



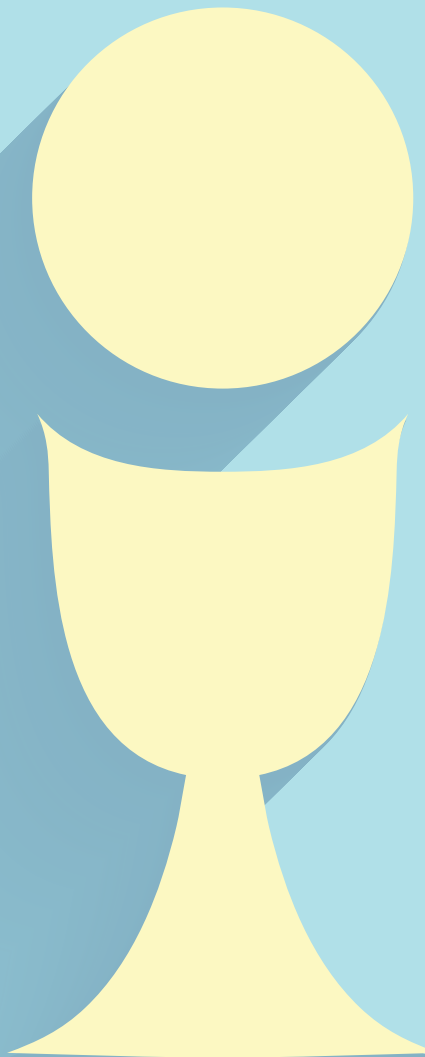
LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

YOUNG BRANCHES

As a dinner guest...
YOU ARE MINE

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Preparing Beautiful Feet

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

Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

Each fall presents an exciting time on the Bethany campus. New faces are welcomed in the classrooms of our college and seminary. Professors and students wonder with anticipation what the year will bring. In the college, what souls may be touched for the very first time with the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus? At the seminary, how will it go for men preparing to shepherd the congregations of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod?

A verse found both in the Old and New Testaments (Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15) captures the essence of what our Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary is all about: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" The messengers spoken of here – pastors and teachers of the Word – are not just conveying the daily news. They are called by God to proclaim the vital announcement each person needs to hear: Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners!

In order for the Gospel to go to work in the hearts of sinners, it is important for God's Law to be presented in its fullness. We sinners need to be convicted by the Holy Spirit on how we have fallen far short of God's perfect commands and therefore desperately need divine help. Otherwise, we would perish eternally. This, too, is crucial in training future pastors. The Law must be preached in such a way that the most self-righteous individual is cut to the knees so that when humbled before God's throne of justice, that very same person can hear the most uplifting news of all.

Where we sinners have failed, and have done so miserably, we have a Savior who succeeded by living a holy life in our place, and the Father now counts this as though we had never sinned! Furthermore, God has accepted the death of Christ at the cross as the entire just payment for all sin and now promises everlasting life in heaven through faith in His resurrected Son! Jesus says: "*I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life*" (John 5:24). This is what makes the feet of Gospel preachers so pleasing wherever they travel with this official message from the King of Kings.

Do you know of someone who may have the gifts to become a pastor or teacher? We are thankful that our synod presently does not have a huge vacancy problem as experienced by some church bodies, but a pastoral shortage appears to be trending. The average age of our rostered clergy is now 58, with the median age at 60. Retirements for many of our current faithful shepherds are sure to come. We also desire with the blessing of our Lord to establish many more home mission congregations. More beautiful feet are necessary!

Please pray for the dedicated professors and diligent students at our synod's seminary. If you are able also to make a special donation to assist with pastoral training, we urge you to contact our Giving Counselor:

Rev. Dan Basel / (danbasel@blc.edu) / 507-469-9656.

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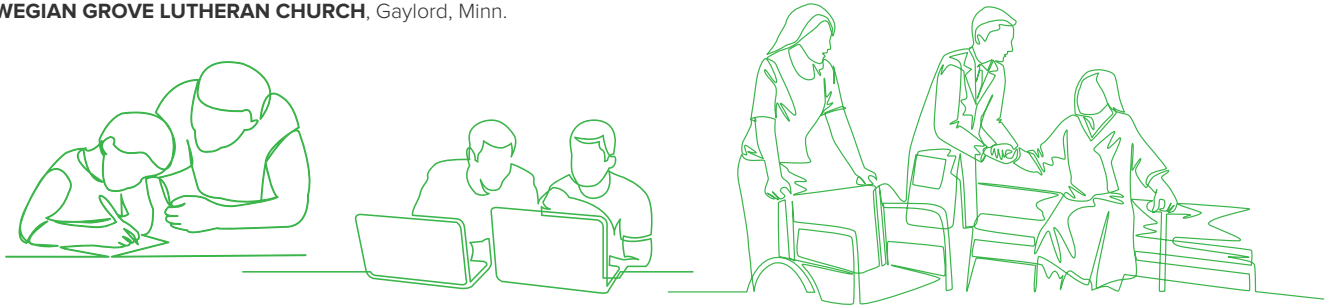
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CHRISTIAN FREEDOM:

Yours for Your Neighbor

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



Perhaps you can remember the day when your parents “gave” you a dime or a quarter as you entered the sanctuary on Sunday morning specifically for the purpose of giving it in the offering plate. It’s a nice teaching practice and it often goes quite well with young ones. I wonder how a similar practice would go for us in adulthood - being gifted something specifically for the purpose of giving it to your neighbor. Maybe this isn’t so far from how we see our life going at all. Perhaps it’s even the life we gripe and groan about so often - all that I get is only to give away again...

