



LUTHERAN SENTINEL

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ELS Teachers:

**SPECIALLY
TRAINED** pg. 7



As a Mother Comforts

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



Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

It can be argued that one of the most endearing pictures, universally acknowledged in every culture, is that of a mother cuddling and coddling her newborn child. Who does not feel a true sense of joy and happiness at the sight? Who does not envision how the love of a mother emanates for her baby in her arms? Each of us likes to have this picture of such maternal tenderness in mind when thinking of his/her own early days and the daily care provided by dear Mom.

Mother's Day is significant to reflect on the blessings that God has provided for us in the gift of mothers, especially *Christian* mothers. We have much to be thankful for as we consider the time, energy, and copious attention moms have given in order to sustain us and get us on our way. Then, too, the attention to what counts most – our spiritual development – is reason above all to express our gratitude. From the rebirth at the font, mothers have played a key role in teaching their children how to pray, in reading Bible stories, in answering big questions of life for curious minds, and in urging a healthy church life. No wonder Luther says in his Large Catechism (cf. 4th Commandment): "To fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction, above all estates that are beneath it, that he commands not simply to love our parents but also to honor them... that we respect them very highly and that next to God we give them the very highest place."

Sadly, motherhood is not honored by all. How tragic it is to hear voices encouraging a would-be mother to abort the child she bears! How barbaric it is that a state governor has signed into law the authorization to murder unborn babies up to the point of birth for any reason, and another governor has even embraced infanticide – intentionally killing a baby after its birth! Our prayers must rise to God's throne, asking Him to cause these gruesome attacks on the children of our land to cease and imploring Him to restore our nation to respect human life and hold motherhood in high esteem.

As we think about the sins of our nation, as we think about sins of failed motherhood/fatherhood, and as we think about our own personal sins, how eternally joyful we are that God, for the sake of His Son, has blotted out all of our transgressions. In fact, using the picture of the loving mother with her child in her arms, our great God declares: "*Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands...*" (Isaiah 49:15-16). Again, he says: "*As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you*" (Isaiah 66:13).



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FENCEPOSTS 9 & 10

"If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell"

(Mark 5:30).

Jesus says some startling stuff in the midst of His teaching. But minds and consciences that think of sin but lightly are minds and consciences that are in desperate need of being startled. When Jesus talks about gouging out eyes that sin and cutting off hands that sin, He is distilling for the hearer the actual font of sin—never eyes, never hands—but always hearts.

These final two fenceposts forbid coveting—desiring a thing that is not our own. They are daggers to the heart of every human being. They startle us from our lofty perches where we see all the “gross sins” beneath us: the burglary and the sexual escapades and the murder. They startle us such that eyes and hands are never really the guilty parties. “You shall not covet” says if we’re going to do any “cutting” or “gouging” that will eradicate sin from us and our lives, it will have to be a cardiectomy—an excising of “the heart,” the essence of our being and our desires.

*The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).*

But as God’s fence is wont to do, it doesn’t merely show us what doesn’t belong in our lives. It also serves to show us the

good that does belong. In explaining these commands, Dr. Luther helps to promote that good. Beyond the killer prohibition of coveting, we get the promotion of helping, serving, and urging. Specifically, helping and serving our neighbor to keep and protect what God has seen fit to give him/her and urging wife and workers to stay where God called them.

When the rancher’s fence breaks, we can eagerly help him round up his cattle and restore his fence. When our neighbor deploys overseas, we can go the extra mile to ensure his wife and family are assisted and cared for and that the wife is urged to stay faithfully married to her deployed husband in service of his fellow man.

We are killed by the prohibition and instructed by the promotion. But we are enlivened by the fulfillment of this commandment by our Savior—the Christ. Jesus our Savior didn’t ever covet—not even that which properly belonged to Him. “*He did not consider equality with God as a prize to be displayed, but he emptied himself*” (Philippians 2:6-7). And more than avoiding the sinful desire, Jesus did “stay and do His duty.” He stayed where His Father called Him to serve, under the Law to redeem you and me with His holy precious blood, with His innocent suffering and death. He stayed. He helped and served us that we might be and remain His very own. That we might serve Him now—by serving our neighbor—and finally in His eternal Kingdom.

GOD'S FENCE: THE LAST FENCEPOST

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, so that we do not craftily seek to gain our neighbor's inheritance or home, nor get it by a show of right, but help and serve him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, so that we do not tempt, force or coax away from our neighbor his wife or his workers, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

by **REV. KYLE MADSON**, Editor, *The Lutheran Sentinel*
NORSELAND LUTHERAN CHURCH, St. Peter, Minn.
NORWEGIAN GROVE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Gaylord, Minn.

