



IT IS WRITTEN: "Look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." (LUKE 21:28)

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

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of




**COMMON
CONFESSION**



Evangelical
Lutheran
Synod



WELS
Christ's Love, Our Calling.



GOD COMES NEAR US

“Christ was handed over by God into the hands of sinners.” Now normally we think of that expression in terms of Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, trial, condemnation, and execution. But “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” He gave His Son to the world. In other words, it was at the birth of Jesus God handed over His Son into the hands of sinners. We consider the hands of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, magi, Simeon, and Anna as being sinful hands which received Him favorably through faith and love. That was the small minority in our world, which is always filled instead with those who remain hostile towards God and His ways.

For many, God had come too uncomfortably near to them. Herod, the chief priests, elders, and all Jerusalem were all disturbed by the news that a new King of the Jews had been born. Herod sought to get his hands on this newborn king to kill Him. And while God thwarted his efforts, there would come a time 33 years later that the evil design of sinful man would have its way. Yet what they meant for evil, God meant for good.

We are finishing up another bruising political season among us. While some in that arena may not know they are persecuting Christ, their policies and legislation at times assail His Church. Thus they have received Him in their hands, unwittingly doing Him harm – “they know not what they are doing.” Our Lord, the Savior of all sinful mankind, still comes through the Church, but too uncomfortably near for some. While they may seek to strike out in evil, God always turns such evil into blessings for His Church.

While avoiding putting our trust in princes, we consider those who govern us a part of our annual Thanksgiving. We give thanks to our gracious Lord who provides for our bodies and

life, using even the evil of the unbelieving world to bring blessings upon His Church and the entire world. When Christians celebrate Thanksgiving, it is not limited to their temporal blessings, but most importantly the eternal blessings from the hand of our gracious God.

We now once again are about to celebrate Christmas, acknowledging how God came near to us by sending His Son to be our Brother. He came down to us in the flesh to live the perfect life we are required to live but fail to produce and to die the death we are required to die so that we might live.

In the Bethlehem stable, when it was time for the Virgin to deliver, He was delivered into the hands of sinners. Sadly, many at this blessed Christmastide act as Herod did. They find Jesus the Christ too uncomfortably near and seek to banish Him from their lives and even from the celebration of His own birth. But by God’s grace, there still are those whose hands, having been washed clean by His blood through holy baptism, receive Him with joy and gladness.

Dear Christians, God has handed over His Son to you. Therefore, raise your voices in joy because you know and believe the goodness God has worked by delivering Him over for your offenses and raising Him for your justification. Power in the hands of sinners is held through the threat of death, but in the hands of the King of kings, it is always through the promise of life.

*Good Christians all, this Christmas time,
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done,
In sending his beloved Son.*

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by **REV. DAVID J. WEBBER**, ELS Doctrine Committee
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Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) was organized in 2001 by 31 congregation from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) that for some time had been dissatisfied with the theological drift of the ELCA. These congregations had previously been part of a reform movement within the ELCA called the *WordAlone Network* (which still exists), but finally decided that they could no longer remain within the ELCA when the ELCA, together with its ecumenical partner the Episcopal Church, adopted “Called to Common Mission.” This agreement brought into the ELCA a requirement that all bishops be consecrated according to the requirements of the historic episcopate (sometimes referred to as “apostolic succession”) and that all pastors be ordained by such bishops.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod is sympathetic with this particular concern. The details of how a church body is governed are matters of adiaphora, and at least one of the ELS’s sister churches abroad is led by a “bishop.” But the ELS formally rejects “any teaching that the apostolic authority of the Public Ministry of the Word or the validity of the sacraments depends on or is derived from ordination by a bishop standing in an unbroken chain of succession from the apostles, or the necessity of maintaining a ‘historic episcopate.’”

The structure of the LCMC is non-hierarchical and decentralized, emphasizing the autonomy of the congregation. The LCMC has no president, but is administratively managed by a “service coordinator.” It operates no seminaries, but does maintain a list of approved seminaries (both Lutheran and non-Lutheran). The LCMC has within it several “districts” through which some congregations join together for closer cooperation, either on the basis of geographical proximity or on the basis of a shared emphasis in mission and theology. The non-geographical Augustana District, for example, holds its pastors to a higher level of commitment to traditional Lutheran theology than what might be found in the LCMC as a whole.

The LCMC adopted the ELCA’s statement of faith, but believes that it adheres to this statement more consistently than does the ELCA. According to this ELCA/LCMC text,

The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God. Inspired by God’s Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God’s revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God’s

Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

We believe, teach, and accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life.

