3

11 The Cross: as Fountain of
Christian Life
REV. MICHAEL LILIENTHAL

CATECHISM IN CONTEXT SERIES

12 The Creed
REV. JEFF HENDRIX

VISUALIZING THE REFORMATION SERIES

14 Helping to Identify Martin Luther...
REV. LUKE ULRICH

EDITORS SERIES: REFORMATION VOCAB

16 The Righteousness of God
REV. KYLE MADSON

DEPARTMENTS:

- 2** From the President
- 5** Pastor, I have a Question
- 15** Synod Synopsis



THE LUTHERAN SENTINEL / MAR-APR 2017 / VOLUME 100 / NUMBER 2 / 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.

STAFF:

Rev. Kyle Madson *Editor*
Rev. Paul Fries *Editor-in-Chief*
Rev. Charles Keeler *Contributing Editor*
Denise Luehmann *Subscription Manager*
Jessie Fries *Proofreader*
Ryan Madson *Layout & Design*



ANNIVERSARY OFFERING

SPOTLIGHT ON HOME MISSION: DIVINE MERCY

In preparing to move to Texas in the spring of 2013, I explained to my two oldest children that there wouldn't be a church where we were headed -- That we would be going with the hope and prayer that God would cause one to grow up there.

After a few weeks of driving around in Texas, my son (2 ½ at the time) started pointing and asking, "Dad, what's that? How about that?" "Those are churches, son," I replied. And then the old adage – "Kids say the darndest things" - proved true. My son held me to my words: "Dad, I thought you said there wasn't a church here..."

My son's blunt observation was giving way to some of my own. There were churches everywhere here in North Texas: old churches, new churches, small churches in the country, monstrosities on the freeway... There were churches everywhere! The question flowed naturally:

Why ARE we here?

Do we have something different to say?

God has blessed the mission work here in Parker County, Texas. Through His Gracious Word and with your support, God has baptized infants, children, and adults into His family.



He has given a Gospel-rich home to some who'd come from one like it, but also to handfuls who, in spite of the "many churches" around, found themselves starving for the Good News.



You are supporting mission work here in Parker County, Texas – a place rife with churches because the uninterrupted voice of the Gospel, - the voice of a crucified and risen Jesus who IS PRESENT with forgiveness and life for the sinful and dying - because THAT voice still has something to say! Something that desperately needs to be heard.

I was just reminded of that the other week when a prospect and frequent visitor to church said to me, "I hope Divine Mercy is here for a long time. You have something people need to hear." And then, like my young son, we get to be the children who hold their Father to His Words:

*For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.
(Is. 55:10-11)*

REVEREND

KYLE MADSON

DIVINE MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH,
HUDSON OAKS, TX

A NOTE FROM THE ANNIVERSARY OFFERING COMMITTEE:

Our home missions work is an integral part of our ELS. Be sure to support the Anniversary Offering by giving generously.

Visit els.org/offering to learn more and support our students and missions online.

SEND YOUR GIFT TO:
ELS Anniversary Offering
6 Browns Ct.
Mankato, MN 56001

Q

QUESTION:

When Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, did Jesus (Son of God, Son of man, or both) die? If the Son of God died or both the Son of God and the Son of Man died, did that leave only two parts of the Triune God for the time Jesus the Son of God was dead?

.....

ANSWER:

We sing...

***Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the death of Christ, my God:
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.***
(TLH 175)

***Well might the sun in darkness hide and shut his glories in when God,
the mighty Maker, died, for man the creature's sin.***
(TLH 154)

O sorrow dread! Our God is dead.
(ELH 332)

A

The mystery is as great as that of the Incarnation when the second person of the Holy Trinity became human. The impossible happened. Jesus is both God and man. The Incarnation, the union of God and man, is permanent.

The question takes us to Good Friday. Upon the cross and in punishment for our sins, His Father forsook the Man who is truly God. We confess, "But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and coequal, so that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped" (The Athanasian Creed). The Unity of the Holy Trinity cannot be broken, and yet God the Father forsook God the Son as Jesus suffered the hell sin deserved. God, who cannot die, died in payment for the sin of all people in the person of Jesus the Christ (Acts 20:28, I Corinthians 15:3). There is never a time during which the Holy Trinity is limited to two persons and yet the Son of God died.

From the moment of His conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, God and man are united. Jesus died as the Son of Man and the Son of God. His death is real. God cannot die and yet the man who is God died for our sin. *Knowing this that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot* (I Peter 1:18-19).