When Jesus was giving the Last Supper, it says He dipped the bread in the bowl before serving His disciples.

What was in the bowl?

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

Answer:

When Jesus gathered with His disciples in the upper room for that final Passover meal, He told them that one of them would betray Him. The announcement set off a cascade of voices asking, “Is it I?” Jesus told them that His betrayer would be the one who dipped his hand with Him in the dish (Matthew 26:20-23). At that point, though, you can imagine each of the disciples starting to wonder if he was the one who had dipped with Jesus in the dish. John in his gospel relates how, at Peter’s urging, he leaned over and quietly asked Jesus who it was. Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.” John then goes on to say that Jesus dipped his unleavened bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot (John 13:26).

It was an ironic way for Jesus to reveal His betrayer. Few things express faithfulness and friendship more than sharing your bread and your dipping bowl. For Judas to betray Jesus after dipping his bread in the same bowl was the height of treachery.

Yet the Gospels don’t tell us absolutely everything. They tell us what we need to know to be saved—about Jesus’ betrayal, for example. But they don’t directly tell us the answer to your question: *What was in the bowl?*

The most likely possibility is that the bowl contained bitter herbs. During the first Passover, when the Israelites were still slaves in Egypt, the Lord had given specific instructions to Moses regarding how this meal was to be eaten. In addition to dining with robe and sandals on, according to Exodus 12:8 the people were to eat the Passover lamb “roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs” (NKJV). According to rabbinic tradition, these bitter herbs symbolized the bitterness of the Israelites’ hard labor in Egypt and included things like endives, romaine lettuce, or horseradish—talk about eye-watering bitterness!

These herbs did not merely serve as a dressing for the lamb; they were meant to be eaten. And the best way to consume

these herbs? Chop up the herbs into a sauce into which one could dip a piece of unleavened bread and sop them up. In Ruth 2:14, Boaz asks Ruth to do something similar when he invites her to join the harvesters, dipping their bread in bitter wine vinegar. The practice of dipping bread in olive oil or vinegar infused with various herbs is still around today in several Mediterranean cultures.

Of course, other things might have been in the bowl. According to rabbinic tradition, one of the elements of a Passover meal was the “charoseth,” “a sweet mixture of chopped apples, nuts, wine and cinnamon.” It is not difficult to imagine dipping a piece of unleavened bread into that tasty-sounding mixture. The charoseth, however, is not mentioned in Exodus 12:8. Since Scripture is silent about what was in that bowl, in the end all answers are going to be somewhat speculative.

While we can’t be certain what Jesus dipped His bread in, we can be certain of lots of other things. Like Judas, how many times have we betrayed our Savior by ignoring His will? Yet look at the way Jesus treated Judas. Though He allowed Judas to betray Him, Jesus also continued to give him opportunities to repent. That’s partly why Jesus gave the dipped bread to Judas. He loved Judas, right up to the end. In the same way, Jesus loves us sinners, too, calling us to repent with His holy Word. He died and rose again so that we can break bread with Him for all eternity.

? *Do you have a question for Pastor Van Kampen?*

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---> *Send them via “snail mail”:*

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ELS Home Mission Spotlights

May–June, 2019

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS



“I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people...”

St. Paul's 1st letter to Timothy, Chapter 2

There is power in prayer. Not because we who pray are powerful or are doing some great deed, but because the one to whom we speak is powerful.

In our ELS, we are currently supporting five congregations that we view as Home Missions. These are groups of believers whose congregations have only recently been established. Just like your congregation, each Home Mission has experienced joys and celebrations along with hardships and setbacks. Below you'll find a brief overview of two Home Missions in Texas, and specific things for which you can make petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings. Let us all approach our God with confidence, knowing He hears our prayers, and out of His love and wisdom, He answers them for our good and His glory.

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH LEANDER, TEXAS

Home Missionary: Rev. Bradley Kerkow
Home Missionary Family: Rachel (wife), Anna, Sophia, Jadon, and William

Home Missionary: Rev. Daniel Ruiz
Home Missionary Family: Katie (wife), Adrianna, Everest, and Elias

Membership: 128 members with about 84 worshipping each week.

Thank God on our behalf for: Visitors in worship and several Adult Confirmation classes being taught.

Ask God on our behalf for: New goals for the congregation now that the physical church building is completed.