Compare this somewhat vague wording to what the ELS states in “*We Believe, Teach and Confess*”:

We confess that the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, in their original form as written by the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, were given by inspiration of God. The Holy Scriptures are without error in everything they teach, ... and they are the only infallible rule and norm of Christian doctrine and practice. ... Since the term “inspired” is often used in a loose sense, we frequently use the expressions “verbally inspired” and “inerrant” in describing the authority and reliability of these sacred documents which God caused His servants to write.

The ELCA/LCMC statement also recognizes the Ecumenical Creeds as “true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach, and confess,” the Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as “true witnesses to the Word of God,” and the other Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord as “further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.” The ELS position, with respect to all the Confessions, is firmer and clearer: “We accept these Confessions, not insofar as but because they agree with Scripture, and we believe that they are a correct exposition of the teaching of God’s Word.”

The LCMC describes its place on the American Lutheran spectrum as “centrist” and “mainstream.” Yet it has taken few stands on specific doctrinal or moral issues and allows a fairly high degree of diversity in belief and practice among its member churches. The LCMC encourages its congregations to enter into ecumenical relationships with other churches according to their own judgment and local circumstances. It has no official policy on altar fellowship, but open communion seems to be the norm. Also, women serve as LCMC pastors and in all other offices of the church. Some congregations are traditional and liturgical in their worship practices while others are more “evangelical” and even “charismatic” in their style and format.

One area where the LCMC has spoken with some clarity is in regard to same-sex relationships. It requires all its pastors to affirm “that God created us male and female, and that it is God’s will and intention that human sexual expression and fulfillment take place only within the boundaries of marriage between one man and one woman.” Indeed, the membership of the LCMC grew dramatically after the ELCA voted to allow practicing homosexuals to serve in the ministry and ELCA clergy to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies. The LCMC today numbers 970 congregations in 41 states, two U.S. territories, and 15 foreign countries.

The four Gospels relate many instances of Jesus healing the sick and demon-possessed, not just with the power of His Word, but also with the use of His body (touching people, making mud out of spit and rubbing in a blind man's eyes, etc.).

When Jesus performs a healing through the use of His body, is it a display of the genus maiestaticum (the “majestic genus”)?

Answer:

As you well know, the field of theology utilizes many “five-dollar words,” complex, many-syllabled terms that are not easy to pronounce, often involving Latin or Greek. The questioner brings to our attention perhaps one of the most important “five-dollar words” of all: the genus maiestaticum (pronounced JE-nes my-es-TAH-tic-coom), also known as the “majestic genus.” Hopefully, a basic understanding of the concept will lend itself to answering the question.

What is the *genus maiestaticum*?

The majestic genus, or genus maiestaticum, is one of three categories theologians use to explain how the attributes (qualities or characteristics) of Christ's divine and human natures relate to one another within their personal union according to the Scriptures. The other two genera are the idiomatic genus (*genus idiomaticum*) and the apotelesmatic genus (*genus apotelismaticum*).

Often when Scripture speaks about the person of Christ, the individual qualities of Christ's divine nature and His human nature are ascribed to the whole person. For instance, in Romans 1:3-4, Paul writes of “Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh” (NKJV). We understand that Christ's nature as true God does not have a human lineage. At the same time, we also understand that according to His human nature—“according to the flesh”—Christ is “born of the seed of David.” The facts of Jesus' lineage and birth, however, are not just tied to His human nature alone, but to the entire person, Jesus Christ our Lord. (This is, essentially, the idiomatic genus.)

Yet within the personal union of Christ, something else is also taking place. While the divine and human natures remain separate and distinct, they exist in such close communion with one another that within the person of Christ the majestic attributes of His divine nature are communicated—or gifted—to Christ's human nature. This is the majestic genus or genus maiestaticum. A wonderful example from Scripture is found in 1 John 1:7: the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. In the act of justification not only the divine nature in Christ, but also His blood shed at the cross (according to His human nature), has the power to cleanse us from all sins.

Are Jesus' miraculous healings a display of the *genus maiestaticum*?

Yes, Jesus' miraculous healings display the genus maiestaticum—though perhaps not in the way you might think. Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus heal the sick in a variety of ways. Sometimes He uses the power of His Word, as He did with the centuri-

on's servant (Matthew 8:13). On other occasions, He heals simply through the power of human touch, such as when He touched the hand of Simon Peter's mother-in-law and removed her fever (Matthew 8:15). Still at other times, Jesus healed blind men with His own saliva (Mark 8:22-25; John 9:1-7).

