



LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

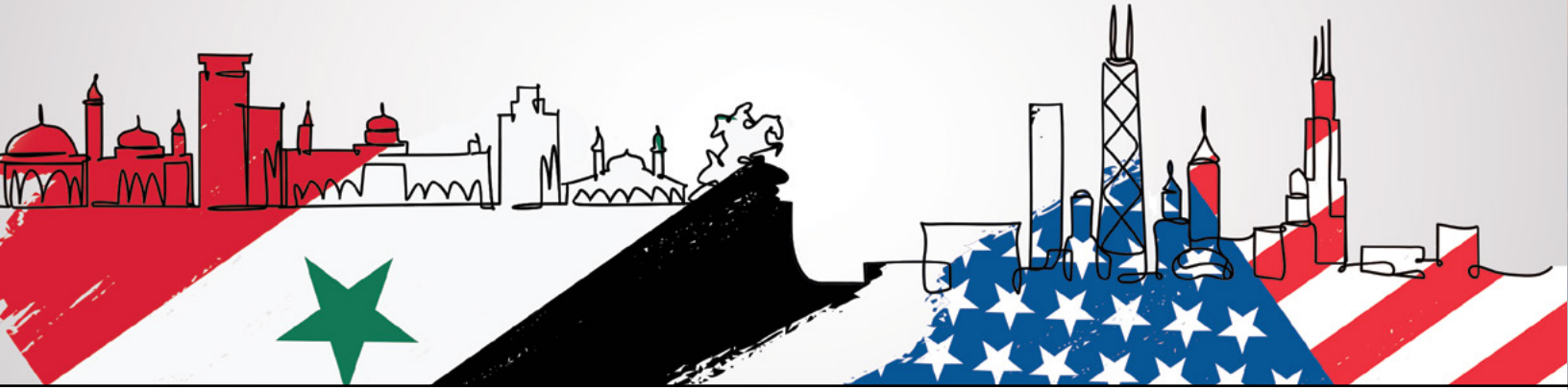


GOD AT WORK SERIES:

Police Officer

pg. 8

A Foreign Missionary at Home



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

Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

Often it is said that the biblical book the Acts of the Apostles could more fittingly be thought of as “the acts of the Holy Spirit.” As the Word of our risen and ascended Lord Jesus spread, the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to faith and preserving them in faith is most evidently what transpires in this intriguing mission book of Scripture.

We especially think of the journeys of the apostle Paul and how the good news of the Savior was carried to various countries and even to the European continent. Yet the opening chapter of Acts has a “close at home” first focus. As Jesus spoke to the eleven at the moment of His ascending, He commissioned them with these words: “...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Jesus made it clear that the disciples were to begin their Gospel-spreading task right where they were planting their feet at that moment in Jerusalem. Like concentric circles formed by a pebble in a pond, the Gospel of Christ then would move outward from their home base. Samaria came next, then Asia Minor into Macedonia, Rome, Spain, and beyond.

The work of our synod down through the decades has shown a similar pattern. There was only one Mission Board for many years that had a dual purpose: the development of home missions and the establishment of mission churches in foreign lands. Today we have two separate boards, enabling a more concerted and precise effort toward each goal. We want all people of every country and of every race and ethnicity to know the truth that Jesus has come, lived, died, and risen again for the eternal salvation of every sinner. But without home mission development, it would be virtually impossible to carry on the work of world outreach. How thankful we should

be to those in our synod who have been committing themselves to the work of our Board for Home Outreach (BHO) as well as to the work of our Board for World Outreach (BWO). These boards deserve our prayerful attention! They represent the heart and center of what our ELS mission purpose is all about.

Recently, our Board for Home Missions took on a unique project. It weds a home-based start with what we hope will have an international scope. You may already have heard about it. One of our newly ordained men has been called jointly by St. Timothy in Lombard, Illinois, and our ELS BHO. His name is Karim Yaghleji (wife, Anna), who is from Aleppo, Syria. He is bilingual and soon will – God willing – be holding Arabic-language worship services in the Chicagoland area while serving as a second pastor at St. Timothy.

Historically, it is interesting to observe that in the year of our ELS’ origination (1918), we as a fledgling church body resolved to take over the support of a new home mission (St. Paul’s) in the western suburbs of Chicago. Today, the “home” territory of Chicago is providing us with an extraordinary opportunity to reach another culture right at our own doorstep! Could this effort also have world-ranging effects for the spread of the Christian Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit?

If any are interested in donating toward this BHO-sponsored mission project, you may direct your gifts to this address:

ELS Arabic Outreach
 6 Browns Court
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A few members of **Messiah Lutheran Church** in Omro, Wisconsin, with two Omro police officers.



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Competing Goods

by **REV. KYLE MADSON**, Editor
THE LUTHERAN SENTINEL, Norseland, Minn.

When did being “the Church” become so difficult?

Why does it suddenly involve so much consternation of mind and heart, so much “distance” and protective equipment?

Why do we suddenly find our greatest struggles to be with/ against our own church family rather than “those other people in the big, bad world out there?”

Why is it that suddenly the majority of a Christian congregation’s efforts and energies are dedicated to figuring out how to “stay inside the lines,” lines that shift from week to week or even day to day?

Well, one could say... *It’s as simple as 3 - 4 - 5:*

3RD COMMANDMENT

You Shall Keep the Day of Rest Holy

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

(Small Catechism - 3rd Commandment)

*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

(Hebrews 10:24-25)

This whole pandemic experience for the Christian (and the Christian congregation) has been like a drawn-out, real-life Bible study: Love God, love your neighbor. It’s that simple... and oh so troublesome for us sinners.

