



IT IS WRITTEN: "they will call him Immanuel" Matthew 1:23

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

GOD'S FENCE

pgs. 12-17

DEVOTIONAL SERIES:

**O Come, O Come,
Emmanuel**

pg. 4

YOUNG BRANCHES:

**My Callings &
The Divine Call**

pg. 10

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2018

Bodily Connections

by **REV. JOHN A. MOLDSTAD**, President
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD, Mankato, Minn.

Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

We are concluding a year of commemorating the gifts God has passed down to us from the Lutheran Reformation. The 500th should not close without drawing attention to “the other Martin.” Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586) played a key role in preserving what we today know and confess as solid Lutheran doctrine.

Chemnitz is known mostly for serving as the chief author of the Formula of Concord (1577), but he contributed greatly in other ways. Just to cite a few:

1. His comprehensive work in 1570, *The Two Natures in Christ*, sets forth the scriptural teaching of the incarnation of our Lord and how it must be upheld for us sinners to have the free gift of salvation. Chemnitz states:

It is proper, therefore, for God to cleanse and destroy sin (Is, 43:25), but Scripture clearly attributes this action not only to the person of the incarnate Christ according to the deity, but also to His blood according to the humanity.

(the J.A.O. Preus translation, p. 261)

2. Another offering from his pen, *The Lord's Supper* (1570), contains the orthodox arguments for the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood under the bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar. On the word “is” in our Lord's words of institution, he notes:

But if I say that the divine will does not wish that we understand the words of the Supper in their proper and natural sense, then I fear that I might be accusing the Son of God in His last will and testament of lying.

(the J.A.O. Preus translation, p. 207)

3. Finally, we mention Chemnitz's commentary on Melancthon's *Loci communes* (treatise on doctrine). On the topic of Justification, he demonstrates how Law and Gospel apply to each of us sinners very personally:

It is manifest that many do not persevere but fall from grace. But this is not because God does not will that believers, whom he at one time received into grace, should persevere unto the end, but it comes from the fact that many drive out the Holy Spirit and trample their faith underfoot. And looking at the traps of the devil, the evil of the flesh, and the frightful examples of those who have lapsed, we ought to disintegrate with fear and trembling for our salvation. But when we look at the will of God revealed in the Word, and at Christ the Mediator, we can and must declare: “Who shall separate us?” “No one shall snatch them out of my hand.” Therefore, as it pertains to God, the perseverance of the godly is sure; and because it has been revealed in the Word, faith must believe this.

(the J.A.O. Preus translation, p. 123)

God be praised for the faithful and dedicated service of both Martin #1 and Martin #2! What a legacy they have left under the grace of the Almighty!

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REV. KYLE MADSON

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O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

by **REV. KYLE MADSON**, Editor, *The Lutheran Sentinel*
NORSELAND LUTHERAN CHURCH, St. Peter, Minn.
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It's one of those tunes, haunting as it is hallowing. It's a melody that quickly reminds one that it's not yet the celebration of Christmas but soon will be. "*Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel*" – one is as likely to hear this medieval chant sung in the sanctuary as projected from your Sirius FM radio. Though its lyrics are steeped in Christian promise and fulfillment, it remains a staple of what is among many now called "holiday music." And this ancient lyric - God-with-us, COME! - is a bold and urgent prayer. In fact, in our "holiday seasons" that seem to be inevitably crunched for time, this prayer's urgency dwarfs our perceptions of urgency. It's the urgency of emancipating slaves!

At Christmas we celebrate a phenomenal miracle of God, the True Son of God born into human flesh. That cool, dark evening some 2000 years ago in Bethlehem, God sent His Son to be born of young virgin, Mary. He was born to live out God's holy law's demands. His perfection under the law fills up our lawlessness so that we might receive full adoption into God's family (Galatians 4:4-5). Emmanuel came to the manger for this purpose. And what began in the manger proceeded to its summit – to Calvary's cross where Jesus makes the payment for sin complete. He declares it himself: "It is finished."

The Son of God came lowly to the manger. He lived humbly among sinners. He died as the Just for the unjust, buying us back from our self-dug graves. And then he rose again, Victor over Satan and death itself, ascending triumphantly back to heaven...