DIVINE MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH HUDSON OAKS, TEXAS

Home Missionary: Rev. James Kassera
Home Missionary Family: Jenny (wife), Japheth, Maggie, Tiffany, Josiah, and Victor

Membership: 45 members with about 25 worshipping each week

Thank God on our behalf for: Our Pumpkins in the Park event this past October was even more successful than last year. We had 200 pumpkins to decorate and give to kids. We had games, prizes, and our church info booth, where we were able to interact with the families that came to our event.

Ask God on our behalf for: Enabling us to navigate the challenges of holding services in a non-permanent location. And that through our recently purchased land and upcoming building project, we can be established in people's minds as a permanent part of the community and a place where they can go to hear God's comforting truth.

ELS TEACHERS: **SPECIALLY QUALIFIED**

A Sentinel article about teachers? Really? What's the big deal? Teachers are a dime a dozen, aren't they? Isn't it easy to find qualified teachers for our ELS schools?

Well, the short answer is, "No, it's not easy." In fact, right now there's a shortage of synodically trained teachers of our fellowship. We have more openings than candidates in both the ELS and WELS.

Historically, ELS schools have had to draw their teachers from Martin Luther College, various Concordias of the LCMS, or other institutions. Since 2003, however, so that our little synod can provide for its own schools, Bethany Lutheran College has offered ELS certification to students interested in teaching in our Christian Day Schools.

Here's what's required to be certified to teach in the ELS: a bachelor's degree in education; specific religion courses in the Old and New Testaments, Christian doctrine, the epistles, and the Lutheran confessions; a music course in the use of hymns and the liturgy; an education course in how to teach the Christian faith; and a letter of recommendation from one's pastor. Certification assures a congregation that their teacher is highly prepared to correctly share God's Word with the lambs entrusted to their care.

At Bethany, the majority of our graduates apply for a Minnesota teaching license and seek employment as public school teachers. Many are currently teaching in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Oregon, Arizona, Florida, etc. It is good that we are producing Christian teachers and spreading them around the country. They let the Light of Christ shine wherever God puts them!

A small percentage (<10%) of our graduates, however, are led by the Holy Spirit to take a call into the teaching ministry in one of our ELS schools. At Bethany, students seeking synod certification indicate their willingness either to be placed in a school at graduation, called to a school sometime after graduation, or to forego a placement or call altogether. Placements are made by the ELS Secretary of Schools in consultation with synod and college officials at the request of an ELS congregation that desires a graduate. Calls are issued directly to a student from a congregation through the Secretary of Schools. As you can imagine, choosing what to do requires a huge decision on the part of a graduate.

For those willing to be placed, it means that prior to graduation, they don't apply for jobs or interview for teaching positions. Rather, they wait and pray and trust. They wait for the Lord to open up opportunities and to place them into schools

through congregations according to their needs. They pray that there will be an opening for a teaching position and that they will get a placement. There are no guarantees! It could turn out that there will be no calls available and that they'll then have to scramble to find a job after their peers have already secured one. As you can imagine, choosing to be placed requires a great deal of trust and the willingness to keep human preferences out of the process, to relinquish perceived control over the future. In essence, it is a leap of faith that God will provide for the graduate without his or her active involvement in the process. Moreover, graduates accepting a placement don't know where they'll be going until it is revealed to them at the joint candidate of theology/vicar/teacher call service right before their college graduation in May! Until then they wait, pray, and trust.

So it's a big deal when we have a student who is willing to be placed or called. It's a very special time of excitement and celebration for the ELS. Specially qualified teachers for our Lutheran schools are unique in this world. Would you, therefore, please rejoice with us that 2019 BLC graduate, Miss Jayde Thompson, along with her fiancé, Tim Faugstad, are willing to be placed? (They will be married shortly after graduation and then will move to their new home in Port Orchard, Washington, where Jayde will teach grades 3-4 at Bethany Lutheran School.) Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

! The ELS Board for Schools has approved the following incentives for any student seeking ELS certification at Bethany Lutheran College:

- 1. Religion textbooks paid for**
- 2. \$1000 after the completion of the first year in an ELS school and \$1000/year thereafter for the next three years.**



IN
DEADLY
FILTH

YOU
ARE
MINE

by **REV. KYLE MADSON**, Editor, *The Lutheran Sentinel*
NORSELAND LUTHERAN CHURCH, St. Peter, Minn.
NORWEGIAN GROVE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Gaylord, Minn.