We have instruction from God to gather together to hear His Word and a very high premium placed on “keeping holy” (carefully preserving) that occasion for hearing the Gospel proclaimed together (Hebrews 10:25). We also have instruction to love our neighbor by giving honor to superiors (civil authorities included) and through help for our neighbor in every bodily need. And none of these exist in separate silos where their contents and directives don’t mix.

The Christian life often requires us to wrestle with “competing goods” next to one another, weighing the costs and the benefits

4TH COMMANDMENT

Honor Your Father and Mother (& Civil Authorities)

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

(Small Catechism - 4th Commandment)

*For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore **whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God**, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

(Romans 13:1-2)

also

Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.

(Psalm 146:3)

5TH COMMANDMENT

You Shall Not Kill

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

(Small Catechism - 5th Commandment)

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”

(1 John 3:16)

and discerning how to “love God and our neighbor,” and all this without color-by-number instructions. (The Pharisees loved color-by-number instructions. They were “easy.”) There hasn’t been a day in the life of the Christian Church or in your local congregation when this duty to weigh competing goods was not a present duty. That we haven’t always noticed this or chaffed through such trials says as much about our (perhaps convenient) blindness to “taking up our cross” (Matthew 16:24) as it does God’s kind and abundant preservation of peace and health in our lifetimes.

May God grant us patience, wisdom, and courage. But most of all, God grant to us abundant mercy for our failures to discern the weighty and competing goods and the extension of such mercy and charity to our brothers and sisters as well.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

In Acts 1:18, it says that Judas Iscariot fell headlong, burst open, and his bowels gushed out. In Matthew 27:5, it says that Judas threw down the pieces of silver into the temple, departed, and hanged himself. **How do we reconcile this seeming discrepancy concerning Judas Iscariot's death?**

Answer:

This question—and other questions like it—is not easy. When confronted with so-called discrepancies or contradictions in the Bible, we can easily be caught off guard and struggle to find a good answer. So as we share our faith with those around us, we need to be ready to deal with the question of apparent contradictions.

Before looking at the verses in question, let's review a couple of key truths about the Bible. First, the Bible is divinely inspired. Over a period of about 1500 years, God “breathed into” (inspired) the writers' minds the very thoughts and words He wanted them to record. As Peter wrote in his second letter, “holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). Christians can rightly say that the Triune God is the author of Scripture. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God* (2 Timothy 3:16, NKJV). The Bible doesn't just contain God's Word, it is God's Word. Every word of Scripture is a word that God wanted to be written down.

This brings us to our second key truth: the Bible is without error. Since the holy and righteous God is the author of Scripture, we can trust that His Word has no mistakes. His Word is truth (John 17:17); it contains no lies or falsehoods. In addition, Scripture is internally consistent with itself. As Jesus said in John's Gospel, “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

Since the Bible is divinely inspired and without error, there are no real discrepancies or contradictions in the Bible. Some apparent discrepancies exist, and a small number of them present thorny problems for scholars. A faithful student of Scripture, however, will be able to reconcile most of these apparent discrepancies.

So we begin with Matthew 27:5: *Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.* Compare Matthew's words to those of Luke in Acts 1:18: [Judas] *purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.* From this passage, Luke appears to contradict Matthew by saying that Judas died by falling headlong and rupturing his abdomen. Did Judas die by hanging or by falling? There's the apparent discrepancy.

Yet did Luke say that Judas died by falling? The context from Matthew's gospel gives us more clues as to what Luke is really talking about. In Matthew 27:6-10, the gospel writer goes on to explain what happened after Judas' death. Since the silver Judas threw

down was blood money, the chief priests did not put it back into the treasury. So “they consulted together and bought with [the pieces of silver] the potter's field, to bury strangers in” (Matthew 27:7). The chief priests did not purchase the potter's field until after Judas left to hang himself. Judas' death and the purchase of the field are two separate events.

Yet in Acts 1:18, Luke begins with the purchase of the field—an event that took place after Judas had died. Interestingly, Luke says Judas himself bought the potter's field, not the priests. While the chief priests may have carried out the purchase, it was Judas' thirty pieces of silver—his payment for betraying the Lord—that bought the field. Matthew 27:5 describes Judas' death by hanging while Acts 1:18 relates what happened after Judas died. Discrepancy resolved!

Some might argue, however, and say, “What about the description of falling headlong and his intestines gushing out? Isn't that a description of how Judas died?” Luke's words may describe what happened to Judas' body at the time of his hanging, though it's more likely, given what happens during human decomposition, that the gory sight of Judas' abdomen rupturing took place later—hours, perhaps days, after his death.

Judas' death by hanging and the headlong fall of his body, while separate events, are part of the same history. Matthew captured part of that history in the gospel that bears his name, and Luke captured and wrote down the other part of that history in Acts 1. When we put the two accounts together, they do not conflict, but instead give us a more complete picture of what happened.

When faced with an apparent discrepancy or contradiction, don't panic. Read the Scriptures carefully and especially note the context of the passages. Remember that a difference in the details does not necessarily mean a contradiction. Above all, never doubt that what you're reading is the God-inspired truth.



Do you have a question for Pastor Van Kampen?