Here are the words of two great Lutheran teachers:

"The death of Christ, the God-man, an ignominious death on the cross, was not a termination of His natural life in the course of nature, but a violent, though on His part voluntary, separation of body and soul, without, however, any cessation or suspension of the personal union of God and man in Christ, His body and soul remaining personally united with the divine nature of the Son of God" (Graebner. Doctrinal Theology, p. 121).

"Since Christ's death is the death of the Son of God, and, accordingly, not merely the departed soul, but also the entombed body remained in personal union with the Son of God, the possibility of death in the case of Christ passes human understanding" (Pieper. Christian Dogmatics, vol. 2, p. 313).

REVEREND
CHARLES KEELER
RESURRECTION LUTHERAN CHURCH
WINTER HAVEN, FL
cjohnk@aol.com

APOLOGETICS

"TO DEFEND A PERSON OR THING"

THIS ISSUE

PART 2: JESUS' OUTRAGEOUS CLAIMS AND APOLOGETICS

Jesus' Outrageous Claims and Apologetics:

Who do people say that I am?

I was an agnostic when I came to Bethany Lutheran College. I had also conveniently redefined sin, concluded no one religion could be true, and was convinced the Bible was filled with errors and myths. I had life figured out, I thought.

So when I walked onto campus, I found it rather strange that intelligent professors believed the Bible to be entirely true, as did most students. I attended chapel services, took required religion courses, and listened as Christianity was brought into other classes. This was a bizarre little world I had entered.

Though I did not fully realize it at the time, I was being encouraged to think about two critical questions: "Who am I?" and "Who is Jesus Christ?"

My religion class was an apologetics course ("The Case for Christianity") where this second question was dealt with via lectures, readings, one-on-one visits with the professor, and discussions (and debates) with fellow students. And the answers put forth – the claims of Christ – were outrageous.

These outrageous claims are fascinating. Christians sometimes take them for granted. This is not necessarily a bad thing, though it would be helpful if all Christians would remember these claims are outrageous, especially as they walk side by side with those who have a faulty or unclear understanding of the true identity of Christ. For as the records show, Jesus used his claims about himself to compel people to come to terms with both his identity and his work so they would ultimately be confronted with Law and Gospel.

It is these outrageous claims that can cause a person to say, "Whoa! Did I just hear what I think I heard Jesus say about himself?"

His outrageous claims take two forms. Some are *indirect*. For example, he says he is without sin;¹ he hands out forgiveness;² he prays as if he has been the one sending prophets to the Jews for centuries;³ he claims to be the heart and center of the Bible;⁴ and he preaches that eternal life is dependent totally on him alone.⁵

In other words, he talks as if he possesses attributes of God, and he does so without qualification. He never says anything like, "Now don't read too much into this." He lets them stand just as they are.

¹ John 8:36.

² Mark 2:9; Luke 7:48.

³ Luke 13:34.

⁴ John 5:39; Luke 24:26f.

⁵ John 6:35ff; 14:6.

And then there are *direct* claims where he clearly says, “Here’s who I am.” He does this in a variety of ways, but they all essentially point to one thing: he is God in human flesh.⁶ And not only did he make these claims himself, but others – both friends and foes – admit he was making these claims.⁷ In every one of these settings, he never corrects them by saying, “No, I didn’t really say that” or “Well, I really meant something less than that.” Again, he lets their understanding of his claims stand – “He’s telling us he is God” (which people would then either believe or reject).

When I evangelize, I often ask, “What would you think about me if I told you I was a king from some other realm or planet? Or what if I claimed to be God, the maker and preserver of all things? And furthermore, what would you think of me if I were serious and really believed these things about myself?” The other person always says something like, “You would need some real help.”

Jesus clearly was a man, made such claims, and he was completely serious. And people reacted as one would expect. His own family said, “He is out of his mind” and wanted to seize him.⁸ Others said, “He has a demon, and is insane.”⁹ Jewish leaders not only opted for the demon-possession theory, but also charged him with blasphemy. And, of course, there were those who believed him to be exactly who he claimed to be.¹⁰

So the choices are clear: possessed, crazy, a liar, or the Lord. His claims do not allow for believing he was a mere man who was a great prophet or a wonderful religious leader. Either he was God in the flesh or something quite disgusting.

I have found over and over that a simple explanation of these outrageous claims gets people thinking. It is not uncommon for them to say, “Wow, I have never thought about it like that.” It compels them to grapple with the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth just like it did when he walked on earth.

But two more things need to be said to complete this apologetic approach.