Undesirable as this practice might be to our nature, this is how St. Paul writes about Christian Freedom:

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:1)

We, dear Christians, are free from the task of “making ourselves free” by what we pursue of our own will and amass to ourselves. In Christ, we have been “called to liberty.” Not only is this a gracious calling for you and me. This freedom is the gift that frees us to be agents of giving to one another. Said another way, your freedom is for your neighbor.

You see, our Christian freedom is CHRISTIAN first. When the word “freedom” rings in our fallen, self-serving ears, it inclines us to serving “self” first. But CHRISTIAN freedom, like its namesake - Christ - frees us to serving outside of “self” - serving our neighbor in love and charity.

To be in Christ is to be already free with God by the selfless love of God in Christ Jesus. When the already-right one - the one who, by faith, already has all things necessary for life and salvation - when THAT one is given freedom, the only place to exhaust that freedom is on another: forgiveness for a spouse, patience with a child or a dementia-ridden parent, gentleness with an agitator, joyfulness for the friend who received the cancer-free bill of health from the doctor.

St. Paul gives a look to Christian Freedom with the familiar list from Galatians 5:

“The fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control; against such things THERE IS NO LAW”
 (Galatians 5:22-23).

“No Law Against...” - What could express freedom more clearly than that? This is the sketch St. Paul gives when tidying up Christian Freedom - free-range fruits! These freedom fruits are not bound, constrained, or coerced by any law. These good fruits germinate, mature, and give wherever the Good News of Jesus-for-sinners is proclaimed and apprehended by faith.

Dear Christian, you are free. You don’t have to right yourself with God by being the world’s best parent. You are right with God by faith - by donated goods - and that makes you free to be the patient and long-suffering Christian parent God has called you to be. You don’t have to establish yourself with God or man as the most loved and revered pastor or professor, the most highly acclaimed engineer or nurse. You are already right with God by the achievements of His Son - His blood, His death, His life from the dead. And so you are free to be the pastor filled with joy for the flock you are called to shepherd, free to be the professor oozing with kindness and goodness toward your students, free to be the engineer faithful in your physics, free to be the gentle nurse God has called you to be to your patients.

Christian Freedom is in Christ. So live freely, dear Christian. That freedom is for spending on your neighbor.

There are disturbing statistics about the numbers of young people who abandon their church, lose their faith, and just disappear after being confirmed during high school years, but especially during college years.

How can parents and our congregations work to help our young people remain faithful?

Answer:

Sadly, the problem of youth dropping away from the church in the years following confirmation is nothing new, nor is it unique to our synod. It happens for various reasons. Suffice it to say that by the time they enter high school, teens and young adults must confront and negotiate all kinds of views of the world that run contrary to what they have learned from Scripture at home and at church, not to mention the smorgasbord of temptations for the sinful flesh waiting for them when they leave home. Sometimes parents have not led a model Christian life. In other cases, hypocrisy on the part of the pastor or other church members prompts a young person to leave the congregation.

If we want to help our young people remain faithful, that means preparing them for these challenges and temptations and then being there for them as they face them. Parents, we are on the front lines of this battle. Passing the faith down to the next generation starts at home (Deuteronomy 6:7). In surveys, Christian teens and young adults repeatedly point to their parents as the greatest spiritual influence in their lives.

Part 1: So what can we as parents do?

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4, NKJV). Don't be timid in exercising the influence that God has given us! Have expectations for your teen or college student with regard to worship and Bible study attendance and being involved in the life of the congregation. At the same time, do not misuse that influence by being a legalist or a hypocrite. Don't set arbitrary rules that you yourself are not going to keep. Lead by example. Repent for past failures, striving onward in the confidence of God's forgiveness in Christ.

Help them to understand why we believe what we believe. Starting when children are young, teach them the basics: The Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Remind them of their baptisms. As they get older, ex-

pose them to the kinds of arguments against Christianity they will hear from peers, teachers, and the world at large—and then demonstrate how to refute them. If you need help in this area, your pastor can be a great resource.

In addition to teaching, take time to listen. Make sure they know that conversations about faith and the Bible are welcome. When they come with questions or doubts, stay calm. Don't panic and shut down the conversation. If you don't know the answer, be honest. Take them to Jesus in His Word and find the answers together.

When they come to you to confess a sin that's wracking them with guilt, don't fly off the handle in anger. Show mercy and forgiveness—love them with the same grace that God has shown you in Christ.

And finally, pray. Pray boldly and insistently that God would keep our sons and daughters in the true faith. Pray for the strength to continue to love them and encourage them in the truth of God's Word. When they walk away from God's Word and the church, pray that He would lead them to repentance and to once again desire to know His love and forgiveness in Christ.

We entrust our children to Christ's care. We ourselves will fail at many points. Yet failure is not the end. Christ is still risen, still seated at God's right hand. His death on the cross still covers over all our sins. And through His powerful Word, He goes after the lost and brings back the strays. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. And that goes for our kids, too

■ **Next time, Part II:** *What can pastors and congregations do?*



Do you have a question for Pastor Van Kampen?

- > Send them via email:
pastorspvk@christthekinggb.org
- > Send them via "snail mail":
1700 Cardinal Lane
Green Bay, WI 54313

ELS Home Mission Spotlights

September–October, 2019

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 pray 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 California and Minnesota 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.



Cristo Rey Lutheran Church

BELL GARDENS, CALIFORNIA

Bell Gardens
(Los Angeles)

San Diego



Redeeming Grace Lutheran Church

ROGERS, MINNESOTA

Rogers

Minneapolis - St. Paul

Mankato

Home Missionary: Matt Behmer

Home Missionary Family: Beth (Wife), Emma and Nora (Daughters)

Membership: 44

Thank God on our behalf for: the opportunity to host our second annual back-to-school event and blessing of the school year. Thanks for the recent confirmation of three youth, two recent quinceañera celebrations, and several blessings of the home. Thanks for several youth in catechism. Thanks for a new Wednesday night bible study in Spanish.