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



How Preserving the Past Will Sustain Our Future

MR. DAVID EVANS (BA – History, 2020),
DR. DAVID REAGLES, Bethany Lutheran College - History
Contributing Writers

Around six hundred years ago in Switzerland, a young man by the name of **Cincius Romanus** made the find of his life at the St. Gall Abbey: molding, worm-infested books. A clerk in the papal curia by profession, he had gone looking for these strange treasures after the Council of Constance (1414-1418) had ground to a halt over which of the three current popes should be the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Having found these strange treasures, Cincius called immediately for a courier to take a letter south to his former teacher, Franciscus di Fiana. For these were not just any books, but exquisite works of antiquity which monks had tediously and laboriously copied by hand. These texts included the *Argonautica*, the story of the Greek hero Jason's search for the Golden Fleece, Cicero's *Orations*, works on ancient architectural theory, early Christian commentaries on the poetry of Virgil, and more. Yet the joy of discovery was tempered by grief. He explained:

But when we carefully inspected the nearby tower of the church...in which countless books were kept like captives and the library neglected and infested with dust, worms, soot, and all things associated with the destruction of books, we all burst into tears, thinking that this was the way in which Latin [learning] had lost its glory and distinction. Truly, if this library could speak for itself, it would cry loudly: ... "let me not be utterly destroyed by this woeful neglect. Snatch me from this prison in whose gloom even the bright light of the books within cannot be seen."¹

This plea from a long-forgotten Christian humanist leaves us with much material for reflection. In the first place, Cincius isolated the two biggest challenges to archives in his day that continue to our own: neglect and ignorance. In Cincius's time, centuries of neglect had reduced the literature of antiquity to moldy books infested with bugs. Today, precious remnants of lives long past lie scattered in musty church basements, disorganized filing cabinets, or buried in landfills. In Cincius's day, ignorance left the past buried beyond sight. Today, slashed budgets, understaffed departments, and unsystematic practice produce the same results.

¹"Cincius Romanus to his most learned teacher Franciscus de Fiana," in *The Human Record: Sources of Global History, Volume II: Since 1500*, ed. Andrea Overfield (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning), 37.

Yet what grieved Cincius most was his awareness of the long-term consequences of ignorance and neglect: we risk forgetting who we are. A fundamental lesson of a liberal arts education is that a society without history is like a person without memory. As memory fades, awareness of the past degrades and succumbs to a myopic presentism that leaves us as prisoners of our immediate experience. Yet within archives exists a narrow, liberating space in which we can stem the entropic tide by preserving fragments of lives forgotten, allowing them to live on to the next generation. The loss of our collective memory from neglect and ignorance lets die a second death all those whose traces remain therein. This was Cincius' chief fear, and it is the same challenge we face today.

We can overcome this challenge by following Cincius' example by dedicating ourselves to the task of collecting, preserving, analyzing, and communicating our collective past. The ELS has a rich and well-recorded history, yet more work remains to be done. If they haven't already, ELS congregations should determine what records are stored where. These include administrative reports and minutes from church boards, blueprints, maps, legal documents, annual budgets, directories, membership registers, baptisms, marriages, and transfers, scrapbooks, photographs, and anything from special services or events.

Once located, congregations should make a basic inventory of their records. Then they should be organized by group (i.e. everything produced by Board of Deacons, Board of Stewardship, etc...), arranged by type (i.e. minutes, budgets, etc...), and ordered chronologically in clearly labeled folders (after all, the Christian church in the Middle Ages did invent the file folder!). Electronic records may be convenient for day-to-day church business, but computers are not ideal for archival storage. Imagine if most church records from the 1980s were stored on floppy discs! Not only would the information now be difficult to access, it would deteriorate within years. We cannot assume current technologies will be accessible in decades to come. Preserve physical records in a dry and cool space and ensure they are not in direct contact with the floor (especially in flood-prone basements). Remove staples, metal paper clips, and rubber bands to avoid damaging archival materials. Using acid-free paper, file folders, and boxes will ensure long-term preservation, as will maintaining a storage temperature of under 70°F with roughly 30-50% relative humidity. Investing in a good hygro-thermometer helps to ensure optimal environmental conditions.

Despite the promise of such collection programs, Cincius reminds us archives remain silent if they are not used. So how might we increase usership of the archival treasures of the ELS? One answer lies in a great word from the French:

dépaysement. *Dépaysement* names a feeling of complete disorientation when traveling to a new place. Yet *dépaysement* also denotes the excitement of anticipating unexpected adventure.² Becoming immersed in the archive is similar. You can rifle through an endless stack of documents and be none the wiser about what you are looking at or how it will answer questions you don't yet know to ask. Yet it is there we can cultivate this sense of wonder. Who hasn't experienced this while cleaning out a grandparent's attic or while shuffling through dusty files in a church office? In these moments, we ask the questions of an archivist: Of all possible items to preserve, why these? How do these papers connect with one another? Is it worth keeping or should it be discarded? How do these artifacts and documents relate to broader topics; in other words, how does content intersect with context? The questions are endless, but through these tactile immersive experiences, we grasp our collective past.