A man (we'll call him George) had seven children and loved them all dearly. He had worked as an airline pilot for most of their young lives, but now he was retired, and all of his beloved children had moved out of the home and had begun their own households and families.... all except his youngest son, Tommy. Tommy had cerebral palsy. This disability made it necessary for Tommy to live at home with his father and mother, and that was just great—especially great for George! George loved his son Tommy dearly. Wherever George went, Tommy went. They were buddies at the store, buddies working in the yard, buddies sitting on the porch. They did everything together.

One day, several workers came to clean out the sewage tank (that's where the toilet flush goes) that was buried under the ground at their country home. The workers were on break eating lunch and the tank was still "open-air," so to speak. Tommy, wandering through the yard, stumbled upon the tank, and then he stumbled IN! This was filthy-gross, but it was far worse than filthy. This was deadly serious! Tommy was drowning in rotting, human waste—DYING in filth! His father came upon the dire scene. He saw the sewage, he smelled the potent gases wafting from the open tank. And immediately he submerged himself in the waste, placing Tommy on his shoulders to rescue him from drowning in the deadly filth. Tommy lived, but only because his father died. His father claimed Tommy as his dearest possession by dying for Tommy—dying for him in all that filth! God demonstrates His own love FOR US in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

This isn't Tommy's story. This is your story. You don't get to be grossed out at the thought of that filthy, rotting waste from the comfort of your chair reading this article. You are in that filth. That's the rot and waste of the filthy things you've thought with your mind, said with your mouth, stared at with your eyes, done with your hands. To confess our sinfulness is to "fess up" to just such a "filthy" status for ourselves. "LORD, have mercy on me A SINNER."

This story isn't about George, either. It's about your Lord, who came to know you—to SAVE you! —in all of your filth, drowning for you in your nasty sins. In your deadly situation, He doesn't strike a bargain with you. He doesn't invite you to meet Him halfway, saying, "Get your head and shoulders above the filth and I'll hoist you out from there." God demonstrates love—bargain-free, gracious, merciful LOVE. While you were nothing but filth, He sent His Son to submerge himself under the suffocation of your filthy sins, to replace you in filthy death. Your heavenly Father claimed you by giving up His Son.

And He didn't just claim you then. Your Lord claims you now. He claims you even in today's sin, speaking that Word of forgiveness to you this day through this devotion and again this weekend in the announcement of your filth forgiven in Jesus your Savior. "In deadly filth," your Father says, "YOU ARE MINE!"

Prayer: Holy Spirit, convict me daily of my "filth" and create in me the certainty of faith that says with Paul, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save the 'filthy' of whom I am foremost." AMEN.

I QUESTIONS

How can you know if you are among the filthy?

▀ **Read:** Matthew 19:16-26

Based on what the rich young man hears from Jesus, what is the simple measure of “clean” or “filthy?”

Do you measure up?

How do you know that God doesn't strike up a bargain with the “filthy” to make them clean?

▀ **Read:** Romans 5:6-8

What part of your “rescue from filth” did the Lord leave to you?

What's so unlikely about this rescue account? (v. 7)

How does Christian Baptism bring this unlikely, one-sided Gospel rescue home?

▀ **Read:** 1 Peter 3:18-22

Is baptism better than “a bath to wash the dirt off the body?”

How does Paul say the rescue of this “baptism-clean” is better than a skin cleanser?

How is this “good news” affected if/when baptism is spoken of as “me dedicating my life to God?”

In Your best body let me be / Even as the branch is to the tree / Thy life my life supplying
P. NICOLAI