One might be tempted to say that Jesus' healings by the power of His Word represent the idiomatic genus while Jesus' healings by the power of His body—especially His bodily fluids—represent the majestic genus. Yet the truth is that Jesus' miracles are an example of both genera. The genus maiestaticum describes how the divine and human natures in Christ function all the time. From the time of His conception, both natures are present in the person of Christ all the time along with their unique attributes. The unique attributes of each nature are ascribed to the whole person all the time. Yet various majestic attributes of the divine nature are communicated or gifted to the human nature all the time—because the two natures are never separate from each other.

If you place a piece of iron into the blacksmith's fire, it will receive within itself the attributes of the fire and glow red hot—even though iron by itself isn't usually red hot. In a similar way, when Christ's human nature was conceived in the womb of Mary, it began to receive in itself the attributes of His divine nature: God's almighty power, omnipresence, and omniscience. The analogy limps somewhat in that iron can be pulled from the fire and thereby lose the attributes of fire. In contrast, the human nature and divine nature—while distinct and separate—are inseparable in the personal union of Christ.

In conclusion:

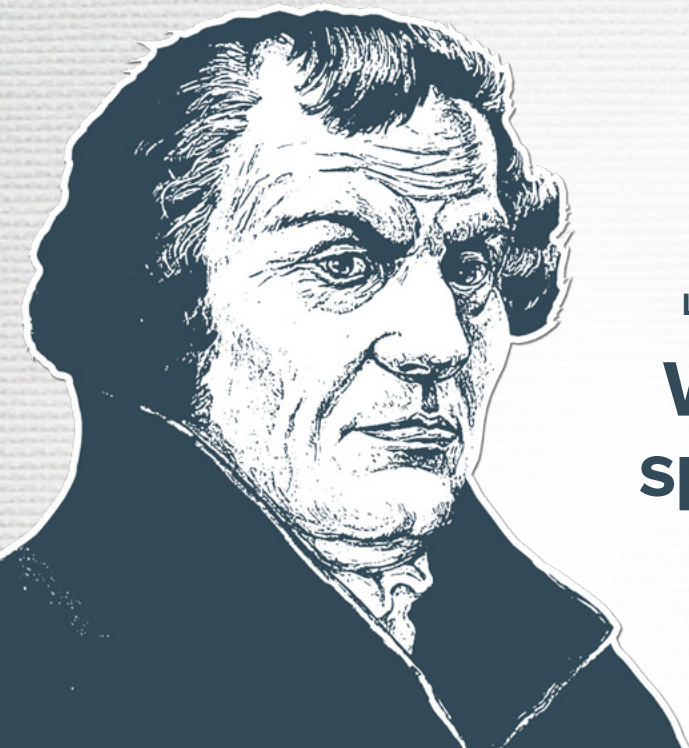
If this month's column went over your head a little, do not be discouraged. Doctrines such as the majestic genus are admittedly hard for most people to grasp without a careful study of the Scriptures. Don't be afraid to ask your own pastor about this or any Bible teaching that you wrestle with. The word genus maiestaticum may be a “five-dollar word,” but rest assured it has an infinite value in helping us think about and teach the truth of God's Word.



Do you have a question for Pastor Van Kampen?

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novum testam~~entum~~ Neues Testament



LUTHER'S NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATION:

Why should English speakers care today?

by **REV. DR. NICHOLAS PROKSCH**, Contributing Writer
BETHANY LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Mankato, Minn.

I might as well start by admitting the obvious: It's probably hard to get excited for the anniversary of a German Bible translation when we use English and most of our churchgoers and pastors (understandably) don't read German today. For us English speakers, however, Luther's translation is still worth caring about because it demonstrates what Luther thought about communicating the Gospel. Reflecting on how Luther communicated then lends insights to us for communicating that same Gospel today. Luther's translation of the New Testament was not the first one into German, but he made such radical departures from what had been done that his translation stood far above the rest. His uniqueness, I believe, lies in his strong reader orientation.

Previous translations had tried to be so faithful to the traditional translation of western Christianity—the Latin—that in extreme cases it resulted in tortured, incomprehensible German sentences. Luther, however, tried to be faithful not only to the biblical text, but also to his audience so they could understand the message of the Gospel clearly. Scholars have noted how earlier German translations adapted Latin terms transliterated into the German text, like *glori* or *pontifex* (high priest), likely trying to maintain ties with the traditional Latin or thinking something would be lost if specific Latin vocabulary was not maintained and explained in the church. In contrast, Luther wanted the German Bible to sound how Germans speak—oddly a more revolutionary concept than it seems at first glance.