These findings must be communicated. Just as Cincius took up quill and parchment in his effort to prevent archival decay, we must strive to increase community involvement with our collections. Archives—whether at the local congregation or synodical level—need to serve as gathering places for the communities whose histories they inform if they are to maintain their relevance. This requires creating the very stakeholders who later form the basis of its support. At Bethany, for example, we are capitalizing upon our relationships with our own ELS historical society as well as the local historical societies of Blue Earth, Brown, and Nicollet Counties. Students in the History Department (1) gain valuable leadership, organizational, research, and communication skills in professional settings, and (2) help to promote the collections and activities of those venerable institutions in a meaningful way. We push to collaborate on joint exhibits, cooperate on research projects, organize tours of various sites, and run coordinated workshops on themes about archives and history. All of these piecemeal forms of communication build lasting relationships that encourage engagement with archives. Why couldn't ELS congregations similarly enliven their own pasts by organizing exhibits, writing local histories, sponsoring lectures, or recording the memories of its members?

Like today, Cincius realized that coming face to face with the past through the archive is many things: it is time-consuming, confusing, and disorienting. But it is also inspiring and exciting. This complex array of emotions remind us not only to avoid the dangers of neglect and ignorance, they are also what can inspire in our own constituents the kind of enthusiasm Cincius had. Not for old stuff just because it is old, but because old stuff has the power to transform ourselves and even the world around us. Cincius earnest desire to recover fading voices is worth the effort, and it is something we cannot afford to lose if we are to keep our sanity in a world rife with neglect and ignorance.

²This discussion of *dépaysement* follows Tiffany Watt Smith. See her "The History of Human Emotions," TED Talk, 13:43. November 2017. https://www.ted.com/talks/tiffany_watt_smith_the_history_of_human_emotions/up-next.

God at Work: Divine Care Through Many Callings



Police Officer

"A cobbler, a smith, a farmer, each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated ...every one by means of his own work or office must benefit and serve every other, that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, even as all the members of the body serve one another."

Martin Luther - "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility"

by **SGT. CHRIS HOFFMAN**, Member of
HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH, West Jordan, Utah,
ELS BOARD FOR YOUTH OUTREACH

My name is **Chris Hoffman**, and I am a police officer. I have served in this vocation for the past three decades in four police agencies. I currently serve as a police sergeant assigned to supervise school resource officers in large metropolitan junior high and high schools in Utah. Through my career, I have also served as a patrol officer, patrol sergeant, training officer, state investigator, and detective. All this information I include not in boasting, but in humility, as the Lord has called me to serve so many, and I have fallen short. God has placed numerous neighbors in my life through my vocation. They include my supervisors, fellow officers, citizens, and elected officials of the agencies that have so graciously employed me.

One of the neighbors I have been called to serve that I have neglected to mention until this point are the people I arrest. Those people that I have been called to bring to justice are also placed in my care.

We understand as Lutherans that God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does. George Floyd needed Minneapolis police officers that understood their vocation in this way. Police officers are often called to use physical force. When force is used to take someone into custody, only the amount of force needed to safely take the person into custody is to be used. Anything outside of that will most likely be met with arrest and criminal charges for the officer. There is no way to undersell it: the consequences of bad intent and inaction by the officers in this case will have a negative lasting impact on law enforcement and the country for the foreseeable future.

In Romans chapter 13, Paul writes, *“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God.”* As a Christian and a police officer, I understand that the authority I exercise through the government is ultimately instituted by God.

Our Lutheran view of Law and Gospel is an invaluable help when I think about the responsibility of my position even though it is exercised in a secular environment. So much of policing is figuring out what needs to happen given a certain set of circumstances. An officer could tow the car of a homeless person down on their luck with an expired registration. The grace in that instance may be finding resources for the person and sending them on their way. In other circumstances, such as domestic violence, there is rarely any leeway given. The law will show itself immediately.

Incidents like these happen to every officer dozens of times every year. Police use discretion (mercy) and justice. My luxury is that I can categorize this concept. I can use this distinction and my application of it to internally gauge whether I am doing an effective job for my community.

Officers serve the citizens of their communities, but they are also called to serve those who would violate the trust of the people of those communities. They do this by treating those arrested fairly and recognizing that, should an arrest be made, punishment is not theirs. It belongs to the community through its instituted court system. We have seen the consequence of what happens when justice is sought outside of these systems.

I am extremely thankful that God has placed me in this vocation. I am thankful that I have been given insight through His Law and Gospel on how to properly treat my neighbor. Most of all, I am thankful that when I fall short, which is often and always, I have a Savior who forgives and redeems me.

*“Hear us, cheer us By Thy teaching;
Let our preaching and our labor
Praise Thee God and bless our neighbor.”*
ELH 27; v.3



Messiah Lutheran Honors Community Officers

Members of Messiah in **Omro, Wisconsin**, decided to show appreciation for the dedicated service of their local police department. With partial assistance from a Thrivent grant, the congregation purchased gift bags of summer sausage and cheese and also gave gift cards to the eight full-time and 4 part-time officers in the city. Officers **Joe** and **Josh** (pictured) expressed sincere gratitude on behalf of the Omro PD, and one of the moms whose son is on the force wrote a heartfelt note of thanks to the people at Messiah Lutheran.

Concerning the Administration of the Sacrament of the Altar

Since concerns and questions regarding some aspects of the administration of the Lord's Supper have been forwarded to the doctrine committee for discussion, the synod president has directed the doctrine committee to prepare guidance on these matters for the pastors and congregations of the synod.



1. Concerning the elements in the Lord's Supper

In cases of recovering alcoholics and those with gluten intolerance or other such ailments, may substitutions for wine and bread be used?