...But we're still here. We live with consciences that are like a vast library, stacks full of guilty recollections. One news broadcast will be more than enough to remind you that you live in a world where the Devil roams and exercises his terror. The effects of sin's tyranny are palpable in us (Romans 7) and all around us (Psalm 94). So even as we anticipate the joyful bells of Christmastide, this life remains a captivity – an exile – a starkly imperfect home away from home. And it will be this way - Until the Son of God appears!

The Emmanuel of the manger, cross, and empty tomb is the Emmanuel who is also poised to come again for the reclamation of His redeemed. And so His redeemed bride, the Church, cries out with anticipation, "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel!" With this cry, you, the bride, boldly hold the Lord to His promise to bring this rescue to its perfect culmination. You call upon Jesus to appear again for you - to ransom you from this sinful body and life. And then, on that Great Day, Jesus will be the One calling for you to come: "*Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you...*" (Matthew 25:34)

Dear Christian friends, Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel will come for you. "**Amen. Come Lord Jesus!**" (Revelation 22:20).

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 35:10

*And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
 And come to Zion with singing,
 With everlasting joy on their heads.
 They shall obtain joy and gladness,
 And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

HYMN: ELH 110, 1

*O Come, O come, Emmanuel,
 And ransom captive Israel,
 That mourns in lonely exile here,
 Until the Son of God appear.
 Rejoice! Rejoice!
 Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

PRAYER:

LORD, rouse us from apathy toward the Last Day. Give us such hope and comfort in Jesus, who has already Redeemed us from sin and death, that we long more and more for His promised return to ransom us from this veil of tears to Himself in heaven. Amen.

Pastor, I have a question:

What role (if any) does “personal testimony” have in the Christian church?

by **REV. S. PIET VAN KAMPEN**, Contributing Editor
CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH, Green Bay, Wisc.

Answer:

A boy once asked his grandfather why he had three different kinds of fish bait in his tackle box. The grandfather answered, “Depends on where I’m fishing and what I’m fishing for.”

Personal testimony has an important role to play in the life of the Christian church. However, like the bait in the grandfather’s tackle box, its benefit is tied to where and how Christians use it.

Testimony in a private setting

On one hand, as believers sanctify the Lord God in their hearts, they are to “*always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear*” (1 Peter 3:15, NKJV). Believers in Christ constantly seek opportunities to share their faith in Christ. Peter describes that sharing as a “defense,” explaining what we believe and why we believe it “to everyone who asks.” Peter assumes that people will ask you about the hope that you have in Jesus Christ. Having seen how that hope has changed our lives, they will want to know more.

Then, when the questions come, we can make a case for Christ “with meekness and fear,” gently and compassionately leading people to see both their sin and their Savior Jesus. The private, personal gospel testimony of one person leading another to Christ as one beggar leading another to find bread has always had an important role in the life of the church.

Testimony in a public setting

Public personal testimony also has a role, albeit more limited. The Christian congregation in Corinth provides an excellent example. In those days, the Holy Spirit’s special gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues were still in effect, but the people were not using those gifts in an orderly way. If one person got up to prophesy, many others also felt the

need to do so. It became a matter of one-upmanship and pride. People began to talk over one another. So, in addition to calling those Christians to repentance, the apostle Paul instructed them to “*Let all things be done decently and in order*” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

The church still strives to do everything “decently and in order.” It presents several problems to allow someone who has no call from God to speak during the worship service. First, as it did in Corinth, it can become a free-for-all. If the church allows one person to share his testimony, then what about everyone else? Second, what if getting up and “sharing my story” becomes a matter of sinful pride and one-upmanship, where each person tries to outdo the last one? Most importantly, what if someone would give a false testimony or teach falsely, whether they meant to or not?

This need for order is one of the reasons why the Lord established the public ministry of the Word. Through the divine call, God provides a man who can bear witness to the truth of God’s Word publicly on the church’s behalf. **Public testimony is what the pastor is called to do, especially in church.**

Yet that doesn’t mean public testimony by a layman has no place at all. At a recent youth rally of our sister synod, one of the keynote speakers was an Army helicopter pilot who had been wounded in his service to our country. Together with his wife, he shared the story of what happened to him and how the Lord protected him from danger and pointed his hearers to the gospel of Jesus Christ. His words edified all who heard them. A similar thing happens at mission rallies, where both missionaries and, on occasion, the people they serve share their experiences with those who attend. In the context of a Bible class, a mission rally, or a youth rally—under pastoral guidance—a personal story of how Christ touched someone with the gospel may be quite appropriate and uplifting.