It is hard to evaluate how Luther's translation would have sounded to its original listeners and readers since even modern native speakers of German have 500 years of linguistic development between them and Luther. Thankfully, we at least have what Luther himself wrote about his process in his work *On Translating: An Open Letter*. Though he speaks against being overly literal and word for word rather than sense for sense, he notes that he kept very close to the original language "where everything turns on a single passage" (*Luther's Works* 35:194). Overall, one can see where many words line up between his German and the original Greek, so he is not drastic in general, as if paraphrasing. Yet he is concerned for German word order, using common German vocabulary, and clarity in style, taking liberties when needed. When facing heavy criticism for taking too many liberties, he makes it clear his concern for his German audience is the top priority over impressing elitist snobs: "We do not have to inquire of the literal Latin, how we are to speak German.... Rather we must inquire about this of the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the marketplace. We must be guided by their language, the way they speak, and do our translating accordingly. That way they will understand it and recognize that we are speaking German to them" (*LW* 35:189). To set the goalposts for a good translation as using the language of mothers, children, and the common man would, of course, have sounded even more extreme in Luther's context.

He addresses a few examples against critics to shed light on what he means. For example, in Matthew 12:34, the Latin translation would have sounded exactly like our New King James Version: "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*" Yet Luther, with lovable bluntness, writes about the verse, "What German could understand something like that? What is 'the abundance of the heart'? ... For 'abundance of the heart' is not German, any more than 'abundance of the house,' 'abundance of the stove,' or 'abundance of the bench' is German. But the mother in the home and the common man say this, 'What fills the heart overflows the mouth'" (*LW* 35:189–190). When criticized for changing the angel's greeting to Mary in Luke 1:28 from the Latin, "Hail Mary, full of grace," Luther writes, "What German understands what that is, to be 'full of grace'? He would have to think of a keg 'full of' beer or a purse 'full of' money" (*LW* 35:191). Though Luther had gone with "gracious one" instead for his translation, he writes with a bit of humor that he was holding back: "Suppose I had taken the best German, and translated the salutation thus: 'Hello there, Mary'—for that is what the angel wanted to say, and what he would have said, if he had wanted to greet her in Ger-

man. Suppose I had done that! I believe they would have hanged themselves" (*LW* 35:191–192). Luther wanted to avoid the misunderstandings and confusion that result from callously translating word for word or without a thoughtful reader orientation.

Additionally, Luther's style had a way of bringing the translation down to earth for people. For example, one scholar notes he often added little particles to his German, imparting the flavor of spoken, conversational language. It might be comparable to how we often add "so," "like," or "yeah" when speaking English more than writing it, though German has more such particles and with greater subtlety. In fact, when translating from Luther's German into English, you often need to simply leave them untranslated; otherwise, you end up with an unwieldy abundance of words like "indeed" in your sentence. Yet in Luther's translation, this feature would have made it more natural. To give an example where Luther influenced (and continues to influence) our English translations, a scholar once noted his eloquent deviation from the Latin in John 13:1. The Latin would have sounded something like, "Having loved his own who were in the world, into the end he loved them," but Luther's fingerprints are on most English translations that read something like, "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." These examples illustrate how Luther valued clear, approachable communicating.

For all these reasons, Luther's Bible is widely regarded as a landmark translation and a brilliant accomplishment. He certainly knew what he was doing. How might Lutheranism have ended up if he had a drab outlook on translation? I'm glad I don't have to find out!

So then, the anniversary of Luther's translation is not only a celebration of the past but also a helpful challenge to us who carry the Lutheran tradition forward. Luther was attuned to the people and their language, and he simply wanted them to clearly understand the Gospel message in whatever way they could handle it. We have people in our lives that we want to talk to about Jesus, whether teaching children or chatting with a friend, whether with the church or the unchurched. Luther shows that such communication is not simply about using the right churchly words but rising to the occasion or needs of the listener. The person we communicate with influences how we communicate. Luther's New Testament translation did it, bringing with it the comfort of Christ crucified, the Gospel message that has found its way to us still today. I hope his translation can inspire us also to carry this great tradition forward.

150 YEARS of



HARTWIG



OBERBERGER



SCHROEDER



TREPTOW

*Four leaders comment on common confession and fellowship as we celebrate the unity that has endured for 150 years between the **Evangelical Lutheran Synod** and the **Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod**.*

by **MR. JOHN BRAUN**, Executive Editor (ret.)
FORWARD IN CHRIST MAGAZINE,
monthly periodical of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

“You believe what?!” When we confess our faith in Jesus and what the Bible teaches, sometimes we hear such a response. At other times, it might seem that we are all alone in what we believe and teach.