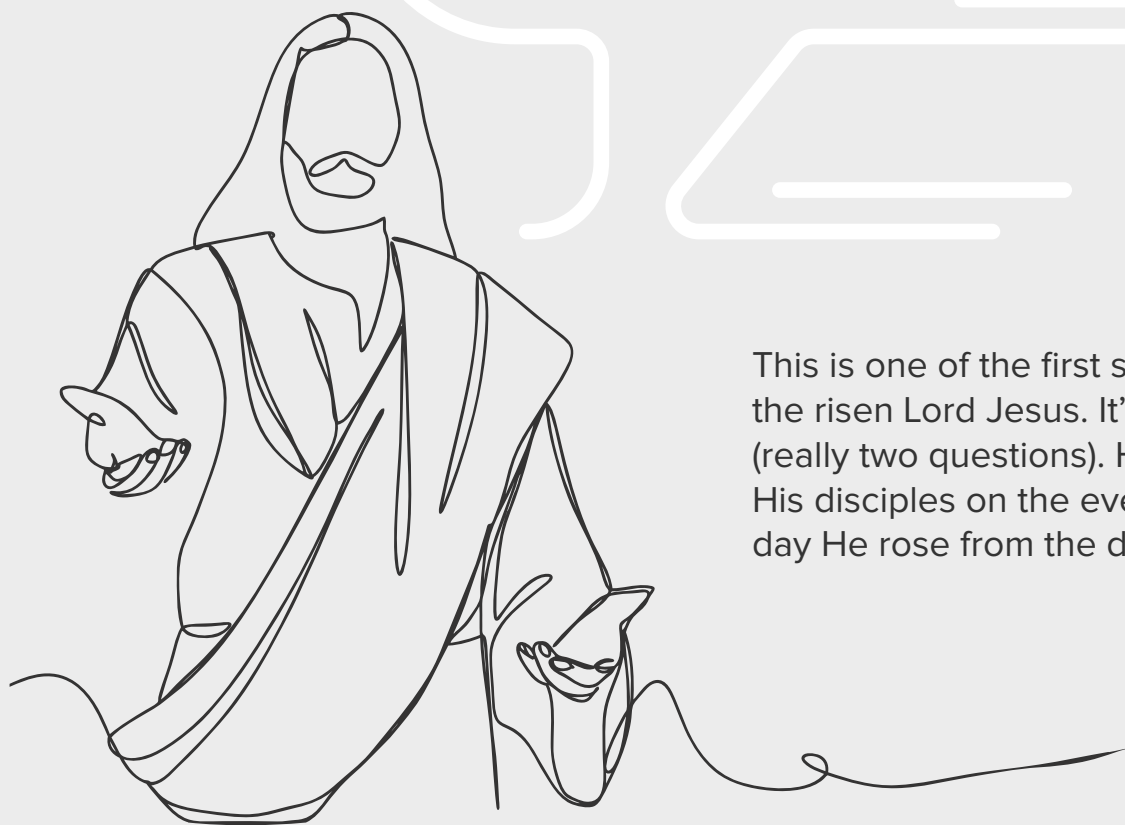
JESUS ASKS QUESTIONS

by **REV. JERRY GERNANDER**, Contributing Writer
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Princeton, Minn.

And He said to them,

Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

(Luke 24:38)



This is one of the first statements of the risen Lord Jesus. It's a question (really two questions). He said this to His disciples on the evening of the day He rose from the dead.

This came after the women returned from the empty tomb, and as they walked, they were met by Jesus, who spoke to them (Matthew 28:9). This came after the women spoke the angels' message that "He is risen!" to the disciples, who wouldn't believe yet (Mark 16:11). This came after John and Peter ran to the tomb and saw that it was empty (John 20:3-7). This came after Jesus showed Himself to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-17). This came after Jesus appeared to Peter alone (1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34). This came after Jesus had appeared to two disciples (followers of Jesus who weren't part of the Twelve, one named Cleopas and another disciple) on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), when Jesus revealed Himself as the risen Jesus, the perfect fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises in which they hoped.

When Jesus says this, He has suddenly appeared in the room where the frightened disciples were assembled. When they see Him, they aren't yet glad. They're frightened. They aren't sure He is Jesus, true Man and true God. They wonder if He's a ghost. His ability to be present anywhere easily proves to them that He is true God. So Jesus sets about proving to them that He is also true Man, the same Jesus they've known. He eats some food in front of them, He shows them His wounds, and then they are glad.

But before Jesus does any of that, He asks them these questions: "*Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?*" This seems like an obvious answer. It's because they know He died and was buried, and their minds can't grasp the truth of His bodily resurrection yet.

But, knowing Jesus, this isn't about an obvious answer. There's a reason He asks these questions before providing the evidence that He is risen. It isn't as if the evidence for a risen Jesus takes away all the doubts and fears. The devil will always make sure there are new doubts and fears. But especially what Jesus is doing here is acting as the Great Physician - diagnosing what's underneath. Luke, who was a physician himself, includes these questions so that Jesus can ask every person who reads this gospel these diagnostic questions: "Why are you troubled? What doubts are in your heart?"

The testimony of Jesus' resurrection is so important. It's important to know the truth, to show that there is eyewitness evidence for Jesus' resurrection and therefore, our religion is true. But we must not imagine that this is simply a matter of reasoning with people, and once somebody accepts these facts, then the hardest part is over. Often the hard part is just beginning.