Ask God on our behalf for: that God would help us maintain and strengthen the relationships we have with our prospective members. Requests that our recent youth and adult confirmands continue to grow in the faith. Requests that God would bless our outreach events, Bible studies, and worship services.

Home Missionary: Pastor Josh Mayer

Home Missionary Family: Jonnica Mayer

Membership: 171 / Average Attendance: 75

Thank God on our behalf for: several very successful events this past year, including a Christmas by Candlelight Program and a Passover Meal, and our congregation in the early stages of planning a sanctuary renovation.

Ask God on our behalf for: For our congregations, continued focus and energy to commit to the Gospel ministry of our Lord.

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

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

SEMINARY MEMORIALS

GIVEN BETWEEN 7/1/18 - 06/30/19

A. Donald Johnson

Mrs. LaVonne Johnson – New Hampton, IA

Amanda Madson

Rev. & Mrs. Craig Ferkenstad – Mankato, MN
Mrs. Lila Mae Nordlie – Stoughton, WI
Rev. & Mrs. Gaylin Schmeling – Mankato, MN
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Swenson – Nicollet, MN

Arnold Trae

Donald Anderson – Albert Lea, MN

Bob Hall

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kapanke – Eau Claire, WI
Ms. Linda Krenz – Fall Creek, WI

Bob Leininger

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brown – Mason City, IA

Corley Hendrickson

Ms. LaVonne Bailey – Albert Lea, MN

Dana Glock

Trinity Lutheran Ladies Aid – Calmar, IA

Dorothy Stark

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Bull – San Antonio, TX

Doug Guelker

Nancy Anderson – Bear Creek, WI

Ewald Kohlmeyer

Rev. and Mrs. Daniel Basel – Mankato, MN

George Orvick

Ms. Marie Aaberg – Rochester, MN
Mrs. Isabel G. Arneson – De Forest, WI
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Arneson – Madison, WI
Rev. & Mrs. Theodore Gullixson – Mankato, MN
Mr. and Mrs. Juel Merseith – Mankato, MN
Mrs. Lois Pieper – Stoughton, WI
Rev. & Mrs. Gaylin Schmeling – Mankato, MN
Martha Statlander – Thornton, IA

Glenn Reichwald

Mrs. Ruth Reichwald – North Mankato, MN

Gordon Johnson

Rev. & Mrs. Gaylin Schmeling – Mankato, MN

Jack Levinson

Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Rose – Salinas, CA

Jerry W. Bull

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Bull – San Antonio, TX

Jessie Oelkers

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brown – Mason City, IA

Lydia Kletscher

Elsa Ferkenstad – Mankato, MN
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Reid – Gaylord, MN
Rev. & Mrs. Gaylin Schmeling – Mankato, MN

Mark Harstad

Mrs. Ruth Reichwald – North Mankato, MN

Matt Scully

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Bull – San Antonio, TX

Merlyn (Bud) & Iris Hayes

Dennis and Judythe Hayes – Tracy, MN

Merlyn (Bud) Hayes

Pres. and Mrs. John Moldstad – Mankato, MN

Olaf and Pauline Knutson

Mrs. LaVonne Johnson – New Hampton, IA

Owen Swenson

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Swenson – Nicollet, MN

Paul Anderson

Rev. & Mrs. Craig Ferkenstad – Mankato, MN

Paul Madson

Mrs. Ruth Reichwald – North Mankato, MN

Rebecca Lussky

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Reid – Gaylord, MN
Rev. & Mrs. Gaylin Schmeling – Mankato, MN

Rev. John Secor

Trinity Lutheran Ladies Aid – Calmar, IA

Rev. Thomas Trapp

Rev. and Mrs. Steven Sparley – Tacoma, WA

Rev. Virgil Vickers

Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Rose – Salinas, CA

Robert W. Hall

Wesley and Susan Erickson – Granite Falls, MN
Paul and Terri Frank – Wood Lake, MN
Brian Hall – New Richmond, WI

Ronald Buelow

Dr. and Mrs. Lon Knudson – North Mankato, MN

Shirley Jochman

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Bull – San Antonio, TX

Shirley Petersen

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Swenson – Nicollet, MN

Stella Natvig

Saude-Jerico Men's Club – Lawler, IA
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Swenumson – New Hampton, IA

Theodore Aaberg, Jr.