“Our postmodern culture has declared the individual free to form whatever religious opinion he or she wants. Effectively, it has made the individual a ‘god,’” says Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary president **Timothy Hartwig**. “We are different from society because we believe there is a God who has revealed himself to us in the Bible.”

WELS president **Mark Schroeder** agrees. “What makes us so different in society and what makes us so different in comparison with other churches and other popular religious thought? Our commitment to holding on to absolute truth and not changing our doctrine to suit the whims of culture, society, or ‘science.’ Itching ears want to hear all kinds of things; we have been blessed to avoid accommodating them.”

ELS president **Glenn Obenberger** reminds us of the basis of our faith and unity: “The authority in our synods is the Word of God guiding us in all that we speak and do. We do not find an authority in any other source, not pope, not councils, not tradition, not what I feel in my heart, not popular opinions.”

OUR APPEARANCE

That means that some will think we are arrogant and stubborn. “No doubt everyone who confesses that they have the truth will be considered arrogant and closed-minded,” says Schroeder.

“Our confession is based on the Word of God as the authority for all we teach and practice, and we recognize that this will always appear as foolishness to our sinful natures. . . . We should always attempt to avoid being obnoxious in bearing witness to the truth, while realizing that the gospel is an offense or stumbling block to many,” remarks Obenberger.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary president **Earle Treptow** says, “There’s no question that some consider us arrogant and accuse us of thinking that we’re better than others. . . . We in WELS and the ELS aren’t smarter than anyone else or better than anyone else; we’re simply recipients of God’s grace.”

“Our confessional unity can be considered arrogant by others and it can certainly be presented in an arrogant manner,” comments Hartwig. “However, our confessions are one of the ways that we are transparent. We don’t hide what we think and believe.”

OUR COMMITMENT

Our commitment to God’s truth makes us different. “Church bodies that no longer stand on the Scriptures and the confessions have introduced teachings and practices that represent a clear departure from God’s truth,” says Schroeder.

“Some church bodies have changed their understanding of God’s Word over time, and that has led to a gradual decline in their doctrine and practice,” notes Hartwig. “God’s Word has not changed. Therefore, our confession should not change.”

Treptow identifies the reason we are committed to the Scriptures: “Why do we cling so stubbornly to our teachings? I would simply say that we love God’s Word, which points us to our Savior, and we cannot compromise God’s teachings. They’re our Savior’s teachings, not ours.”

Treptow then focuses on the essential message we treasure: “The Lord has graciously led us to confess and teach that God has declared the world righteous in Christ. There is no fine print, and there are no strings attached. There is nothing that people must do to live with God now and forever. We have what everyone needs most of all: the forgiveness of sins full and free in Christ. This is the special gift given to us that we have to give others. The Lord has placed that message in our hearts and our mouths that we might be a blessing to others, to be the Lord’s instruments to give them peace that can be found only in Christ.”

OUR WITNESS

That witness is for the world around us and the members of our churches.

“Confessional unity is a witness because it is a witness to the truth—God’s truth,” says Schroeder. “In a world where absolute truth is ridiculed and discarded, a church that confesses unchanging and absolute truths sends a clear message. Here we stand, and nothing will change that. The same witness—even externally—is also a reassurance to our own members since their beliefs and values will be constantly challenged by the world and the culture.”

“As God gives us strength, we are not going to compromise on God’s teachings. . . . We love God’s Word too much,” says Treptow.

He continues, “Members of the ELS and WELS find encouragement from one another. . . . By our fellowship, each synod is asking the other, ‘Please hold us accountable to our confession. Help us to stand firm in temptation. Enable us to confess God’s Word with joy even if it may mean persecution.’ We need that encouragement desperately. And God has graciously provided it to us as a gift.”

Obenberger agrees. “We are among Christian brothers, loving one another as Jesus loves us and recognizing that we are partners in the gospel seeking to obey all that Christ has commanded us to do in the locations and cultures in which he has placed us.”

GOD’S GRACIOUS GIFT

The confessional unity between the ELS and WELS is a gift of God’s grace. Treptow reminds us of that blessing: “There is no unity or peace unless the Lord graciously grants it. . . . By declaring fellowship with those who believe, teach, and confess what we do, we are making this statement to any who will listen, ‘Doctrine is important.’ God has graciously given us sisters and brothers who stand alongside us and confess what we do. . . . We enjoy confessional fellowship with another church body in the United States and others around the world (*see below*). We are not alone, and we need not feel we are the only ones left.”