It depends on where we’re fishing.
And what we’re fishing for.



Quite a year with quite a plan!

by **REV. JOHN A. MOLDSTAD**, President
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD, Mankato, Minn.

This has been a key year for our church body! In June, we gathered in convention for special events marking the centennial of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In our congregations this fall, pastors and members held worship services and showed an historical video as a reminder of the blessings we have received from God's gracious hand through the many decades. Truly, we join the psalmist David in extolling our gratitude with the words: *Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts* (Psalm 145:3, 4).

Our centennial theme, ***Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done***, reminds us that an appropriate thankful response for past blessings is sharing with others the good news of salvation through the work of our crucified and risen Lord Jesus. To this end, we as ELS members initiated a synod-wide thank offering with the commendable goal of accomplishing sizable assistance for carrying out a threefold plan under our Board for Home Outreach (BHO). The board identified these three areas of work as:

1. **A potential new mission site**
2. **A vicar-in-mission program**
3. **Conducting cross-cultural ministry**

Potential New Mission Site

At the time of this writing, the BHO has identified a site in Texas for a new start: **San Angelo** (see map below), a city with a population estimated at over 100,000. A call has been issued for an exploratory missionary to begin the work, and we pray that God will bless us with the qualified pastor to lead our Gospel efforts in this city, which also is home to the Goodfellow Air Force Base. The board believes that clustering a mission around our other **three congregations in the region** is conducive for fraternal encouragement and support.

Vicar-in-Mission Program

The training of future home missionaries is also on our minds. As men from our Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (currently 16 in the classroom) approach their fourth and final year when they serve as vicars, the board looks to recognize certain skill sets which might well fit a home mission setting. If a seminarian as a vicar is able to receive hands-on training in a mission, the hope is that such an individual might one day be called to serve as the pastor of a subsidized ELS mission congregation. An example of where this has worked well is at our **Hope congregation in Leander, Texas**. **Rev. Daniel Ruiz**, now a co-pastor of the mission church, was originally assigned as a vicar-in-mission under the **Rev. Bradley Kerkow**. Today the church has benefited greatly by the work of both men in the northwest corner of the fast-growing city of Austin.

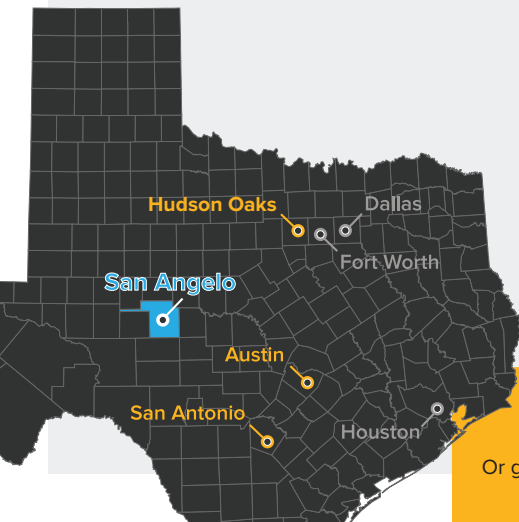
Conducting Cross-Cultural Ministry

Finally, a cross-cultural focus by our BHO enables us to do gospel outreach to a burgeoning multicultural population of souls in major urban communities. **Rev. Matthew Behmer**, who serves as pastor of **Christ the King Lutheran in Bell Gardens, California**, is part of such an effort. He and his wife, Beth, and family underwent Spanish immersion classes in Mexico with the plan that Matt would be able to conduct worship services in Spanish in a Los Angeles suburb that has a Hispanic population of 96%. Right now, the once all-Anglo congregation is making solid strides to connect with many in the neighborhood and share with them the saving message of Jesus. The board is hoping this joint project with the Christ the King congregation may be duplicated elsewhere.

Can we urge every member and every congregation to prayerfully consider a special monetary gift for this Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done thank offering? Most of all, we ask for your prayers as we, through the efforts of our beloved synod, strive to touch the lives of many more Christ-redeemed souls through the powerful means God has provided – his holy Word and Sacraments.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

(2 Corinthians 8:9)



PLEASE CONSIDER A GIFT & SENDING IT TO:

The Anniversary Offering, 6 Browns Ct, Mankato, MN 56001
Or go to els.org/donate and designate your gift for the "Anniversary Offering".