First, when Jesus made these claims, he backed them up – he provided undeniable testimony. His dozens and dozens of miracles were overwhelming proof that his claims were true.¹¹ This especially includes his resurrection – the ultimate defense or apologetic – which always needs to be placed before the doubter and unbeliever.¹²

But there is a second crucial element. This element deals with the other critical question, “Who am I?” The answer is, “A poor miserable sinner.” When Peter, James, and John traveled up the mount of Transfiguration with Jesus and saw the proof of his glory (that he was the eternal Son) and heard the thunderous voice of the Father as they entered the cloud, they were terrified, as sinners ought to be. When the voice and cloud were gone and when Christ’s glory was once again hidden under his humanity, he said to them, “Have no fear.” Why was he able to say this? Because in a little while, this man, who claimed to be and clearly was God, would travel up another mountain bearing the sins of the world. There on the cross he would receive what all poor, miserable sinners are supposed to receive: God’s wrath and punishment for sins, thereby purchasing real peace with God.

Apologetics, when done right, points to this free, undeserved, unconditional forgiveness and salvation. So even though a sinner may know who he is, he can also know who Jesus is, what he has done, and what that means. No other religion is founded on such claims, provides such historical evidence, or offers such eternal comfort. Christianity stands alone. It is true. And the fields are white for harvest.

REVEREND

DAVID THOMPSON

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

SAN ANTONIO, TX

* MEMBER, BOARD OF REGENTS FOR
BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE & SEMINARY

⁶ “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30); I am “the Son of God” (John 3:16-18; 5:25; 10:36); “Before Abraham was, I Am” (John 5:58); “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36f).

⁷ “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:16; see also John 11:27). “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” (John 19:7; see also Matthew 4:6; 14:33; 26:63-65; Luke 22:70-71).

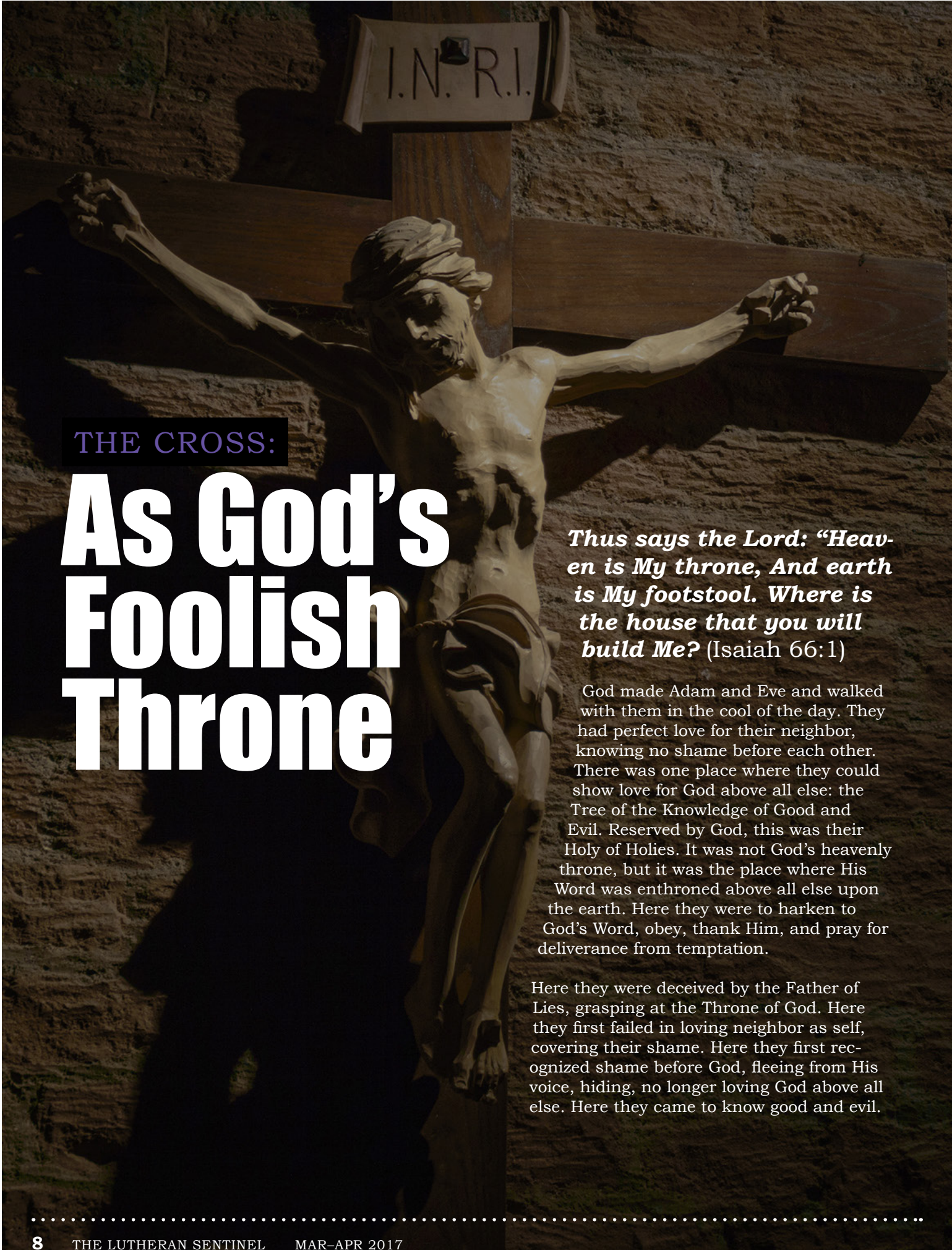
⁸ Mark 3:21.