Obenberger strikes a common note for us all: “By the grace of God, may we continue to engage each other in our united lives as confessional Lutheran Christians. We trust that as we show love in our open and free discussions we will seek to support each other in all that we do and say based on the Word of our Lord. May we give our Lord continual thanks for this cherished fellowship among us and ask for continued blessings which we have come to expect these past 150 years.”



WORLDWIDE CONFESSATIONAL UNITY

Besides enjoying confessional unity with each other, WELS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod also share in worldwide fellowship with 34 Lutheran church bodies, all committed to the teachings of the Lutheran Church found in the Book of Concord. Established in 1993 with 13 churches, the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference continues to grow, holding its next in-person convention in Seoul, South Korea, in 2023.

Find more info @ celc.info.

Songs out of Zion

by **REV. PETER FAUGSTAD**, Contributing Writer
SAUDE, JERICO & REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCHES, NE Iowa

“What are the three main festivals of the Christian Church Year?” I include this question for extra credit on my Catechism Class tests. How do you think the students do? Most of them get Christmas and Easter, but not many of them get Pentecost—at least not until year two.

One way our synod’s pastors and churches have emphasized these festivals is with a special exordium and hymn verse prior to the sermon. This tradition among Lutherans can be traced to the 16th century, and the Scandinavian Lutherans especially retained the practice through the centuries. By the time *The Lutheran Hymnary* was published in 1913, the hymns of Birgitte Katerine Boye were identified as the exordium hymns of choice for the major festivals.

Boye was born in Denmark in 1742, the oldest of seven children. She was a gifted student with a special love for poetry. Besides studying the great poems and hymns of Denmark, Germany, France, and England, she also wrote some hymns of her own. In 1773, now married and raising her four children, Boye submitted twenty hymns in a nationwide call for new sacred poetry. Her work was so well-regarded that after her husband became sick and died in 1775, Boye was hired by the king to collaborate on a new hymnbook for Denmark. When this hymnbook was published in 1778 (called *Guldberg’s Hymnal* after the editor), one-third of the book came from Boye’s pen: 124 original hymns and 22 hymn translations.

If you want to learn more about the festival exordium and hymn tradition, go to the “ELS Worship Essays” page and click on “The Festival Exordium” by Pres. Glenn Obenberger: <https://els.org/resources/worship/els-worship-essays/>.

142 Rejoice, Rejoice This Happy Morn

*Rejoice, rejoice this happy morn!
 A Savior unto us is born,
 The Christ, the Lord of glory.
 His lowly birth in Bethlehem
 The angels from on high proclaim
 And sing redemption’s story.
 My soul,
 Extol
 God’s great favor;
 Bless Him ever
 For salvation.
 Give Him praise and adoration!*

Boye’s hymn for Christmas Day repeats the joyful message of the angel: “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger*” (Luke 2:11-12, KJV). Then the sky filled with the heavenly host singing, “Glory!” “Peace!” “Goodwill!” The hymn calls all believers to join in this song of praise. We extol God’s great love for us sinners, and we bless Him for sending His Son to win our salvation. Some of the beautiful pictures in this verse are lost in translation. According to Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux, the last lines of the hymn literally read, “feast your eye at the Dayspring from on high,” an allusion to Luke 1:76-79.

Boye paired her hymn with the melody *Wie Schön Leuchtet* (“How Lovely Shines the Morning Star”) by Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608). When the text for this hymn is centered, it makes the shape of a Communion chalice. The Son of God who took on human flesh to save us brings us this salvation now through His Holy Supper.

*He is arisen! Glorious Word!
 Now reconciled is God, my Lord;
 The gates of heav'n are open.
 My Jesus died triumphantly,
 And Satan's arrows broken lie,
 Destroyed hell's direst weapon.
 O hear
 What cheer!
 Christ victorious
 Riseth glorious,
 Life He giveth—
 He was dead, but see, He liveth!*

Boye's hymn for Easter does not tell us at the beginning who is arisen, because every Christian knows who. Jesus, true God and Man, is the one who died and then rose on the third day. He "died triumphantly" because no one took His life—not the Jews or Gentiles, not the devil, not death (John 10:18). Jesus suffered the eternal punishment of hell for all people and laid down His life to atone for sin, but the grave couldn't hold Him.