If a person has been skeptical, been an unbeliever, or doubted the truth of God's Word, then after coming to faith in Jesus Christ, the attacks really begin. The devil introduces doubt that God can forgive a person who thought that way or acted as an enemy of Christ at one time. Or the devil introduces doubt that a person will keep believing. Or the devil introduces fears that you will be led to give up the faith or into temptations that are too hard to resist.

Jesus' diagnostic questions really are about the conscience. If a person has doubted the truth of God's Word, that's a hardened conscience. But when a person does believe, when the Holy Spirit changes his hard heart and gives him a new heart softened by God's love in the Gospel, when a person lives by daily repentance and knows his sinful weakness, then the devil exploits the tender conscience so that you're troubled by everything and find it hard to believe that God loves you and forgives you.

So Jesus' questions, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?" are not questions meant to condemn you or make you feel that you're now unworthy of Him. They are identifying where your conscience is in need of being properly formed by His Word.

In other words, these are questions whose answers are only found in Him, who is not only the risen Lord, but the merciful Lord. The risen Lord Jesus appears among His own in the divine service, bringing His gift in Word and Sacrament of the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. His resurrection is proof that God forgives you -- proof that God the Father accepted Jesus' death as full payment for all your sins.

Whatever troubles you, whatever doubts you may have, pray to Jesus about them and bring them to Him. Bring your sin and guilt, doubts and fears, to Jesus. All the risen Lord Jesus does is absolve you, pronounce you accepted and worthy in God's sight, and lacking nothing for His sake. The Gospel is for troubled consciences, to heal them. The Gospel is for those who doubt, to give faith and to strengthen your faith.

*His word is sure, here is thy stay,
Though doubts may plague thee on thy way,
Count not thyself forsaken.*
(ELH #227 v. 12)

Next Question: "*Who touched me?*" (Mark 5:31)



IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 207: SEEKING THE WEED-FREE LAWN

by **REV. CHRISTIAN EISENBEIS**, Contributing Writer
FIRST TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Marinette, Wisc.

In his book *American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn*, Ted Steinberg describes the humorous (and scary) lengths we the people go to in order to secure the blessing of a flawless yard. These lengths cost Americans a lot of green; forty billion dollars go toward lawn “care” each year.

Steinberg argues that this obsession is relatively new. The quest began in the post-World War II era of suburban lots and keeping up with the neighbors. The obsessive quest for the “perfect church,” however, has ancient roots.

Tertullian was from the city of Carthage in North Africa. He was likely a lawyer; he was certainly an expert in the law. He was brought to faith as an adult and, for a time, applied his sharp legal mind to crafting precise statements on Christian doctrine.

Tertullian gave us words to express two of our dearest doctrines. We confess that Jesus Christ unites two natures—divine and human—in one Person. We sing, “God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity” (ELH 15). These expressions come from Tertullian. We owe him a great debt.

Tertullian was hard on his opponents and his fellow believers. He expected people who had been baptized to be perfect in this life. As Tertullian grew older, his love for the law gave way to an obsession called legalism.

Legalists believe that “real” Christians never break the commandments, whether God’s commandments, which are revealed in Scripture, or man’s commandments, which respond to temptations that Christians face in society. A “real” Christian church is made of “real” Christians. The church is a weed-free lawn and must be kept that way. Sinners can’t be members and members can’t be sinners.

By turning the Gospel into another Law, legalism makes salvation the result of works instead of faith. It robs the repentant sinner of the Gospel’s comfort.

The Christian Church stands firm on the teaching that, upon a sinner’s confession, a pastor declares that sinner forgiven for Jesus’ sake. When Tertullian realized he was not going to shake this conviction, he began his obsessive quest for a better church, where—in his mind—the Gospel is proclaimed, but never actually applied, since believers should have nothing to confess and therefore nothing to be forgiven.

In the year 207, Tertullian broke with the Church and joined a group that lived up to his high standards. They believed they had more of the Holy Spirit than the Church the Spirit Himself had established.

But Tertullian never found the weed-free lawn. In time, he broke with the “more spiritual” group and essentially became a congregation of one.

Tertullian's type is still among us today. "Church shoppers" search for the congregation that has "more of the Spirit" than others. We ourselves are less than thrilled when a "weed" is welcomed back after embarrassing our congregation by a particularly public sin. We think the Gospel should only apply to those who have the decency to keep their shameful sins more private—people like us.