⁹ John 10:20.

¹⁰ Matthew 16:16; John 7:31.

¹¹ See, for example, Mark 2:5ff.

¹² John 2:18ff.; 20:24-31; 1 Corinthians 15; Matthew 12:38ff.



THE CROSS:

As God's Foolish Throne

Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me?" (Isaiah 66:1)

God made Adam and Eve and walked with them in the cool of the day. They had perfect love for their neighbor, knowing no shame before each other. There was one place where they could show love for God above all else: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Reserved by God, this was their Holy of Holies. It was not God's heavenly throne, but it was the place where His Word was enthroned above all else upon the earth. Here they were to harken to God's Word, obey, thank Him, and pray for deliverance from temptation.

Here they were deceived by the Father of Lies, grasping at the Throne of God. Here they first failed in loving neighbor as self, covering their shame. Here they first recognized shame before God, fleeing from His voice, hiding, no longer loving God above all else. Here they came to know good and evil.

And here is where God promised to come into the world to conquer Satan, sin, and death. They lost their access to the Tree of Life. But the Promise would be fulfilled through the Root of Jesse, the Man who would sit on the Throne of David forever.

*Who on the tree of the cross did give salvation unto mankind that, whence death arose, thence Life also might rise again; and that he who by a tree once overcame might likewise by a tree be overcome, through Christ, our Lord.
(Proper Preface for Lent)*

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. Who could imagine that the Omnipotent God would descend from His Throne on high to dwell as God among us? His own did not receive Him. The thrones of the earth sought His death. *“Man hath no offering for Thee save - the stable, manger, cross, and grave”* (ELH 144, v.3).

He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:7-8).

Soldiers stripped Him, put a purple robe on Him. Twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck Him. Pilate then went out, saying, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.”

Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!”

*And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!”
But they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!”*

*Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?”
The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!”*

*Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified.
They took Jesus and led Him away.*

And He, bearing His cross, went out to Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

*Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross.
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE
JEWS. (John 19)*

Behold how sinners adorn the eternal King of Glory: a crown to tear His head, a robe of mockery, a scepter to beat His body, attendants on the right hand and on the left, the title above Him. Behold the throne of disgrace--the tree of death to which He was nailed.

It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. We preach Christ crucified... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (I Corinthians 1).

It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The Father made Christ's soul an offering for sin. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

So it is that the cross that was meant to be a throne of disgrace, God has made a throne of grace.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-10).

He has returned to his proper throne.

We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry (Hebrews 8:1-2; 6).

Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations (Luke 24:46-47).

Our glory is found in the humility of God on the Cross, a disgraceful throne made by man but changed by God for us into the Tree of Life. Therefore we preach nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

REVEREND
JOE ABRAHAMSON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
CLARA CITY, MN

THE CROSS: and Our Own

What is a cross? Christians immediately recognize THE cross as the instrument of Christ's execution by which He was sacrificed for the sins of the world. But Jesus says we get one, too —not just like His, but related. And our eternal life can hinge on what we do with it.

This cross creates a fork in the road; it presents an either/or situation. It requires that we dethrone self and acknowledge Christ as Lord. It distinguishes faith from unbelief and sorts out Christians from those who just say they are. It discriminates between true worship of God and idolatry of self. For believers, there is no choice but to shoulder this cross, for our Lord, the One we follow, says, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"* (Mark 8:34).

This cross is whatever we endure because we put Christ first.

It is related to Christ's cross because He endured the cross to put us first, before himself, because that was the Father's will and therefore His.