Jesus rose to declare His victory, and His glorious Word still rings out today. Through His death and resurrection, you are reconciled to God! The gates of heaven are open to you! Christ is victorious! His life is your life! His promise is sure: *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die"* (John 11:25-26, NKJV). This festival hymn is again joined with the same melody by Nicolai.

*O Light of God's most wondrous love,
 Who dost our darkness brighten,
 Shed on Thy Church from heav'n above,
 Our eye of faith enlighten!
 As in Thy light we gather here,
 Show us that Christ's own promise clear
 Is Yea and Amen ever.
 O risen and ascended Lord,
 We wait fulfillment of Thy Word;
 O bless us with Thy favor!*

Boye's hymn for Pentecost is a prayer for God the Holy Spirit to shine the light of Christ's work into our minds and hearts. As the Holy Spirit brought confidence and boldness to the apostles, we ask Him to do the same for us. Jesus promised the disciples that after ascending to His Father, He would send them the Holy Spirit. *"He will guide you into all truth"* said Jesus; *"for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you"* (John 16:13-14, NKJV).

With the hymnwriter we sing, "Show us that Christ's own promise clear / Is Yea and Amen ever." And the apostle Paul, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, assures us, *For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us* (2 Corinthians 1:20, NKJV). The verse closes with a prayer to our Lord Jesus expressing the certainty that He will bless us through the work of the Holy Spirit. This hymn breaks the pattern of using Nicolai's melody and instead utilizes a German melody from the 15th century.

Because of the departure from Nicolai's melody, some have used the first verse from "O Holy Spirit, Enter In" (ELH #27) as an exordium hymn for Pentecost. Norwegian Synod pastor U. V. Koren did this in 1888, and others have done the same since then. But the handbook to the 1913 *Lutheran Hymnary* prescribes the use of Boye's hymns for the three major festivals. In fact, the original intention for these verses, according to the 1778 *Guldberg's Hymnal*, was that they be sung three times on a festival day and once per Sunday throughout the season.

This festival tradition of an exordium with Boye's hymns is appreciated especially by church bodies with a Scandinavian Lutheran background. The 2013 hymnal of the Church of Norway retains each of these hymns, as does our synod's *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*. Other synods have retained some of these hymns in their most recent hymnbooks. Boye's Christmas and Easter hymns can be found

in the *Lutheran Service Book* of the LCMS (#391, #488) and her Easter hymn in the new *Christian Worship* of the WELS (#461). Wherever they are used, these rich verses are a wonderful way to draw attention to God's gracious work for our salvation on Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.



The Holy Art of Dying

Part V:

The Blessed Death

by **REV. JACOB KEMPFERT**, Contributing Writer
GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH, Saginaw, Mich.

Eaten alive. Roasted on a grill. Lit on fire. Hit with rocks. Skinned alive. If we think about the way we'd like to die, these sorts of deaths never make the list. They are not what we'd call a "good death" or a "blessed death." And yet these and many other grisly deaths are the means by which the martyrs of the Christian church have entered into eternal life. So what exactly does the truly good and blessed death look like?

Because many of us have not personally faced death, our preferences for how we'd like to die are often abstract and contradictory. For example, many would like to die suddenly, but would also want doctors and medical teams to use any and all means necessary to keep them alive. Yet there usually is no way to die suddenly but also be kept alive by any means necessary. Often the tools and techniques used to accomplish the latter ensure that the former will not occur.

Likewise, we think the “blessed death” might be one surrounded by loved ones on our deathbed. This too involves contradiction, for such a death cannot then be a quick or quiet one—in order to gather loved ones (some from great distances away), it must necessarily be a prolonged death if we are to die in their presence, and most likely a painful death as well because of how it is prolonged.

So then, when our definition of a “blessed” death contradicts itself, how can we hope for a truly blessed death? We must come to terms with the fact that death never looks blessed and is never easy. Sudden deaths are often violent and deeply traumatic for those who witness them. Deathbeds are often tortured by prolonged sickness and frailty. The dead may be beautified with makeup and pleasant apparel, but death itself never will be. It contorts and corrupts, spoils and stinks.

It is sin and all its consequences laid bare.

If we think of death in terms of its outward appearance, no death can be a truly blessed death. So the good and blessed death we desire cannot be considered according to what we think a good death should look like.