The fifty-first annual **Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures** were held at the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center, Mankato, Minnesota, on October 25–26, 2018. These lectures are sponsored jointly by Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

This year, the theme of the Reformation Lectures was ***“Evangelical Lutheran Synod: Three Perspectives.”***

This theme centered on the one hundredth anniversary celebration of the reorganization of the ELS in 1918 and its relationship with the other church bodies in the Synodical Conference.

The first lecture, given by Rev. Dr. John Brenner, was entitled, ***“ELS: A WELS Perspective.”*** In this essay, there was a discussion of the relationship between the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and the

Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), a sibling relationship. The mutual counsel and advice between the synods have been advantageous for both synods. This fellowship is a wonderful blessing.

The second lecture, presented by Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast, Jr., was entitled, ***“ELS: A LCMS Perspective.”*** This essay points out that the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) was an important big sister to the ELS in its early years. Both the Norwegian Synod and the re-organized synod received considerable support in their infant years from the LCMS. The break in fellowship with the LCMS was tragic for the ELS.

The third lecture, given by the Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, was entitled, ***“ELS: An Introspective.”*** As a native son, the essayist indicated the synod’s positive contributions to the world and, at the same time, pointed out its weaknesses. He showed the unique flavor of the ELS.

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

Calls Accepted →

Pastor Edward Bryant

to **Our Savior Lutheran Church**, Grants Pass, Oregon and **Faith Lutheran Church**, Medford, Oregon

Pastor Michael Lilienthal

to **Our Savior’s Lutheran Church**, Albert Lea, Minnesota

Pastor Jonathan Madson

to **New Life Lutheran Church**, Sebring, Florida

Pastor Nicholas Proksch

to **Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary**, Mankato, Minnesota, as Professor - New Testament

Pastor Thomas Rank

to **Bethany Lutheran College**, Mankato, Minnesota as Professor - Religion

Pastor Joshua Skogen

to **Scarville and Center Lutheran Churches**, Scarville, Iowa

Candidate Noah Thompson

assigned as pastor of **River Heights Lutheran Church**, East Grand Forks, Minnesota

Candidate Christian Walz

assigned as pastor of **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**, Indianola, Iowa

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MY CALLING & THE DIV

by **REV. JEFF HENDRIX**, Contributing Editor
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, Oregon, Wisc.

In the final issue of this anniversary year, we look back once again to our history to see how it applies to us today.

I never wanted to be a pastor. Of course, if you look up at my bio line, you'll see things didn't go the way I intended...

Still, I always looked up to pastors. "They are doing the Lord's work," I thought, "but I don't have the skills (namely, communication skills) required to do that." I thought that somehow pastors had better calls than anyone else, that when God looked at the vocations of different people, He was most pleased with pastors. After all, they were directly preaching His Word. They must be better.

But then I got to Bethany Lutheran College (to study communication, of all things) and was introduced to the Biblical doctrine of vocation. Vocation, from a Latin word which means "calling," teaches that each person has unique callings that God has given to them. God calls us to be in relation to other people. If a man has a wife, his vocation to her is that of a husband, which carries with it all sorts of good works God desires for him to do. His wife in return has a vocation to him. If a woman has a son, her vocation to him is that of a mother, which again

comes with good works God desires her to do. If a teenager has a friend, her vocation is that of a friend. If a young adult has a job, his vocation is that of an employee to his boss and a colleague to his coworkers. It is important to know that vocation doesn't have to do with our relationship to God, but rather our relationship to other people. It is where we put love into action, where we accomplish the good works God has prepared for us to do. As it has been said, "God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does."

The offices of pastor and teacher are vocations. But they are no more meritorious, no more pleasing to God than a farmer who serves others by growing food for others to eat, or a woman who stays home to serve her children in her vocation as a mother. In our vocations, we don't serve God directly. Rather, we serve others. Through our work done for others, which God has given us in Christ to do, God is served and with this God is pleased.