Those who are considered wise in our society think little of truth and therefore proudly speak of shades of gray rather than black/white. According to these fools, one religion is much the same as another; a person's identity is a matter of choice or feeling and there is no grace, no undeserved love of God for man.

What will you endure in your life if you say and act otherwise? The answer to that question is your cross, at least for that moment.

What if you say that the Bible is true, that God created us and all things specially, that there is one and only one true and living God, that He has spoken to us through His word, that those who worship other gods are doomed to hell, that who we are depends upon who God made us, that God's order in marriage, family, and society are indeed His order and therefore true? What if you say loudly that there is no Allah; it's just a figment of idolatrous imagination? What if you say these things? Will you lose prestige, respect, status, prosperity, employment, or even your life?

What will happen if you speak of grace? This is, after all, the message of Christ. What if you speak of forgiveness to those who worship false gods, who mock true marriage, who resolve their temptations by declaring evil to be good? What if someone says, "I'm _____," (fill in the perversion du jour) and you reply, "There is forgiveness for you." Will you face anger, resentment, rejection, loss of business, prosecution, fine, imprisonment? Will you face violent retribution? You may if the person rejects the forgiveness of Christ, and if so, that is your cross.

I haven't perfectly carried my cross. Have you? That can be worrisome considering the stakes involved, as Jesus says, *"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels"* (Mark 8:38 NKJV). But you are saved by Christ on His cross, not you on yours. To deny ourselves is also to deny our own righteousness and say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Christ from His cross answers, "You are forgiven."

REVEREND

EDWARD BRYANT

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

ST. TIMOTHY LUTHERAN CHURCH
LOMBARD, IL

* MEMBER, BOARD OF REGENTS FOR
BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE & SEMINARY

THE CROSS:

as Fountain of Christian Life

A cross is an instrument of torture and execution. Anyone within the Roman Empire would have seen that symbol as a horrifying warning against crime. As Christians, we are familiar with the cross as a symbol of something far different. We set it at the front of our churches not to frighten us, but to comfort us. What caused this great reversal? Jesus Christ, dying on just such a cross, transformed even death into life.

For Jesus, the cross meant death. The cross is where he shed his blood, from head, from hands, from feet, from side, and from countless other wounds he had received from the soldiers' scourges. He had foretold this horrifying event to his disciples on numerous occasions, but they had not understood. When Jesus was betrayed and arrested, the disciples scattered. At his death, they mourned. However, although they did not yet understand it, they had received the promise the very night before that this cross meant their salvation. *On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus "took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'"* (Matthew 26:27, 28, ESV).

We could make ourselves dizzy trying to count all the miracles involved in this statement of Jesus—that his blood was in the cup, yet in his body; that he called it the blood he “poured out,” although it would not be shed until the next day; that the blood would be provided “for many,” although only a few sat around the table—but the miracle which draws all the rest together is that this, his blood, was shed “for the forgiveness of sins.” As our Catechism teaches, “in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given us through these words. *For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation*” (SC VI).

In this is the miracle: Jesus died so that we might live. Jesus bled from the cross, but his blood did not simply seep into the ground, nor did his flesh turn to dust (Acts 2:31). No, by his death his blood sprang into a great fountain of life, offered to us over and over. His death earned forgiveness, which is given to us in the great washing water of Baptism. It is repeatedly given to us verbally in the words of Absolution and in the proclamation of the Gospel. It is regularly offered in a way we can feel and even taste in the Sacrament of the Altar. Our Communion cups are placed on the altar, near the cross, because we confess that the blood given to us in the cup is the very same blood which was shed from Jesus' side on the cross.

By shedding his blood and giving it to us, Christ won salvation, confirms unto us the forgiveness of all our sins, and replaces the death of sin that rests in our hearts with his own holy and everlasting life. Jesus' great deed of love was to turn that cross into a symbol we can cling to in faith, transforming it from an instrument of death into a fountain of life.

REVEREND

MICHAEL LILIENTHAL

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
OMRO, WI

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
IOLA, WI

CATECHISM *in* C O N T E X T

THE CREED

IN CONTEXT

The most recent Star Wars movie, *Rogue One*, was, in my opinion, phenomenal. I won't spoil anything for you, but the premise of the movie was basically the opening crawl to the original Star Wars (subtitled *A New Hope* some years later). It provided some backstory to the action. However, anyone who had never seen *Star Wars: A New Hope* and the rest of the original trilogy might not have the same positive reaction to *Rogue One* as I did. For one, the ending of *Rogue One* is rather depressing...if you don't know what happens immediately following in *A New Hope*. If you do know what happens next, the ending to *Rogue One* is incredibly...hopeful.