It was not enough that the woman "was bent over and could not fully straighten herself" and "had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years" (Luke 13:11 ESV). She had to be shamed by the synagogue ruler when she came there for help on the Sabbath: "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath," (v. 14 NIV), he scolded, as if to say, "Don't come to this holy place on this holy day for what you need most!"

But he couldn't stop what had already taken place: "When Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity" (v. 12 KJV). Our Savior casts out disabling spirits, but makes this promise to broken and contrite hearts: "Whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37 ESV).

The weed-free church does not exist in this life. Even as Christians, born again in baptism, our Confessions state, "We are far distant from the perfection of the Law" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, IV 175). Luther put it even more simply: "We daily sin much" (Explanation to the Fifth Petition). So we come, just as we are, to the Lord's house, where His Gospel is applied and the penitent are forgiven. Church is the place where "Jesus sinners doth receive" (ELH 426).

■ **For further reading:**

Matthew 9:1-13, 18:15-35;
Luke 15;
John 21:15-19;
Romans 7:1-8:17;
1 Corinthians 5:1-13 and
2 Corinthians 2:5-11;
1 John 1:5-2:6

PART FOUR:

"When the 'mute' button must be pressed"

Second Annual Apologetics Seminar

MAKING THE CASE FOR THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE

Bringing Jesus to My Unbelieving Neighbor

Thursday, June 27, 2019

Bethany Lutheran College's Trinity Chapel | Mankato, Minnesota

SESSIONS

- **When Your Neighbor Doesn't Believe in Truth—**
Combining Apologetics and Evangelism
- **Is the Old Testament Reliable? The Evidence Within the Text**
- **Is the Old Testament Reliable? The Evidence Beyond the Text**
- **Keynote: How to Make the Case for the Truth of the New Testament**

REGISTRATION

Please register in advance for FREE admission with the option of adding supper for \$15. For complete details plus registration, visit blc.edu/apologetics2019 or contact Pastor David Thompson at pastor@flc-sa.org.

*Do you feel **frozen in silence** when people around you **criticize Christianity**?*

*Are you at a **loss for words** when asked to **explain your beliefs** to others?*

*Would you like to learn how to **speak the truth in love** (Ephesians 4:15), giving a defense to everyone who asks a **reason for the hope** that is in you (1 Peter 3:15)?*

Then you will benefit from this Christian apologetics seminar.

blc.edu/apologetics2019



Sponsored jointly by the ELS Committee on Apologetics and the Bethany Lutheran College History Department.

by **REV. TRENT SAARI**, Contributing Writer
LAKEWOOD LUTHERAN CHURCH, Lakewood, Wash.
OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH, Yelm, Wash.

Catechesis Through Scripture

3rd Chief Part: The Lord's Prayer

► **Read:** Luke 11:1-13 & Matthew 6:7-13

“[T]he Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought” (Romans 8:26). The request of Jesus’ disciples, “Lord, teach us to pray,” is more profound than it first appears. Though many world religions include the practice of prayer, the Bible makes it clear that only prayers offered in faith in Jesus are pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6). The book of Proverbs states, *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight* (Proverbs 15:8). St. Paul writes, *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?* (Romans 10:14).

Apart from faith in Jesus and His redemptive work, no one is righteous in God’s sight. Apart from faith in Jesus’ atonement, no one has access to God. The only way to the Father is through the Son (John 14:6). Through the mediating high priestly work of Jesus, Christians can approach God’s throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16).

Prayer has sometimes been called the heartbeat of faith. It flows from a heart that has been born anew by the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel in word and sacrament. David writes, *Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise* (Psalm 51:14-15). Prayer is therefore “an act of worship in which we speak to God from the heart, asking something of Him, or thanking Him for His mercies” (ELS Catechism & Explanation #232).

Prayer is part of an ongoing conversation with our God. He speaks to us in His Word, and we respond in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. We pray in the Spirit, through the Son, to our heavenly Father. We learn the language and content of prayer in the same way that children learn to speak. Children learn by listening to and mimicking their parents. The Scriptures are God’s Word. We pray using the language He has taught us. It is no wonder that our liturgy is filled with prayers and praise taken directly from the Bible. The Scriptures train us to exercise our love for God and our neighbor by praying for all people according to their needs (1 Timothy 2:1).

A disciplined prayer life is not easy for us. We still contend with our sinful nature, which is obstinate and self-reliant. We must be taught to pray. Our prayer life is often learned and strengthened through the crosses and hardships we endure. We must learn over and over that our strength is found only in the true God who has redeemed us. “Lord, teach us to pray” is therefore every Christian’s petition.