GOSPEL DIVINE CALL

Pastors, despite what I originally thought, don't serve God directly, either. They too are called to serve others, but in a very specific way: they proclaim publicly the forgiveness of sins. We commonly say that pastors (and teachers) have a "Divine Call," yet it is true that all people have callings from God – all Christians belong to the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9) and all can proclaim the forgiveness of sins because God has given such authority to men (Matthew 9:8). The difference is that pastors are called to do this publicly and they receive their call through Christian congregations. Pastors don't have a direct call from God, but a call mediated through a congregation.

In the history of our Synod, while the original Synod was just being formed, this was a big issue. Some people believed that they had direct callings from God to be ministers to groups of people. They would travel around and preach even though they lacked

the proper Biblical training and a call from the church and even though their theology was often very flawed.

They felt that in order to really serve God, they must be ministers—public servants of the Word—even though they were not called to that vocation. Today, this is still a danger for all Christians.

We must remember that we don't have to be doing "church work" in order to be working for God. We don't all need a "ministry" to serve other people. Those who are the voters of the congregation serve God no better than those who are not. Those who spend every night in church meetings aren't more pleasing to God than those who stay home to read evening devotions with their families. Pastors aren't more holy because of their vocation.

But pastors are called to administer God's holy things – His Holy Word, Holy Absolution, Holy Baptism, and

Holy Communion. Their vocations, like the vocations and work of all Christians, aren't always easy. But the pastoral vocation is necessary, for through it, God makes orderly and regular opportunity for others receive the Gospel.

Ironically, it was understanding this doctrine of vocation that led me to more fully appreciate the teachings of God's Word and finally pushed me to be a pastor, and it was others who suggested that I should become a pastor. Perhaps someone has suggested that you become a Pastor. If so, consider how God has already worked through you in your various vocations. Maybe God could use your unique skills to serve others specifically in the vocation of pastor or teacher.

P. NICOLAI

In Your blest body let me be / Even as the branch is to the tree / Thy life my life supplying

GOD GIVES GOOD ORDER



THE LUTHERAN SENTINEL

GOD'S FENCE



by **REV. ERLING T. TEIGEN**, Contributing Writer
BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE, Professor Emeritus

The **Fourth Commandment** speaks of God's gracious care for family and society. "*Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you*" (Exodus 20:12). Martin Luther comments on the promise in the Large Catechism: "What a great, good, and holy work is here assigned to children." He summarizes this with: "they revere their parents as God's representatives." His counsel to the children is: "You should rejoice from the bottom of your heart and give thanks to God that he has chosen and made you worthy to perform works so precious and pleasing to him."

This commandment, however, does not speak only to the family as husband, wife, and children. It speaks of a much wider family as well. Luther observes that all who govern “stand in the place of parents and must derive from them their power and authority to govern. They are all called fathers in Scripture because in their sphere of authority they have been commissioned as fathers and have fatherly hearts toward their people.”

All of the other commands in the second table of the law (5-10) describe how an orderly society, both family and state, must work: you are not to murder, violate the sanctity of marriage by adultery, speak falsehood, desire or take your neighbor’s goods, property, or workers.

These laws did not originate when God gave the commandments through Moses on Sinai, but were given by God in his creation of the world and mankind. Luther notes that the first three commandments are devoted to God and our relationship to him. “Now follow the other seven, which relate to our neighbor.” Luther locates these commands in what is called “natural law”: “If we had no father or mother, we should wish, on account of this commandment that God would set up a block of wood or stone that we might call father or mother.”

So the fourth commandment does not only speak of obedience to parents: “This commandment also makes it our duty to superiors or those who govern us in society. [God] goes so far as to derive all governing authority in this command of God.”

Luther thinks, of course, of St. Paul’s words in Romans 13: Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God and likewise to 1 Peter 2:13-14: Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evil deeds and for the praise of those who do good.

This is a part of the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms. Christians live in two kingdoms at once — the kingdom of the right, where God’s children live by faith in his promises and honor the true God through faith in the gospel, and the kingdom of the left, which is the earthly kingdom, where the believers live alongside all mankind and are ruled by law, by threat, and by reward. Both kingdoms are created by God. The earthly kingdom too belongs to the fourth commandment, so Luther observes that “we have introduced three kinds of fathers in this commandment: fathers by blood, fathers of a household, and fathers of the nation.” And then he proceeds to add a fourth: “there are also spiritual fathers,” that is, those who “watch over their souls”; those who teach the law to bring the hearers to repentance and proclaim the gospel to comfort and restore them. In this, these Pfarrer [fathers], as pastors are called in German, are spiritual fathers, whose care for the believers are rooted in the fatherly care of the Good Shepherd.