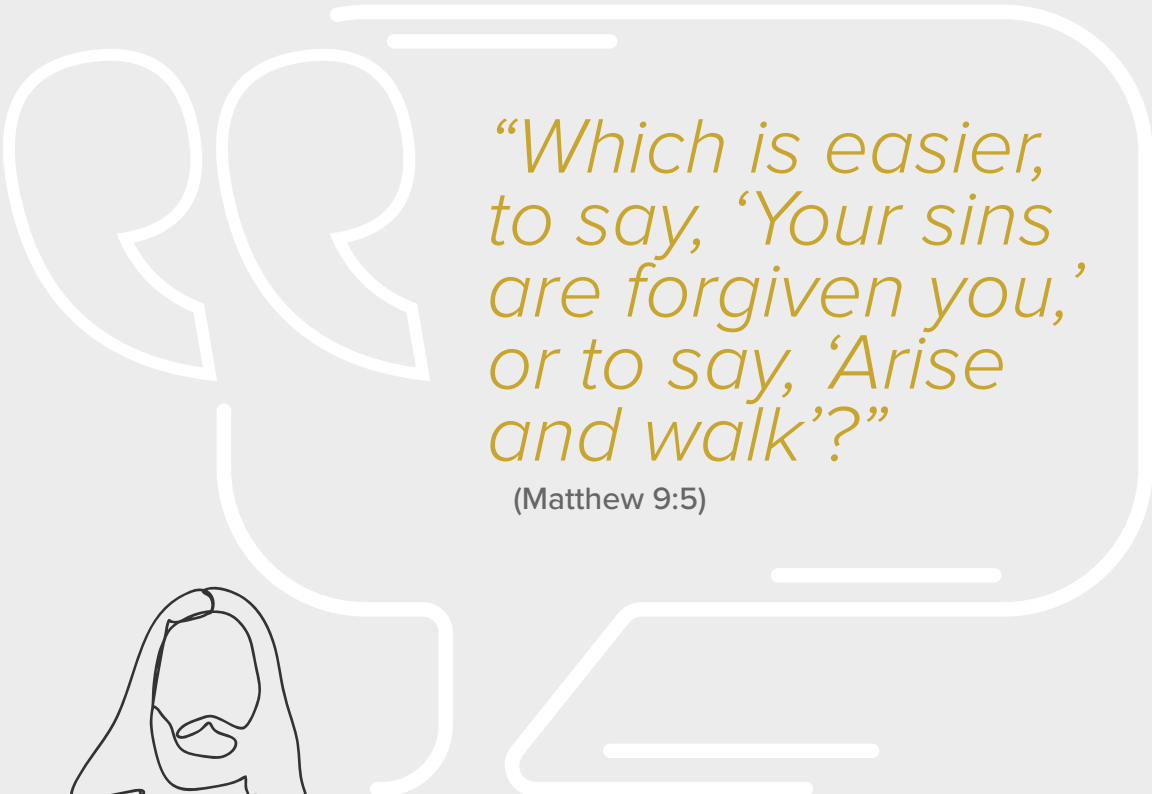
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Wilhelm Petersen

Matt Banbury – Lake Mills, WI
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Mr. and Mrs. Karl Bloedel – Lake Mills, IA
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Ms. Camilla Dashcund – Madison, WI
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Emily Faugstad – Emmons, MN
Mrs. Esther Faugstad – Lake Mills, IA
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Mr. & Mrs. Paul Fick – Sioux Falls, SD
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Goetzke – North Mankato, MN
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Mrs. Cheryl Heiliger – McFarland, WI
Mr. and Mrs. Ross Hermanson – Wells, MN
Rev. and Mrs. Bradley Homan – Cottage Grove, WI
Steve and Lois Jaeger – Mankato, MN
Dr. and Mrs. Eric Jahn – Wayzata, MN
Mark and Sandra Johnson – Kasota, MN
Bud and Judy Krause – Winona, MN
Rebecca Luckstein – Plainview, MN
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Lussky – La Crescent, MN
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Madson – North Mankato, MN
David and Jan Madson – Redwood Falls, MN
Rev. and Mrs. Jonathan Madson – Sebring, FL
Karen Madson – Minnetonka, MN
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Madson – North Mankato, MN
Rev. Norman A. Madson – North Mankato, MN
Timothy and Susan Madson – Albert Lea, MN
Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Mellon – West Bend, WI
Mr. and Mrs. Juel Merseith – Mankato, MN
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Mr. & Mrs. Julian Olsen – Nicollet, MN
Alan and Jackie Olson – Lengby, MN
Pres. & Mrs. George Orvick – Madison, WI
Miss Lois Otto – Mankato, MN
Mrs. Orla Petersen – Minneapolis, MN
Mrs. Ruth Reichwald – North Mankato, MN
Mrs. Joan Reinholtz – Madison, WI
Rev. & Mrs. Gaylin Schmeling – Mankato, MN
Rev. and Mrs. Tosten Skaaland – Wittenberg, WI
Rev. and Mrs. Shawn Stafford – Hartland, MN
Matthew and Elizabeth Sulzle – Rake, IA
Mr. and Mrs. Norman Werner – Coon Rapids, MN
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Younge – North Mankato, MN

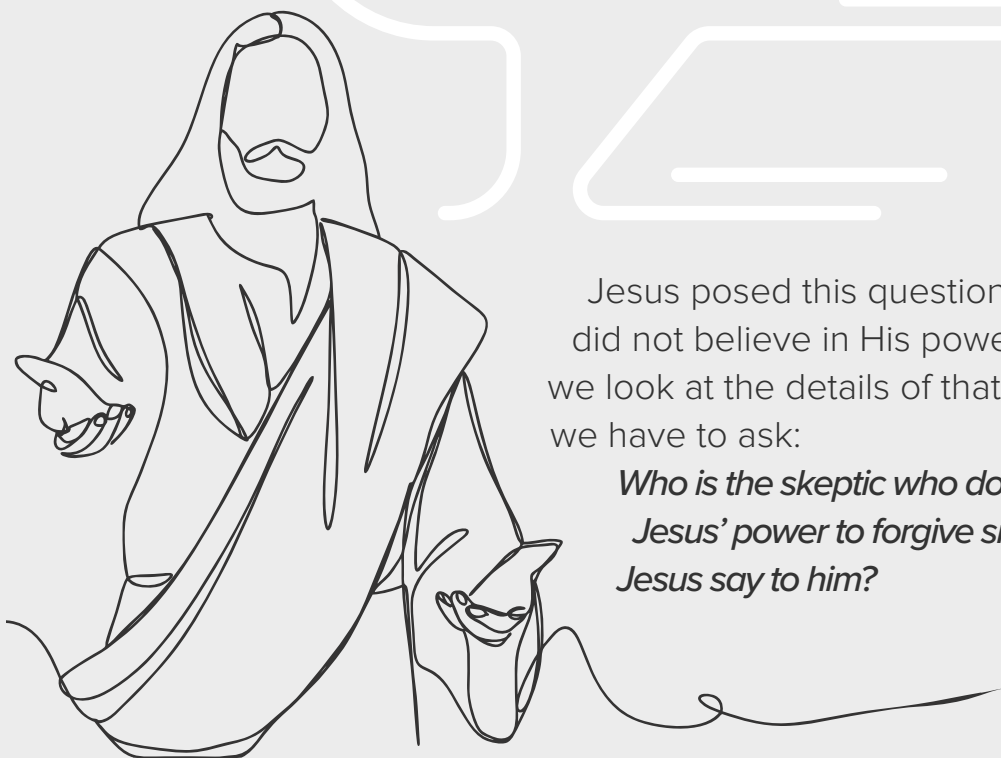
JESUS ASKS QUESTIONS

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



“Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’?”