In a way, the relation of the Apostles' Creed to the Ten Commandments is very similar. If all you had were the Ten Commandments, you would be rather depressed, and worse, condemned, because the Ten Commandments describe what God expects of us. What's more, the Commandments routinely inform us that we can't keep God's demands perfectly. There is no salvation through keeping the Law. The Ten Commandments leave us...without hope.

But immediately following the Ten Commandments in our Catechism is the Apostles' Creed. The Creed, as Luther explained it, "sets forth to us everything we must expect and receive from God." The Creed answers the Commandments, especially the First Commandment, which teaches us to have no other gods than the true God and leaves us wondering who this God is. The Creed's answer is beautiful and succinct, a summary of the Gospel: everything God is and everything God has done to save us.

In a big picture way, this is why the Creed is important. But equally important is everything taught in the Creed. Lutherans have generally divided it into three articles, but this "trilogy" doesn't mean there are only three teachings of Scripture. Luther commented, "But for the learned and those who are somewhat advanced, these three articles may all be expanded and divided into as many parts as there are words."

OUT OF CONTEXT

It has become common among many Christian denominations to reject creeds, at least historic and corporate creeds. These churches falsely assume that such creeds somehow supplant the authority of the Bible and therefore hinge a person's personal faith upon tradition rather than Scripture.

However, a creed, whether written down or spoken, is two things at the same time: one, a summary of what something teaches, and two, a confession of what someone believes. The Apostles' Creed is a true summary of what the Bible teaches, and so as Lutherans, because we believe what the Bible teaches and because the Creed teaches nothing contrary to the Bible, we personally confess and believe the Creed.

The Creed is nothing more than an echoing back of the Gospel. The Greek word catechism, *κατηχέω*, from which we get our word "echo," literally means to "echo back" or to orally transmit teachings exactly from one mind to another, losing nothing in transmission. The language of the Creed helps us retain and understand what the Bible teaches.

THE CREED'S OWN CONTEXT

The first article of the Creed summarizes God the Father's special activity of creation (meaning that this act is not exclusive to the First Person of the Trinity only, but that He is the primary Actor along with the Second and Third Persons). Luther commented on this article in his Large Catechism: "For here we see how the Father has given Himself to us, together with all creation, and has most richly provided for us in this life. We see that He has overwhelmed us with unspeakable, eternal treasures by His Son and the Holy Spirit..."

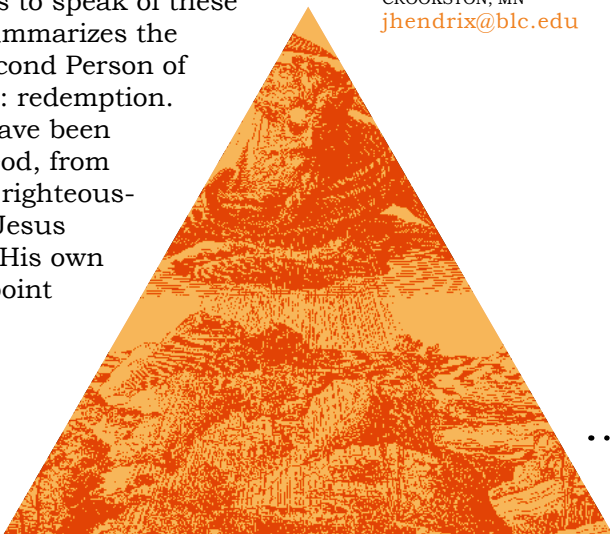
The second article begins to speak of these eternal treasures and summarizes the special activity of the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ: redemption. Redemption is how we have been brought from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, all by the work of Jesus paying for our sins with His own precious blood. On the point

of redemption, Luther explained that "the entire Gospel that we preach is based on this point, that we properly understand this article as that upon which our salvation and all our happiness rests. It is so rich and complete that we can never learn it fully."

Of course, we would never be able to learn or believe it at all except by the power of the Holy Spirit. The third article summarizes the special activity of the Third Person, the Holy Spirit: sanctification. The Holy Spirit sanctifies or makes us holy through the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Again, Luther wrote about the joy this article gives: "So that this treasure [of redemption] might not stay buried, but be received and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed. In the Word He has the Holy Spirit bring this treasure home and make it our own. Therefore, sanctifying is just bringing us to Christ so we receive this good..."