So we see that the fourth commandment includes a great deal, from the family to the nations. If the law, in the form of the commandments, is a fence, it is a protecting fence protecting God’s most precious institutions: family and society. The law simply describes to the children of God how he wants them to be, and he thereby keeps them under his wings as a hen has her chicks under her wing.

And yet, this same law does some other things, too. The fourth commandment, too, shows us our sin. While it teaches the children of God how the Father wants them to live in this world, it is also the mirror that condemns disobedience so that the gospel can speak the voice of love and forgiveness. By the same token, God intends his law to keep order in the world so that the gospel can come as a blessing. Many do not want to be “fenced in,” restricted by moral law from doing what they want to do — as in “it cramps my style.” But the law serves to protect even those who do not believe in God and makes possible a “a quiet and peaceful life in this world.”

The Fourth Commandment

**Honor your father and your mother,
that it may be well with you,
and that you may live long on the earth.**

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, so that we do not despise our parents and superiors, nor provoke them to anger, but honor, serve, obey, love and esteem them.

NOTE:

Quotations from Luther’s Large Catechism are taken from the Robert Kolb-Timothy Wengert edition of the Book of Concord.

GOD

LOVES

&

BEFRIENDS

LIFE



GOD'S FENCE



by **REV. TONY PITTENGER**, Contributing Writer
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL, Port Orchard, Wash.

Four words in English, only two in Hebrew. Let's see what else the Bible says about our life and about the lives of those around us.

God warns Cain when envy and anger are building within. Unchecked, he murders his own brother (Genesis 4). Therefore, the **Fifth Commandment** forbids envy and anger.

Still in Genesis 4, Lamech follows the example of his great-great-great-grandfather and kills a man who has somehow done him bodily harm while we see that violence begets violence and murder begets murder.

After the flood and just before placing His rainbow in the sky, God commands the strictest of punishments for murder, saying, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image” (Genesis 9:6).

In Genesis 34, Jacob’s daughter is raped. This violation of the Fifth Commandment is so egregious that her brothers kill the offender and his entire village. While one violent act spawns more, we see again why God forbids such things.

In Genesis 37, Joseph’s brothers are contemplating his murder. A shrewder head prevailed when Judah pointed out that there was no money in murder. This commandment forbids abduction, imprisonment, and selling another person into slavery.

In breaking the Fifth Commandment, one of Jacob’s sons becomes a slave and prisoner in Egypt. 400 years later, all of Jacob’s children will be slaves, imprisoned in Egypt and commanded to murder their baby boys (Exodus 1).

The Egyptian king seeks to murder God’s sons, an ominous foreshadowing of Herod’s indiscriminate killing while trying to murder God’s Son (Matthew 2).

Between those two murderous kings is found a third. In 1 Samuel 18, King Saul grows jealous of David’s popularity. By chapter 19, he is throwing spears. In chapters 20-23, anger and envy have Saul pursuing David across the country. Eighty-five priests and their families are killed because they showed David kindness.

Which leads to 1 Samuel 24 (a similar event takes place in chapter 26). David has a chance to do something that most humans would condone: David can end Saul’s terror and carnage, end his own exile, with just one “justifiable” stroke of his sword.

But David didn’t do it. God’s Fifth Commandment places a hedge around the lives of the wicked as well as anyone else’s. “The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord’s anointed” (1 Samuel 24:6, ESV).

A hedge. A prohibition. A command to defend and protect what God has created. And a description.

A description. Another aspect of the commandments as they are found in Exodus 20 is that they are descriptive. Literally translated, they might read, “You have no other gods. You don’t misuse My name. You remember My Sabbath. You

honor your father and mother. You are not murdering. You don’t commit adultery. You don’t steal. You aren’t bearing false witness against anyone. You are not even coveting; not someone else’s house, spouse, workers or equipment.

This is who you, God’s people, are; what you are and what you are not; what you do and what you don’t do.”

Now here you might reply: “Really? That doesn’t sound like me. I’ve never actually killed, but I have hated. I’ve been angry and envious of others. I haven’t protected the way I can and should. I probably would have given the order and gotten Saul out of my way.”

All true. You daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. Nevertheless, God’s Word and His description of His people stands firm.