(Matthew 9:5)



Jesus posed this question to some skeptics who did not believe in His power to forgive sins. Before we look at the details of that event in His earthly life, we have to ask:

Who is the skeptic who does not believe in Jesus' power to forgive sins, and what would Jesus say to him?

That skeptic resides in our sinful heart. It's the Old Adam, our sinful nature, that doesn't want to let Jesus have the last word about our sins. Our Old Adam wants to make up for the sins we've done and get the credit for our righteousness and confidence before God. Or, beaten down by our guilt, we might have a hard time believing that the spoken word of forgiveness can actually remove all the guilt of all our sins. Especially that unthinkable sin I did. My sin is too bad to be forgiven, says the depressed skeptic living inside us.

Jesus was about to heal a paralyzed man. But before doing so, He said to him: "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you!" This is when some Jewish scribes, in their thoughts, began to accuse Him of "blaspheming God." They didn't believe Jesus to be the Son of God, so therefore they reasoned that since only God can forgive sins, then Jesus was wrong to say this.

This is when Jesus asked them the question: "*Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?*" He asked them this question, Matthew writes, "knowing their thoughts." The fact that He knew their thoughts is a major clue that He is God! The scribes were reluctant to answer this question. They knew that only God could do either one of those things. Right after this, Jesus said the words that enabled the paralyzed man to walk. He did a miracle only God could do, proving that He was God and proving that He had the authority to forgive sins. The rest of the people there, seeing that Jesus (whom they knew as a man) was able to do this, marveled "that God had given such power [to forgive sins] to men."

We might actually have a harder time than the scribes in believing the divine power of the spoken forgiveness of sins. It's strange to say that because the forgiving of sins is so central to our liturgy and worship services and to the pastor's ministry, and we live in a world in which forgiveness is so easy. People will say, "It's easier to get forgiveness than to get permission." By contrast, we see so-called faith healers supposedly giving a quadriplegic the ability to stand and walk, and we just don't trust that this is real. We would answer that it's harder "to say, 'Arise and walk,'" than "to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you.'"

But even though we rejoice that we have great access to God's forgiveness and that impediments to being forgiven have been taken out of the way, still we find that it's difficult for us to believe that we are forgiven. We can believe that God forgives sins. But we find it hard to believe that He forgives my sins. Or if I believed it yesterday, or I believed it when I was in church, I struggle to believe it today, or "when in the night I sleepless lie" (ELH 565 v. 2).

So we do need Jesus to ask us this question -- "*Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?*" -- and to see that He does both the miracle of giving strength to limbs and the miracle of forgiving sins. Both of these miracles are done through His Word. But the word of forgiveness does not stay in that house in Matthew 9.

The same word of forgiveness that Jesus spoke to the paralyzed man, He sends your pastor to speak to you (1) publicly in church, throughout the liturgy, and in the sermon; and (2) privately, if needed, "for your comfort and peace" (ELH p. 129). It's because the devil is attacking you that you have difficulty believing that Jesus died for your sins. This very reality makes the rite of private absolution such a comfort when you are personally absolved as the pastor says: "I absolve you and free you from all your sins ... Believe without a doubt that your sins are forgiven ..." (ELH p. 129).

But while God has given this power to forgive sins to men, to His Church on earth, it isn't simply a man, the pastor, who is saying this. When you hear the forgiveness of sins being spoken to you by your pastor, it is Jesus Himself -- true God and true man, the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord -- who is speaking these words to you through the pastor. The pastor says these words in the stead and by the command of Jesus. Jesus stands before you. Jesus says to you: "Be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you!"

What Jesus did in the house that day goes on and on, and it includes you. In the Large Catechism, Martin Luther says, "Everything in the Church is ordered toward this goal: we shall daily receive in the Church nothing but the forgiveness of sin." Jesus' church, into which the Holy Spirit has gathered you, is a community of forgiveness, in which (you can believe) God "forgives me and all believers all sins."

■ **Next time:** "*What did you go out into the wilderness to see?*" (Matthew 11:7, series conclusion)

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

THE FIRST FIVE CHRISTIAN CENTURIES

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 325:



MUTING UNHOLY MUSIC

“Something is different about my daughter,” thought the man as he looked out the window at the bail bonds office across the street. He turned to face the kitchen. He saw the simple Sunday lunch he and his wife were going to share. Like the church service earlier that day, it would be just the two of them.

Their daughter had come home from school for the weekend. She slept late that morning and “couldn’t” get ready in time for church. She “couldn’t” stay for lunch but promised to grab something on the way. She had made her opinions clear to Mom and Dad throughout the visit. Their neighborhood, their dinner table, their church: none of these were good enough for her anymore.

“Something is different about my daughter,” thought the man. “Someone has been teaching her new songs, and she’s singing them.”