Together, the three articles of the Creed focus our attention and call us to believe who God is and everything He has done for our salvation. Through everything God has done, we are now freed from the condemnation of the Law, from the burden and guilt that the Ten Commandments place on us. To reject any of the three articles of the Creed would be to return to the Law and deny the comfort revealed in what God has done for us in the Gospel. Because of everything echoed in the Creed, we now have...a new hope.

REVEREND
JEFF HENDRIX
CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ULEN, MN
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
CROOKSTON, MN
jhendrix@blc.edu



In Your blest body let me be / E'en as the branch is to the tree / Thy life my life supplying
P. NICOLAI

VISUALIZING THE REFORMATION

Helping to Identify Martin Luther...

“The judgment people have passed on me varies greatly. To some I seem impious, to others quarrelsome, to others vainglorious, to others something entirely different.” **MARTIN LUTHER** (LW, AE, vo. 27, p.153)



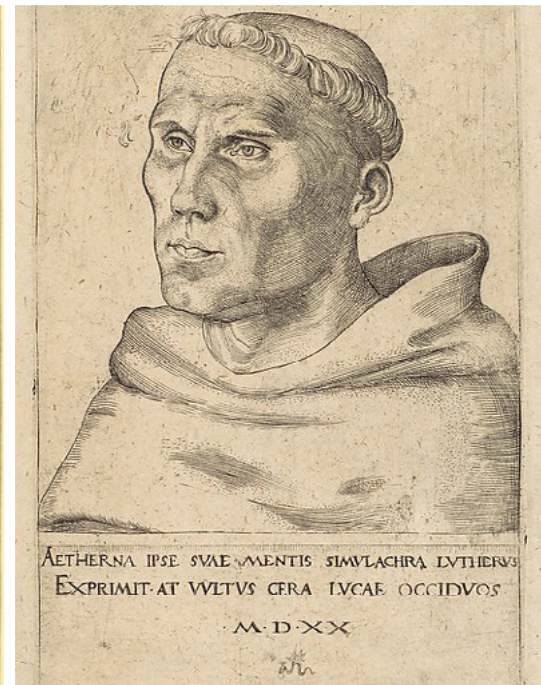
Martin Luther with a Dove (1521)
HANS BALDUNG GRIEN

In this woodcut, Luther is shown as one who is inspired. As he is directed to the Word, the dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, is enlightening him. This piece professed the Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura*.



The Seven Heads of Martin Luther by Johannes Cochlaeus (1529)
VALENTIN SCHUMANN

This woodcut shows Luther as a fearful seven-headed monster (a reference to Revelation 12:3 & 13:1-10). It was intended to make people fearful of Luther and of his teachings. This is one example of many propaganda pieces that were employed during the Reformation.



Martin Luther as an Augustinian Monk (1520)
LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER

This is most likely the earliest portrait of Luther. This copperplate engraving shows Luther as a somber, unassuming, humble monk. His facial features are gaunt. He wears a tonsure and simple habit, which an Augustinian monk would have worn.

Luther's opponents worked hard to paint him as a scoundrel and fraud. They sought to destroy his reputation and to depict him as some sort of beast from the bowels of Hell. Luther, however, was simply trying to share the clear Gospel message of the Scriptures with people who were starved to hear of God's mercy and grace found in Christ alone.

Martin Luther was blessed to have a close personal friend in the well-known German artist and printer Lucas Cranach. Cranach produced numerous portraits of Martin Luther, which were then copied by other artists and spread throughout Europe. These paintings, engravings, and

prints were not liturgical in nature (i.e. not for use in churches or worship settings), but they were very important to the spread of the Reformation. They depicted Martin Luther as “something entirely different” from how his opponents portrayed him. These pieces of artwork depicted him as a pious monk and as an educated doctor of theology. Above all, these portraits presented Luther as a humble, sincere, relatable, and respectable man who was pointing people to God's Word.

REVEREND
LUKE ULRICH
CONTRIBUTING WRITER
MT. OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL
MANKATO, MN

SYNODSYNOPSIS

ANNOUNCING

**the 100th
Annual Convention**
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

**the 61st
Annual Meeting**
of
Bethany Lutheran College Inc.

**the 2nd
Annual Meeting**
of the
Lutheran Schools
of America, Inc.

*“Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done:
Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide”*

JUNE 18-22, 2017
MANKATO, MINNESOTA

** Due to the special nature of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, the convention essays will be presented on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.*