His description of you stands firm. Look:

Then the King will say to those on His right, “Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.” Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see You hungry...” (Matthew 25:34–37, ESV).

Faith is alive and pulsing within the sheep. Even if they don’t see what they’ve done, their Shepherd does and He knows them and He knows their name. They are sheep because their creator made them to be sheep.

Do you see your sin regarding the Fifth Commandment? Do you see how you have harbored anger and not harbored concern? Do you remember how you have hurt others and how even now you fail to help and befriend in every bodily need? Good.

God sees you in Christ, who was pierced for your transgressions and crushed for your iniquities. In Christ, God sees you as one who has kept and who still keeps His law, one who had and still has regard for the lives He’s surrounded you with. God bless you as, in Christ, you help and befriend everyone in need.

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not kill.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do no bodily harm to our neighbor, but help and befriend him in every need.

GOD GIVES FAMILY WITH HUSBAND- and-WIFE MARRIAGE

GOD'S FENCE



by **REV. JERRY GERNANDER**, Contributing Writer
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The sins against the **6th Commandment** constitute a long list.

The list includes fornication and cohabitation, or in today's slang: hooking up and shacking up. It includes homosexual activity, gender confusion, and the making and using of pornography. It includes marital unfaithfulness (adultery in the narrow sense). It includes crude jokes, suggestive music videos, foul-mouthed lyrics, and R-rated movies. It includes not only unscriptural divorce, but also all the sinful anger, arguments, and unforgiveness within marriage prior to the divorce.

The sins also take place in dating, in the years before marriage. How a young man treats a young woman in dating indicates how he'd treat her in marriage. How a young woman responds to a young man in dating indicates how she'd respond within marriage. Whether the relationship is defined by "what have you done for me lately," demands, and conditions or whether the relationship is defined by forgiveness and giving is learned in dating.

What a list! But what's amazing about Luther's Catechism on the 6th Commandment is that you don't hear even a faint echo of any of this! You come to this commandment ready to hear all the no's; "don't do this, don't do that." But this is the only one of the Ten Commandments where the meaning has no negatives. Instead, there are two positive statements:

1. "that we lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed," and
2. "that husband and wife love and honor each other."

So is Luther ignoring all the sins and sweeping them under the rug? Not at all! It's as if he goes back to when God created marriage in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18-24) and sees marriage through God's eyes. When God created marriage, He said it was good. Marriage is good because God made it. Your marriage is good because God made it. Your future marriage is good, and you can wait in faith and hope because God promises to make that marriage for you.

What about everything that's wrong in the world in this area, all the twisting and wrecking of God's beautifully made estate of marriage? What about all the bad stuff? Of course we don't have perfect marriages. Everyone is lacking in some way. You're guilty of adultery in your heart a thousand times because the culture bombards you with things that you as a Christian don't want to see and be tempted by. You don't perfectly show the self-sacrificing spirit—love—that marriage requires. You don't measure up. How can you be chaste? How can you be pure? How can your marriage be good enough? How can you be sure?

The answer is Jesus Christ. God saw Adam and Eve ruin marriage, so He sent forth Jesus, our dear Redeemer, to love the Church, to make the Church His bride, to redeem her with His blood, and to cleanse her with his blood and "*present her to Himself a glorious church, holy and without blemish*" (Ephesians 5:27). Jesus perfectly resisted temptation and remained without sin. So now in our lives, He makes it so the cleansing of all sin comes to you, comes to the marriage, and also to the unmarried. His chaste and decent life in word and deed atones for all the sins we commit in marriage, all the 6th Commandment sins you are guilty of as a single person or in the context of divorce, and all the defiling sins that are done to you as well.

But taking away sins is not all that Jesus does. This commandment is here to protect you, not only through repen-

tance and absolution, but also as a guide for holy living. This is important for those who are victims of sexual sin or abuse. It's important for those who have been led into sins they didn't want to be part of. It's important for all who through sin in this area might be filled with shame and feeling unclean. It's also important for young people.

When people take their cues from our culture and society's changing moral standards and think it's OK to hook up or shack up or think viewing pornography is normal behavior, they open themselves up to never-ending attacks from the devil. Through these things done in the dark, he brings them into moral darkness. The devil uses these sins to produce guilt and shame, making people uncomfortable being in church in the presence of holy things. They end up thinking it isn't for them and God can't possibly want them. They stay away.