At the dawn of the fourth century, new songs were heard in Alexandria (Egypt, not Minnesota). A church elder named Arius was teaching that the Son of God was inferior to God the Father. The Son’s divine nature was like the Father’s, but not the same. The Father was eternal, but the Son had a beginning. The Son was the first and highest of created beings, but not the Creator Himself. “There was a time,” Arius taught, “when the Son was not.”

Arius solicited support for his false doctrine. He wrote letters to his fellow clergymen and songs for the people: catchy tunes that made the toxic lyrics more easily digestible and easily memorized. When the bishop of Alexandria removed Arius from his position, “Arians” took to the streets and sang his songs in protest.

These new songs threatened the unity of both the Christian Church and the Roman Empire. Constantine, the emperor who had legalized Christianity, recognized the threat and called for a council of bishops to stop it. In the year of our Lord 325, the council met in the city of Nicea.

The Arians expected to win the debate, but most of the bishops turned down the new music and stuck to the Scriptures: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3). Jesus Himself said very simply: “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).

The Council of Nicea gave us the Nicene Creed, which confesses that Jesus Christ is “the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.” Each of these phrases mutes the music of Arius.

Although victory over the Arians didn’t come instantly, the simple teaching of the Scriptures prevailed, and the Nicene Creed became a treasure of the Church.

There is music that threatens the Christian faith today, but this is not a complaint about filth on the radio. What comes from the spirit of the sinful world should not surprise us. Secular songs will not set apart Christ as Lord.

In these last days, Peter tells us what to listen for: “There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1 ESV). These false teachers will take as many with them as they can.

They will do this by teaching new songs to our children. Their lyrics may claim to praise Jesus, but they deny His cross and the shedding of His blood for our redemption. Like the songs of Arius, they limit who Jesus is, what He has done, and how He enters our hearts.

God’s Word teaches us how to silence this unholy music: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16 NKJV). The music of the Holy Scriptures will keep us and those we love in the one, true faith.

For further reading:

Deuteronomy 31:14-32:47; Psalm 101; Isaiah 38:9-20; Ezekiel 26:7-14; Daniel 3; Matthew 16:13-17; John 1:1-18; Hebrews 1; Revelation 15:2-4.

Next time, Part V: “What happens when a pastor goes bad?”

Catechesis Through Scripture

5th Chief Part

The Office of the Keys & Confession

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

Read: 2 Samuel 11:1-12:13; John 20:22-23; Matthew 16:19 & 18:18

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 1:8-9)

The Bible calls David “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). Yet when we examine David’s life, it becomes apparent that this moniker was not given to David because of his exemplary moral character. One of the darkest chapters of David’s life is recorded in 2 Samuel 11-12. David committed adultery with a married woman named Bathsheba. His life descended into a downward spiral of sin. Rather than confessing his sin, David attempted to cover it over by a series of lies, deception, and even murder. The laws that God had given to Israel stated that both David and Bathsheba were worthy of death for their sin (Deuteronomy 22:22).

The story of David is humbling for all of us. It is easy to imagine that we would never resort to such deceitfulness, hypocrisy, and evil. However, the same sin that lurked in David’s heart resides in the heart of all sinners. The Bible warns, “[L]et him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). Many people imagine that they can remain in the faith even while living in unrepentant sin. This attitude is dangerous. Dr. Luther reminds us of the scary reality that, “When holy people – still having and feeling original sin and daily repenting and striving against it – happen to fall into manifest sins (as David did into adultery, murder, and blasphemy [2 Samuel 11]), then faith and Holy Spirit have left them” (SA III, III, 43-44).

What are Christians to do with the sin that still clings to them daily? First, they are to confess their sin. To confess our sin is to confess the truth about our condition that God has revealed to us through the preaching of His Law. God’s Law shows us our sins. However, it doesn’t just do this in order to make us feel bad about ourselves. It shows us that we need a Savior from sin. Therefore, Luther rightly reminds us that Christian confession consists of two parts. “[O]ne, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the pastor or confessor as from God himself, and in no way

doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven” (ELS Catechism & Explanation).

God sent the prophet Nathan to David to confront him in his sin. Nathan preached the law to David in the form of a parable about a rich man who robbed a poor man of his pet lamb in order to throw a feast for a guest traveler. David was outraged at the injustice and actions of the rich man, exclaiming, “As *the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!*” (2 Samuel 12:5). Nathan let the full weight of God’s Law fall on David, saying, “*You are the man!*” (2 Samuel 12:7). David could not escape God’s crushing verdict. *The wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23).

David confessed his sin and the truth of his condition, saying, “*I have sinned against the Lord*” (2 Samuel 12:13). Immediately upon hearing his confession, the prophet Nathan applied the healing balm of the Gospel through the proclamation of God’s forgiveness. “*The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die*” (2 Samuel 12:13). The impact that this exchange had on David’s life is further unveiled in the words of Psalm 51.

Just as God saw to it that both Law and Gospel were preached and applied to the sinner David through the prophet Nathan, so He has established the office of the holy ministry in His church today. Christ has given us pastors and representatives who stand in His stead and by His command to preach the Law which convicts us of our sins. They do this to prepare us for the preaching of the Gospel. Through the Gospel the forgiveness of sins is brought to us - the life, and salvation that Jesus has won for all sinners. His perfect life and innocent death are graciously applied and received through the hand of faith, which He works in our hearts. In repentance, we turn from our sin and turn to Christ for forgiveness.

*The Words which absolution give
 Are His who died that we might live;
 The minister whom Christ has sent
 Is but His humble instrument.*

*However great our sin may be,
 The absolution sets us free,
 Appointed by God’s own dear Son
 To bring the pardon He has won.*

(ELH 417 vss. 6-7)

As a dinner guest... **YOU ARE MINE**

by **REV. DANIEL J. HARTWIG**, Contributing Writer
HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Okauchee, Wisc.