SYNOD SUNDAY, JUNE 18, 2017

3:00 – Synod Sunday Service
4:30 – Supper

MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2017

9:00 – Opening Convention Service
10:30 – Convention Essay
1:00 – Death’s Noted:
LORETTA BEHRENS (1918–2016)
DORIS SCHMUGGE (1921–2016)
E. C. F. STUBENVOLL SR. (1925–2016)

TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2017

10:30 – Convention Essay
7:00 – Reformation Hymn Festival

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017

10:30 – Convention Essay
3:30 – Anniversaries Observed:
HERBERT HUHNERKCOH 40 YEARS
CHARLES KEELER 40 YEARS
NILE MERSETH 40 YEARS
STEVEN PETERSEN 40 YEARS
KENNETH SCHMIDT 40 YEARS
DAVID MEYER 25 YEARS
ALEX RING 25 YEARS
MARK ROGERS 25 YEARS

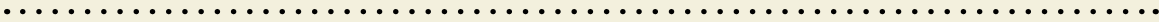
7:30 – Communion Service

THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2017

8:30 – Unfinished Business

**ELS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
21ST ANNUAL MEETING**

5:00 – Registration:
Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center (YFAC)
6:00 – Program: Lee Theater
From Austin to Aberdeen
A Re-enactment of the Austin Agreement of December 1916, and the meeting of the minority at the June 1917 at the Aberdeen Hotel in St. Paul leading to the Re-organization of the Norwegian Synod (ELS) in 1918.
7:30 – Historical Society
Business meeting followed by refreshment and social time



LYA17	XAVIER UNIVERSITY	CINCINNATI OHIO	JULY 27-30
--------------	--------------------------	------------------------	-------------------

**REGISTRATION: \$250, (THROUGH MAY 1)
FIRST-TIME REGISTRANTS: \$200**

- A visit to Answers in Genesis’ Ark Encounter, making connection to 1 Peter 3:20 and Baptism.
- First time registrants (youth & chaperones) pay only \$200 for registration. They will pay the regular fee (\$250) and then receive a \$50 refund after first-time registration is verified.
- 6 occasions to gather in corporate worship!
- Registrants can pick 3 of 10 different sectionals, all of which offer a confessional Lutheran worldview.
- Opportunities to get to know and worship with fellow ELS members from throughout the nation.
- For the sports-minded: opportunities to take tours of the stadiums where the Cincinnati Reds and Cincinnati Bengals play. Also, our dance on the final night will take place in the Cintas Center, home of the Xavier Musketeers basketball teams.
- Check out the promotional video and “registration packet” on the LYA page of our synod website. els.org/lya17



75TH ANNIVERSARY

NEW HAMPTON, IOWA

On **Sunday, November 6, Redeemer Lutheran Church in New Hampton, Iowa**, celebrated 75 years of proclaiming God’s grace. Rev. Daniel Faugstad, vacancy pastor, served as the liturgist. Rev. Nate Abrahamson, who spent much of his childhood in the congregation, preached the sermon. The theme for the service was based on John 12:23-24 and was titled “A Bigger Deal Than You Might Think!” Former pastors Rev. E.C.C. Stubenvoll IV and Rev. Harvey Abrahamson were also in attendance.



REFORMATION VOCABULARY

Repentance

The church of Luther's day (what he often calls "Rome") maintained a flawed view of this very common biblical word: *Repentance*. In the word repentance, Rome understood three essentials:

1) Penitence – sadness over sin, **2)** Confession – an oral naming of sin(s), **3)** Satisfaction – a making amends for sin (Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Art. XII).

Penitence, Confession, and Satisfaction all have a role to play in biblical Repentance. But in Rome's portrayal, all three stages of repentance are "man-centered."

The Reformation writings served to reshape this inward and deadly estimation of *repentance*. This took place by letting the Scriptures bend repentance back into its biblical shape – from man's line to God back to God's encircling of man in the Satisfaction of Jesus for sinners.

When the Gospel records call for *repentance*, they speak to contrition and the verbalizing of our sins.

But the *Satisfaction* is already done, and *more* – it's present! The Good News is already Good (Mark 1:15). The Kingdom of Heaven is already at *hand* (Matthew 3:2, 4:17, 10:7). Reformation *repentance* is biblical *repentance*. It knows nothing of repentance unless it is powered by and revolves around Jesus' person and work – The One in whom the Father is entirely satisfied (Matthew 3:17, 17:5).

Luther's first of 95 theses stands, then, as a generous fountain of Gospel:

*"When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said "Repent,"
He intended that the entire life of believers
should be repentance."*

Repentance:

Contrition over sin and confession of sin growing from and circling back to THE Satisfaction – JESUS.