This commandment is here to protect you from that. When it is used in the right way, it leads you to the Light. It brings you to Jesus, who cleanses you. He doesn't stay away! When Jesus is present with you in Word and Sacrament, He not only removes your sin, but actually fills you with His own holiness, righteousness, innocence, and purity. *The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin* (1 John 1:7).

Jesus, your Bridegroom, makes you His pure and holy bride, not only joined with Him, but also so that in your marriage and sexuality, you are clean and holy. The blood of Christ shall cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). In Christ, He sanctifies you and your marriage, and through His blood He presents you to Himself without spot or blemish.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, so that we lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and that husband and wife each love and honor the other.

CHRIST DISPLAYED IN OUR WINDOWS



Jesus at the Home of Mary & Martha

[Luke 10:38-42](#)

Jesus' visit with Mary and Martha at their home in Bethany provides a picture of the need to hear God's Word. The Word of God teaches everything we need to know for salvation - to know we are sinners undeserving of anything good from God and to know that Jesus Christ came to earth to live, die and rise again for our salvation. Faith comes from hearing the message of Christ and all He did for us.



Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan

[Mark 1:9-11](#)

Jesus fulfilled the Law when He was baptized in the Jordan River. The power of Baptism is that God's Word is connected to the water. Baptism is a Means of Grace through which the Holy Spirit makes disciples with the promise of forgiveness, life and salvation. In the waters of Baptism connected to God's Word, we are clothed with Christ's perfect life.

by **REV. JONATHAN MADSON**, Contributing Writer
NEW LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Sebring, Fla.

The four stained-glass windows at New Life Lutheran Church in Sebring, Florida, depict four events in the life of the Savior. Each of the events is centered around God's Word. Because Jesus "is the Word made flesh," it only stands that whatever He says is always right and true for every generation. The windows serve as a reminder of what a Christian congregation is gathered to do - preach Christ and Him crucified so that those who hear are blessed through the Word of forgiveness, life, and salvation.



Jesus Instituting the Lord's Supper

[Matthew 26:26-28](#)

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave His church a spiritual meal. The power of God's Word makes this meal unlike any other food. The Word of God connected to the bread and wine provides His believers with forgiveness, life and salvation. In this Means of Grace, under the bread and wine, are the true body and blood of Christ which He sacrificed for the sins of all mankind.



Jesus Forgiving the Woman

[John 4:7-26](#)

Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well led to her sins being exposed and Christ's love proclaimed to her. The Word of the Gospel – everything Christ did for salvation – declares and announces the forgiveness of sins. The powerful Word of God is the foundation of God's Church as it is distributed to us in the Sacraments and as it is rightly taught.

BIOGRAPHY BRIEFS:

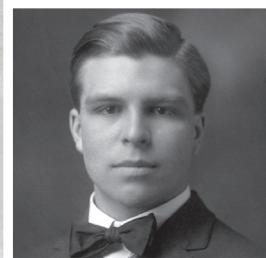
The ELS of 1918

We continue with a series of biographies of the pastors who attended the reorganization convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1918. There is evidence for the presence of at least thirteen pastors along with two hundred guests at this convention.



In 1918, **L. S. Guttebo** recently became the pastor of Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church, southeast of Madison, Wisconsin having served at Paint Creek congregations near Waterville, Iowa. He later served at Concordia Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin and was instru-

mental in organizing Pinehurst Lutheran Church in Eau Claire. Pastor Guttebo served on various boards of the synod, as the field secretary for the Home Mission Board, and as a member of the Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran College. He married Anna Vangsnes. He died in 1947.



In 1918, **George Lillegard** was the youngest pastor present at Lime Creek. He had returned to the United States from the Norwegian Synod's mission field in China and was attending the University of Chicago. He spoke about the religions of China during the synod's 1918 choral union concert. In 1920 he returned to China

as the first ELS foreign missionary serving in a Missouri Synod mission field. He then served as the pastor of Harvard Street Lutheran Church in Boston, Massachusetts (today, Pinewood Lutheran Church in Burlington, Massachusetts) for twenty-four years before accepting a call to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1952. He was the editor of the synod's Norwegian language newspaper, the Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende and served as the secretary of the ELS, 1934–52. He married Bernice Onstad. He died in 1965.