See the ELS Lord's Supper Statement (1989):

<https://els.org/beliefs/doctrinal-statements/>

The Christian Church has not been given authority to alter what our Lord has commanded and instituted. The supper is not based on the Passover, but on what Jesus has commanded. The word "bread" has a clear meaning, but since bread has been made of grains other than wheat (then and now), use of other grains for the bread of the supper is not excluded. Neither is it required to be unleavened. The words of institution refer only to bread, not the baking method. The same is not the case with the other element of the Lord's Supper, the contents of the cup. While the New Testament accounts of the institution use "This cup," Jesus, in Matthew 26:29, referring to the contents of the cup, says "I will not drink of THIS fruit of the vine until that day..." "Fruit of the vine" states clearly that the content of the cup was grape wine (fermented), though it does not mandate its color. On account of what Jesus says, we know that the cup contained "fruit of the vine," which can only be the fermented liquid from grapes. The ancient Christian

church (with few exceptions, mostly gnostic) has held that the content of the cup is to be grape wine, the fruit of the vine. See Martin Chemnitz, *Enchiridion*, "to the essence of this Sacrament belongs the outward elements of bread and wine, for in the cup that Christ took there was the fruit of the vine, Matthew 26, 29" (p. 120). This view is repeated by Walther and others in concluding from Matthew 26:29 that "fruit of the vine" in the cup is grape wine. While they knew that the Jewish celebration of Passover in Jesus' day strictly adhered to the use of grape wine in the Supper Jesus instituted, they depended only on Jesus' word. J. T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, 525 says: "That he used wine is proved by the expression 'this fruit of the vine,'" without further explanation. (See also Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, 354f., footnote 94; Chemnitz, *Lord's Supper*, 98 f.; Augsburg Confession X; Smalcald Articles III, 6; and Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII, 14, all of which simply take it for granted that the content of the cup was wine.)

2. Are the elements consecrated by the Distribution Formula?

When St. Paul writes "the cup of blessing which we bless" (1 Corinthians 10:16), he speaks of a blessing or consecration. This blessing is included in the "Do this" found in the four accounts of the institution of the Supper. The words commonly

spoken in the distribution cannot be considered the consecration since they say “This is the true body of Christ” and not “This is my body.” The confessions of our church (Book of Concord) uphold this understanding of the words of institution (*Verba*): that the speaking of the *Verba* belongs to Jesus’ “*Do this*” and that Jesus’ words, not our adaptations, are the blessing.

Concerning the consecration, the ELS *Lord’s Supper Theses* quote The Formula of Concord–Solid Declaration, §75–77:

For wherever we observe his institution and speak his words over the bread and cup and distribute the blessed [consecrated, gesegnete, benedictum], bread and cup, Christ himself is still active through the spoken words by virtue of the first institution, which he wants to be repeated ... No human being, but only Christ himself who was crucified for us, can make of the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but by God’s power and grace through the words that he speaks, “this is my body,” the elements set before us in the supper are blessed.’ ... ‘This his command and institution can and does bring it about that we do not distribute and receive ordinary bread and wine but his body and blood, as his words read, “this is my body,” etc., “this is my blood,” etc. Thus it is not our work or speaking but the command and ordinance of Christ that, from the beginning of the first Communion until the end of the world, make the bread the body and the wine the blood that are daily distributed through our ministry and office.

Thus we hold that if the elements are not “blessed” (i.e. consecrated) with Jesus’ own words, they are not to be distributed as the body and blood of Christ. The words by which the elements are blessed or consecrated are not the priest’s words, but Christ’s, for only Christ can say, “This is my body.”

So that “This is my body,” etc., retain their true meaning, they are kept in the context of the narratives of the supper from the sacred accounts of the evangelists and St. Paul, and we refer to the entire context as the Words of Institution, which emphasizes that they are the Word of God, not the word of men.

It is customary in our churches to use a distribution formula, though that is not required by the “This do.” In some early Lutheran liturgies (e.g. the church of Norway and Denmark prior to 1685), the distribution was silent. The statement often used in the distribution, “This is the true blood of Christ,” or a longer form, “This is the true body of Christ given for you for the remission of sins” is not the same as “Drink of it all of you, this cup is the New Testament of my blood which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.” It should be noted that what we say in the distribution is our confession of faith

concerning the elements, but they are not the words of Jesus consecrating or blessing the elements.

3. Is it necessary to repeat the consecration when additional elements are brought to the altar to complete the distribution?

Many Lutheran Church Altar Books have required that if additional elements not present when the elements were consecrated are later brought to the altar, they must be consecrated by the portion of the Words of Institution that applies to them. Arguments about whether or not God’s Word can pass through the wall between the sacristy and the chancel are akin to arguments about a mouse eating the wafers. The “this” of “This is my body” refers to the elements which have been prepared for the particular celebration and are on the altar before the communicants, not in the sacristy or in the parsonage. In this matter, too, “This” means “this,” referring to what is before the communicants. The statement quoted before also holds: “For wherever we observe his institution and speak his words over the bread and cup and distribute the blessed bread and cup....” Note that the distributed bread and cup are those which have been “blessed,” i.e. “consecrated.”

In a letter to Georg of Anhalt, Martin Luther wrote (Monday after St. John’s day 1542) that “if not enough of the hosts or wine were consecrated and more must be consecrated, we do not elevate again as is done in the papacy” (*Martin Luthers Samtliche Schriften*, Old Walch edition, 1746, vol. XIX, columns 1632–33).