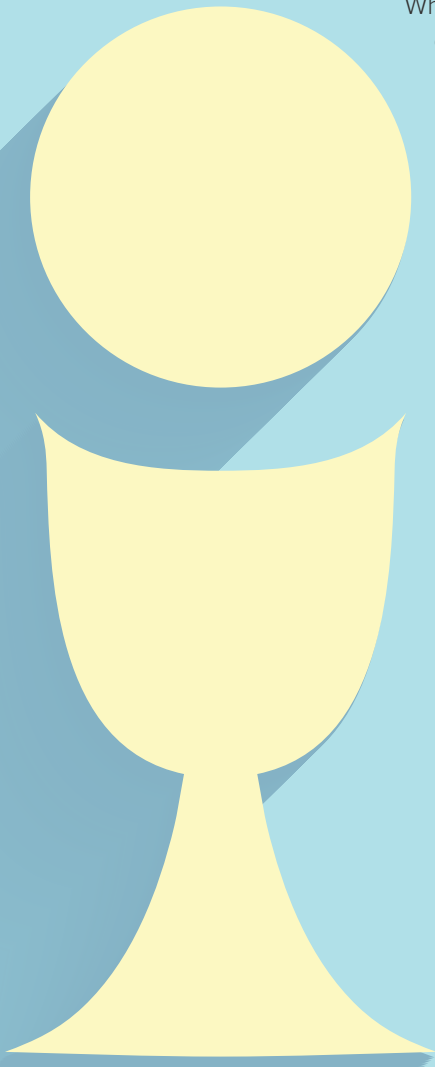
*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?
The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

1 Corinthians 10:16 NKJV

Here's some practical advice for a first date: Go to Perkins. Perkins is a restaurant in the Midwest that serves “generic” American food. It’s a good place for dinner on a first date because the menu is designed to accommodate almost everybody’s taste or dietary considerations. The food’s not too spicy, not too sweet, not too savory—it’s just comfortable for everybody. On a first date, when you really don’t know much about each other, it’s risky to go to a restaurant which only serves one style of food because you run the risk of picking a place your new date may not like. Worse yet, your date may be allergic to the food. But after you’ve dated for a while and you learn about each other’s favorite foods, then you can go to more specialized restaurants with specific foods you both enjoy, even if not everybody else does.

When we receive the Lord’s Supper at Church, we are God’s dinner guests, and this meal is not like a first date where the menu is generic. God’s Meal is a very specific meal meant for God’s special people. The reason for this is because of the highly specialized ingredients we receive in eating it. Though on the surface it looks, smells, and tastes like brittle bread and ordinary wine, because these elements are combined with God’s Word and used as Christ commanded, they are much more than that. St. Paul says the bread is the “communion of the body of Christ.” The wine is the “communion of the blood of Christ.” These simple earthly elements are intimately joined together with the heavenly elements of Jesus’ body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. As we receive the bread and wine, we also receive the same body which was born of the Virgin Mary and the same blood which dripped down the wooden cross.

And if we receive our Savior’s true body and blood, then this is no generic meal. We aren’t just reminded about how God loved us, nor does this show that He just kinda-sorta knows us. Rather, He intimately knows us—our weaknesses, our failures, our hurts, our struggles—and He feeds us with the only thing that can really help us. Such a meal shows us that our God loves us deeply, and He knows exactly what kind of food we need to live every day of our life. As His dinner guests, we are His and He is ours through this very special Communion. The Lord’s Supper is the perfect meal for the perfect date.



QUESTIONS:

1. *Jesus' own words tell us "what" we receive in communion. From His own words, can you see "why" He instituted such a unique meal?*
2. *Typically, teenagers kneel near their parents when they receive the Lord's Supper and hear Jesus' words about forgiveness. How do His words "for the remission of your sins" affect your place in your family?*
3. *If we tweak the pronouns just a bit, how do His words "for the remission of Mom's sins and Dad's sins" affect your place in your family?*
4. *The article ends saying "the Lord's Supper is the perfect meal for the perfect date." It isn't suggesting you and your boyfriend/girlfriend meet at church for a date, but still...could kneeling together to receive forgiveness through Jesus' body and blood deepen your relationship or change the way you view one another? Why?*



Bethany Seminary Begins a New Academic Year 2019–2020

(back, L to R) Paul Agenten, Max Kerr, Abraham Faugstad, Adam Brasich, Colin Anderson, Peter Bockoven
(front) Nicholas Lilienthal, Sean Scheele, Samuel Johnson, Roger Emmons, Cody Anderson, Caleb Helmen
(not pictured) David Choi Vicars not pictured: Patrick Ernst, Jacob Kempfert, Ethan Urtel, Karim Yaghleji

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary began the new academic year on August 19, 2019, with the opening service at Good Shepherd Chapel. **Prof. Nick Proksch** preached the sermon on Ezekiel 47:1–9, which is Ezekiel’s vision of a supernatural temple with waters flowing out of it. These waters flow into the Dead Sea and are able to transform even the saltiest and deadest of waters into fresh water with an abundance of life. Likewise, God recreates us, his fallen creatures. He takes us out of our saltwater of sin and death by connecting us to the fresh waters of life flowing from God himself, as depicted by the temple. It is no wonder that Jesus spoke of himself as the true temple and offered “living water” in his ministry (John 2:19, 4:10, 7:37–39). With his sacrifice for sins on the cross and conquest of death in his resurrection, we have every quenching of spiritual thirst we need. In a world surrounded by spiritual saltwater, incapable of satisfying or sustaining our lives, pastors have the joy and privilege to offer the only thing that truly quenches and satisfies in the means of grace. Studying for this ministry is our task at seminary.