In his book *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality for Today*, John Kleinig says, “Since we are disciples of Jesus, He gives us much more than a set prayer that is to be the model for all our prayers; He gives us His own status as God’s Son and allows us to share in all the privileges of His unique relationship with His heavenly Father....By giving us His prayer, Jesus puts us in His shoes and involves us in His royal mission....He joins Himself to us so that we can join Him in prayer and borrow everything from Him” (p. 163). Martin Luther described prayer as Jesus carrying us into His Father’s presence “in his skin and on his back” (AE 42:23).

“The prayer of God’s children differs from all other prayer because they pray to God the Father together with Jesus and His Holy Spirit.... Christian prayer, therefore, depends on our participation in the life and activity of the triune God. Our prayer does not depend on the development of any innate human spiritual capacities but on the grace of God given to His dependent children. It depends completely on Jesus and His work of intercession. And Jesus gives us His name and Word to include us in His prayer” (Kleinig, p. 168). Luther’s explanations to the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer aid us in this privileged act of worship.

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

Next Issue: *Baptism*

ANNOUNCING

The 102nd Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

The 63rd Annual Meeting of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

The 4th Annual Meeting of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.

**"MY HELP COMES FROM THE LORD,
THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH"**

**JUNE 23-27, 2019
MANKATO, MINNESOTA**

SYNOD SUNDAY / JUNE 23

4:00 SYNOD SUNDAY SERVICE
Preacher: The Rev. Rodney Flohr (Cold Spring, Minnesota)
Liturgist: The Rev. Kyle Madson (St. Peter, Minnesota)
5:30 DINNER (free will donation)

MONDAY / JUNE 24

9:00 OPENING CONVENTION SERVICE
11:30-1:00 LUNCH
1:00 DEATHS NOTED:
Paul Anderson (1920-2018)
George Orvick (1929-2018)
Wilhelm Petersen (1928-2018)
Fred Schmutz (1921-2018)
Amanda Madson (1936-2019)
Shirley Petersen (1924-2019)

TUESDAY / JUNE 25

9:00 DEVOTION
11:30-1:00 LUNCH
1:00 ANNIVERSARIES OBSERVED
Jerrold Dalke - 40 years
Roger Holtz - 25 years
1:30 CONVENTION ESSAY: My Help Comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth
Essayist: The Rev. Doyle Holbird (Mankato, Minnesota)
4:30 COMMUNION SERVICE
Preacher: The Rev. Christian Eisenbeis (Marinette, Wisconsin)
Liturgist: The Rev. Daniel Hartwig (Oconomowoc, Wisconsin)

WEDNESDAY / JUNE 26

8:00 DEVOTION
11:30-1:00 LUNCH
1:30 CONVENTION ESSAY CONTINUED

THURSDAY / JUNE 27

8:00 CONVENTION CONTINUES

CALLS ACCEPTED:

Pastor David Locklair
Hope Lutheran Church, Portage, Indiana

Pastor Jeff Luplow
Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers City, Michigan
Faith Lutheran, Hillman, Michigan

Pastor Peter Heyn
Exploratory Mission Board for Home Outreach, San Angelo, Texas

Pastor John Merseth
Calvary Lutheran Church, Ulen, Minnesota
(Dual parish with Immanuel Lutheran Church, Audubon, Minnesota)

Pastor David Thompson
St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Lombard, Illinois



MEETING MY BROTHERS & SISTERS:

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH Portage, Indiana



by **REV. DAVID LOCKLAIR**, Contributing Writer
HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Portage, Ind.

Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church was first established in 1896. Though it has a longstanding presence in the Portage community, it is relatively new to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In the late 1990s, the congregation entered into talks with the ELS after difficult disputes with its previous church body over both doctrine and congregational polity. Since its beginnings, Hope has had a close relationship with Pastor Fred Lams and his congregation (Grace, Hobart, IN). This relationship is greatly treasured both because of our shared history and because we are the only two ELS congregations in the state of Indiana.

Portage is a town of about 37,000 souls and is on the edge of the greater Chicago community. Located along I-94, the community gets many travelers each day. Being in a highly populated and well-traveled area means that we are in the midst of many people who are in need of hearing the Gospel. Because of our convenient location and the low number of fellowship churches in northern Indiana, each summer we enjoy a number of ELS/WELS visitors as they travel on vacation. If you are in the area, stop by and visit us.