The *Lutheran Hymnary* used in the ELS from 1918 until the publication of *The Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* in 1996 included the following rubric in the service of the Lord’s Supper as printed in the full edition: “If the consecrated bread or wine be spent before all have communed, the Minister shall consecrate more, saying aloud so much of the words of institution as pertaineth to the elements to be consecrated (*The Lutheran Hymnary*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1913 and 1935; p. 32). In order to avoid such a situation, *Danmarks og Norges Kirke-Ritual of 1685* (Christiania, 1863 edition, 71): “The pastor must diligently see to it that he knows the number of those to be communed, so that he does not have to repeat the words of the prescribed consecration; for neither the bread nor the wine should be distributed before they are consecrated by the Word.”

Martin Luther's Busy Year

Babylonian Captivity of the Church:

What does ancient Babylon of 600 B.C. have to do with the Lutheran Reformation?

The title is taken from the Babylonian exile or captivity of Judah 600 years before Christ. Luther likens that captivity of the children of Abraham in Babylon to the Church of Rome's distortion of the pure teaching of the Bible about God's means of grace in the sacraments.

1520



Before Jesus' ascension, He commanded the church to make disciples and teach everything He had commanded them. To do that, He gave the church His Gospel through the writings of His apostles and commanded the believers to preach the forgiveness of sins, to baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the remission of sins, and to celebrate the holy supper of His body and blood in the meal He instituted for the forgiveness of sins.

During the Middle Ages, the Roman theologians added to these gifts the rites of ordination, confirmation, marriage, and extreme unction and called them sacraments—holy things which give grace to God's people.

For the Lutheran Reformation, the question was not really about the number of sacraments, neither was it simply about the definition of sacrament. Rather it was about what God has instituted and commanded.

Luther's task in "this little book," as he later calls it, was to make clear the things God commands His church to do to communicate His forgiving grace and to point

out what things are human inventions. “To begin with,” Luther says, “I must deny that there are seven sacraments, and for the present maintain that there are but three: baptism, penance, and the bread.” Ten years later, Philipp Melancthon in Article 13 of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession also counts penance or absolution as a sacrament. The definition he uses is “rites that have the command of God and to which the promise of grace has been added.”

Luther doesn't really want to quibble about the number, and he will return to that later. But at this point, he adds: “If I were to speak according to the usage of Scripture, I should have only one single sacrament [Christ].” By that, Luther is thinking of 1 Timothy 3:16, where Paul writes, “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.” The Greek word Paul uses, *mysterion*, is translated *sacramentum* in Latin Bibles.

Thus, for Luther a true holy thing is commanded by God and gives Christ and the forgiveness of sins to His believers. The sacraments are the means by which God imparts His salvation—Means of Grace. Baptism grafts us into Christ; absolution applies the forgiveness of sins to us individually; in the Lord's Supper, we receive the true body and blood of our Lord, as we sing in one of our hymns after communion: “My Savior dwells within me now” (ELH 325).

Sacraments are not things we do simply because Jesus and the disciples did them. Sacraments are those acts commanded by God, instituted by Christ, and by which He gives His gracious forgiveness.

On the other hand, at the very end of Babylonian Captivity, Luther uses the slightly different definition by St. Augustine: “Nevertheless, it has seemed proper to restrict the name of sacrament to those promises which have signs attached to them....Hence there are, strictly speaking, but two sacraments in the church of God—baptism and the bread.” However, he does not dismiss penance or absolution, but says it is “nothing but a way and a return to baptism.” By varying the definition and number of sacraments, Luther certainly makes it clear that he will not be bound by anything not specifically commanded by God.

However, Luther finds a serious problem with Rome's teaching on penance—that there are three parts of repentance: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. *Contrition* takes place when we are brought to sorrow over our sins. The penitent then *confesses* his sins to a priest, who absolves the sinner; the confession is followed by *satisfaction*, the performance of an act showing the contrition to be genuine. Luther objected to that approach because it makes forgiveness dependent on an act of the believer. The Lutherans argued that there are only two parts: contrition and faith. The law condemns the sinner, who sorrows over his offence against God. In absolution,

the penitent sinner hears the voice of the gospel—your sins are forgiven—and trusts it. No work of the sinner confirms or completes the gracious promise of God. Absolution is instituted and commanded by Christ: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:23; see also Matthew 16 and 18). Absolution is the voice of the gospel—“your sins are forgiven,” period, not “your sins are forgiven if....” Thus, absolution conveys the very same forgiveness given in Baptism and the Supper.

What of the other rites the Roman church considered to be sacraments? Luther shows why they cannot be placed in the same category as Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper, whether called *sacrament* or something else.

- **Confirmation** is not a sacrament because it cannot be shown to be instituted by Christ, nor does it convey the divine promise, nor does it have a divine command.
- **Ordination** as a sacrament is an invention of the pope. As a rite (ritual), it contains no word of promise, and he finds no divine command for it.
- **Extreme unction** or last rites is a perversion of the anointing of the sick with oil. Certainly, it is mentioned in James 5:14-15, but there is no divine command and no word of promise given in it. Luther does speak very kindly about the anointing of the sick and hopes that in it, the pastor will certainly speak the gospel or absolution to the one who is sick, but he denies that the Roman practice of extreme unction or last rites is what James is talking about
- **Marriage** cannot be called a sacrament. God created it, but that does not make it a Christian sacrament. It was instituted with the creation of humankind and is valid for unbelievers and Christians alike. Neither has it been instituted by Christ to convey the forgiveness of sins. Luther observes that calling marriage a sacrament is a misunderstanding of Ephesians 5. St. Paul uses the relationship of husband and wife as an illustration of the relationship between Christ and the church. In verse 32, he writes: “This is a great mystery.” The Romanists believed that referred to marriage, but Luther points out that Paul completes the sentence by saying, “I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Why is this matter of the sacraments important?