The teaching staff for the seminary this semester is as follows: **Brian Klebig, Nicholas Proksch, Timothy Schmeling, Andrew Schmidt, and Gaylin Schmeling.** Professor Brian Klebig is teaching communication; Professor Nicholas Proksch is teaching in the areas of New Testament, homiletics, and hermeneutics; Professor Timothy Schmeling is teaching Old Testament and homiletics; Professor Andrew Schmidt is teaching pastoral counseling; and Professor Gaylin Schmeling is teaching courses in church history and homiletics.

The seminary enrollment this year numbers nineteen. There are four vicars, five seniors, five middlers, three juniors, and two special students. The vicars are **Patrick Ernst** at *Faith Lutheran Church (San Antonio, Texas)*, **Jacob Kempfert** at *Mt. Olive Lutheran Church (Mankato, Minnesota)*, **Ethan Urtel** at *Hartland and Manchester Lutheran Churches (Hartland and Manchester, Minnesota)*, and **Karim Yaghleji** at *Bethany Lutheran Church (Port Orchard, Washington)*.

THE BJARNE WOLLAN TEIGEN

Reformation Lectures 2019

OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 1, 2019

“Lutheran Preaching through the Centuries”

1. Preaching in the Reformation

Dr. Paul Robinson

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

2. Preaching in the Nineteenth Century

Dr. Thomas Kuster

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota

3. Preaching Today

Pres. Emeritus Paul Wendland

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin

S. C. Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center

on the campus of

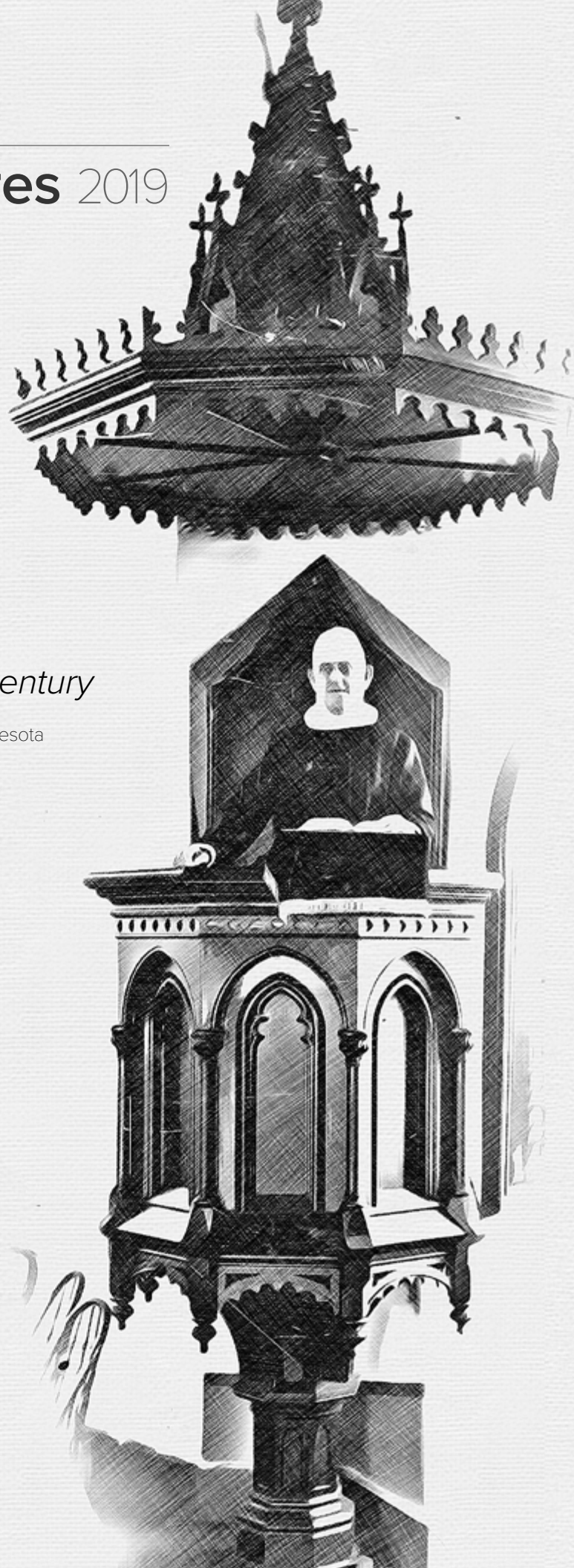
Bethany Lutheran College

Mankato, Minnesota

Begins October 31 at 10:30 a.m.

Registration available online:

blc.edu/reformation-lectures



MEETING MY BROTHERS & SISTERS:

FAITH LUTHERAN Oregon, Wisconsin

by **REV. JEFFREY HENDRIX**, Contributing Writer
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, Oregon, Wisc.



Adorning the altar at Faith Lutheran Church is a statue of Christ, reminiscent of Thorvaldsen's famous Christus statue. Ours however has his hands lower and palms held upwards in a position of invitation. A close examination of the hands reveal indentations where nails might have been. It's as if Christ is in the midst of showing his hands to doubting Thomas the week after his resurrection and inviting Thomas to not doubt, but believe.

This is a fitting focal point for a congregation named "Faith." Our congregation first began meeting in Oregon (pronounced exactly how it looks, unlike the state), Wisconsin in 1979. Then-Vicar, Craig Ferkenstad, was charged with organizing the congregation and became her first pastor after the congregation was formed in 1980. Faith has seen many of her pastors take calls to positions of leadership both within our synod and in our sister synod, the WELS. Faith is comprised of a wide variety of people, from farmers in nearby communities to commuters to Madison. No matter their background, here all are encouraged to come together, join in a liturgy that surpasses generations, and to sit and hear the comfort of Christ crucified and risen.