Luther closes his essay:

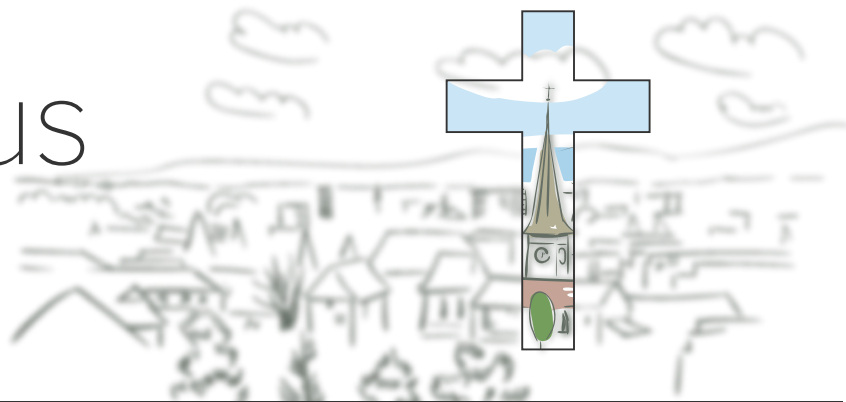
Herewith I conclude this prelude, and freely and gladly offer it to all pious souls who desire to know the genuine sense of the Scriptures and the proper use of the sacraments. For it is a gift of no mean importance, to know the gifts that are given to us.

(The Babylonian Captivity of the Church is found in *Luther's Works*, American Edition, Vol. 36, pages 5-126.)

Cross Focus

Focusing on the world around us through the lens of the cross.

by **REV. PAUL FRIES**, Communications Director
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD, Mankato, Minn.



IF YOU ARE OUTRAGED, THEN YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION

It seems no matter where you look, what you read, or what you watch, someone is angry. News website headlines use words such as “slams,” “attacks,” “eviscerates,” or “wrecks,” among many others, to describe how someone spoke about an issue or about someone else. In an election year, we can expect a heightened use of hyperbole, but the anger has been expressed and has been growing for many years.

I saw a sign in a store window recently. You may have also seen it on a bumper sticker. It read, “If you’re not outraged, then you’re not paying attention!” The phrase has been plastered on many products for a while now. We can all point to something in our modern world that upsets us for a variety of reasons. But the outrage being expressed in our nation at this time in history is out of control. For a Christian, that outrage is unacceptable. If you ARE outraged, then you’re not paying attention—to God’s Word.

We’re told in Scripture:

Be silent before the Lord. Wait patiently for him. Do not fret when an evil man succeeds in his ways, when he carries out his wicked schemes. Let go of anger and abandon rage. Do not fret—it leads only to evil. (Psalm 37:7-8 EHV)

Get rid of every kind of bitterness, rage, anger, quarreling, and slander, along with every kind of malice. (Ephesians 4:31 EHV)

But now, you too are to rid yourselves of all of these: wrath, anger, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. (Colossians 3:8 EHV)

Certainly, a man’s anger does not bring about what is right before God. (James 1:20 EHV)

Now the works of the sinful flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, complete lack of restraint, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, discord, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and things similar to these. I warn you, just as I also warned you before, that those who continue to do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Galatians 5:19-21 EHV)

What good will outrage do? What will it accomplish? Usually outrage leads to more sins. Currently, one of the most abused Commandments is “You Shall Not Bear False Witness Against Your Neighbor.” Luther’s Small Catechism explains this Commandment: We should fear and love God, so that we do not lie about, betray or slander our neighbor, but excuse him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

How often do we put the worst construction on something someone said or wrote? Do we immediately assign a label to them—“racist,” “socialist,” “misogynist,” “elitist,” or much worse—instead of trying to understand the reasons for their perspective? The most important question we need to ask ourselves before we respond to someone is, “Does this perspective violate God’s Word?” If the answer is “no” or if the answer is unclear, it is our duty as Christians to put the best construction on the statement. As Christians, we can disagree on many things that God does not speak to in His Word. But that disagreement should always be as brothers and sisters in Christ, living in this time of grace God has granted us. Out of love for our neighbor and out of thanks to God, we follow His guidance for our behavior.

As Christians, we have the joy of living in God’s grace, earned for us by our Savior, Jesus Christ! This world will never be perfect. There will always be sin. There will always be disagreements. There are times our consciences and God’s Word require us to speak. It seems an easy task these days to find those situations that clearly challenge God’s Word. But there is no room, Christian, for useless outrage in your life. Instead, listen to God’s Word: ***Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if anything is excellent, and if anything is praiseworthy, think about these things.*** (Philippians 4:8 EHV)



BETHANY SEMINARY BEGINS A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR 2020 - 2021

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary began the new academic year on August 24, 2020, with the opening service at Good Shepherd Chapel. For the opening service, **Dr. Timothy Schmeling** preached on 1 Samuel 3:1–10, with the theme “Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.” Beginning with the famous stoic proverb: “We have two ears and one mouth, so we should listen more than we speak,” Prof. Schmeling preached about how failing to listen to the Word of the LORD and the needs of the neighbor resulted in the rarity of God’s Word in Samuel’s day. Pointing out ways we often do the same, he called for us to repent of our neglect of God’s Word and our spiritual deafness to others. Since we cannot initiate God’s Word by anything that we do, the LORD comes to us through Christ and says, “*Ephphata, that is, be opened*” (Mark 7:34, ESV). Only Christ can heal the spiritually deaf, dumb, and blind. Lest we put off repentance and stop listening to God’s Word, Dr. Schmeling exhorted us to make Samuel’s prayer our daily prayer: “Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.” Finally, he acknowledged COVID and other reasons for feeling unready to receive a pastoral call. And yet, it was pointed out that God didn’t wait for Samuel to feel ready before he called him. Instead God recreated him, justified him, and equipped him to take up the prophetic office. God made Samuel ready because he could not make himself ready. Grounded in God’s Word, we too can confidently say, “*Here I am, for you called me.*”

Not pictured: Bjarte Edvardsen, Jonathan Gross

Vicars not pictured: Adam Brasich, David Choi, Roger Emmons, Samuel Johnson, Sean Scheele

The teaching staff for the seminary this semester is as follows:

Brian Klebig, Joshua Mears, Nicholas Proksch, Timothy Schmeling, and Gaylin Schmeling. Professor Brian Klebig is teaching communication; Dr. Joshua Mears is teaching counseling; Professor Nicholas Proksch is teaching in the areas of New Testament, homiletics, and hermeneutics; Professor Timothy Schmeling is teaching Lutheran Confessions and homiletics; and Professor Gaylin Schmeling is teaching courses in church history and homiletics.

The seminary enrollment this year numbers seventeen. There are five vicars, five seniors, three middlers, three juniors, and one special student. The vicars are **Adam Brasich** at Resurrection Lutheran Church (Winter Haven, Florida) and Our Savior Lutheran Church (Lakeland, Florida), **David Choi** at Reformation Lutheran Church (San Diego, California), **Roger Emmons** at Grace Lutheran Church (Redmond, Oregon), **Samuel Johnson** at Our Saviour Lutheran Church (Lake Havasu City, Arizona), and **Sean Scheele** at Pilgrim Lutheran Church (Waterloo, Iowa) and Faith Lutheran Church (Parkersburg, Iowa).

The Center for Apologetics and Worldview Studies

- **Presenting evidence** for the truth of Christianity
- **Critiquing worldviews** that oppose Christianity
- **Fortifying believers** with a proper interpretation of Holy Scripture
- **Engaging unbelievers** in conversations leading toward the Gospel proclamation of forgiveness in Christ

Following a 2019 synod resolution authorizing the establishment of an apologetics center, the ELS Apologetics Committee appointed Dr. Ryan MacPherson of Bethany Lutheran College to serve a two-year term as director. Dr. MacPherson will continue to teach with a reduced load at the college while leading the center in sponsoring conferences, producing publications, and partnering with synod boards for outreach and evangelism. The launching of the apologetics center has been made possible by an anonymous initial \$20,000 gift, as well as a follow-up challenge donation of \$10,000/year for a two-year period. We are pleased to say that this calendar year’s challenge was fully met. For video archives of prior conferences and plans for coming events, visit: www.blc.edu/apologetics

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Cancellation: Reformation Lectures 2020

The 2020 Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures scheduled to meet in Mankato, Minnesota, October 29–30, 2020, have been **cancelled due to concerns over the current global pandemic.**

This should come as little surprise given the many cancellations of academic conferences throughout the country this fall. That said, the 2020 schedule has been retained for next year, so please join us for the 2021 Reformation Lectures, entitled “*We Confess Jesus Christ,*” to be held on the Bethany campus, **October 28–29, 2021.**

The individual lectures will be:

- *Early Church Christology*
- *Early Modern Lutheran Christology*
- *Modern Lutheran Christology*

<http://www.blts.edu/reformation-lectures/>

<https://blc.edu/campus-life/annual-events/reformation-lectures/>

MEETING MY BROTHERS & SISTERS:

Cristo Rey Lutheran Church Bell Gardens, California

by **REV. MATTHEW BEHMER**, Contributing Writer
CRISTO REY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Bell Gardens, California



Cristo Rey Lutheran Church is located in **Bell Gardens, CA**, approximately ten miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles. The community has an estimated population of over 45,000 people within its 2.4 square miles. Approximately half are foreign-born and over ninety-seven percent of the population is Latino or Hispanic. The congregation was formed in 1972. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the congregation carried out ministry in English and Spanish. It has been served by two of our synod’s missionaries to Peru, the Rev. Robert Moldstad and the Rev. David Haeuser.

In 2016, the congregation began a partnership with the ELS’s Board for Home Outreach to renew its outreach efforts. To reach the community, the congregation focuses on neighborhood canvassing, hosting family events, and an extensive social media presence. Two major annual events hosted by the congregation include a Back-to-School event and a Las Posadas celebration. The Back-to-School event includes a school supplies giveaway and community resource fair. A variety of non-profit and community groups participate. There is a brief devotional and blessing of the students and school year. The Las Posadas celebration is held at Christmas time. It includes music, pozole and tamales, activities for children, and a reenactment of Mary and Joseph looking for a place to stay. Catechism students dress up as Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and angels. They recite verses from Luke 2 and sing stanzas of “Silent Night” in English and Spanish.

To learn more about Cristo Rey, please visit:
www.cristoreylutheran.com