Think back again to the various and terrible deaths of the martyrs. Think specifically of Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian church: *But [Stephen], full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him (Acts 7:55-58).*

To view this death with the world’s eyes, it appeared gory, horrendous, full of pain and shame. Yet his death was graced by God and all the company of heaven—Christ Jesus Himself received Stephen’s soul into paradise—a truly blessed death! And despite the violence and horror of this death, Scripture describes it as nothing worse than Stephen simply falling asleep (Acts 7:60). We must therefore keep this in mind if we pray for death to come to us suddenly while sleeping: Scripture includes being stoned to death as such a blessed death!

What could possibly be the reason for this?

We can look no further than Christ Jesus, who Himself suffered a horrific death—by which all nations of the earth are blessed. On His cross, the Lord of Life suffered the full punishment for the world’s sin and died the human death

all humans owe because of sin. Having paid the price and having drunk death down to its dregs, through faith in Christ there is no punishment left to go around. “It is finished,” Christ declares to you as He gives up His spirit for you (John 19:30).

The “blessed death” doesn’t have to look pretty to human eyes. The truly blessed death is any death in the assurance of faith: forgiveness, life, and salvation that is ours through Christ Jesus.

For this reason, we can rejoice that *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me” (Psalm 23:4)*. Christ is with us because Christ has gone before us into death’s darkness and “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10). In Him alone, death is destroyed, the Devourer devoured, and by faith in Him alone, all may be joined to Him and receive His blessed comfort of everlasting victory.

Christ rose alive from death and ascended into heaven “Captive leading death and hell” (Savior of the Nations, Come, ELH #90, v. 4). Your death leads nothing and rules nothing, but follows Christ Jesus as His captive, chewed up and swallowed and slain. And Christ drags this dead death only to one place: the

death of death at the final resurrection of the dead. Christ Himself proclaims to us, *“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and hell” (Revelation 1:17-18)*. Death can do nothing but hasten your imperishable and immortal resurrection, for that is what Christ Jesus commands and wills it to do, and it must obey Him. For those with saving faith in Christ, the blessed death is the only death possible.

No matter the outward trappings in which death disguises itself, no matter its terrible teeth and bad breath, a blessed death is already your sure possession. *“Death is swallowed up in victory”* at the final resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:54), when God Himself *“will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4)*. Death can now do nothing to you except bring you to that bright and blessed dawn. This is exactly what is meant when we hope and pray for the truly blessed death: *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints (Psalm 116:15)*. God grant this blessing to us all!

The truly blessed death is any death in the assurance of faith: forgiveness, life, and salvation that is ours through Christ Jesus.

by REV. CHRISTIAN EISENBEIS, Contributing Editor
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CROSSING PATHS

On the Road to Jericho

PART FIVE

The Friend Who Asks (Mark 10:46–52)

It's the Friday before Memorial Day. Folks at work are discussing their plans for the summer. What if you said you were going to take your family to a big city? An excited colleague might immediately bludgeon you with helpful advice: "You need to see this! You need to do that! You need to stay here! You need to eat there!"

But what if you needed to save money? What if you said your family would be going camping? This time a colleague might ask, "Do you have everything you need?"

Both colleagues wish you well—but which of them acts more like a friend?

The needs of Bartimaeus, a beggar sitting beside the road to Jericho, were obvious, but what he needed most was to be quiet! At least, that's what the crowd thought as they followed Jesus along the road one day. The blind man's crying out to Jesus had become tiresome. *Many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me"* (Mark 10:48)!

In the Gospels, rebukes sound ugly when they come from sinners' lips. Peter rebuked the Lord for prophesying His death and resurrection (Mark 8:32). The disciples rebuked parents for bringing their children to Jesus (Mark 10:13). The disciples presumed to do this because they "had Jesus' needs at heart." They didn't want Him to be bothered, just like the people of Jericho didn't want Him to be bothered. But all these efforts to give Jesus what He "needed" were efforts to obstruct what He truly needed to do: to live and die as the Friend of sinners. That's why He put an end to these ugly rebukes.

Jesus stopped in the road and called for Bartimaeus. At once, all those irritated people became the blind man's well-wishers—even if they went on telling him what to do: "*Be of good cheer. Rise! He is calling you*" (Mark 10:49b).

Bartimaeus didn't need to be told twice. He threw off his cloak, sprang to his feet, and—as though he were already seeing—came to Jesus. Then Jesus did something unexpect-

ed. He asked the blind man a question: "*What do you want Me to do for you?*" (v. 51a).

Your colleague asked if you needed anything for your camping trip. Why? Because your colleague has camped before and knows all the equipment needed. You don't need someone to tell you what to do: "Bring a sleeping bag and bug spray! Pitch a tent! Build a fire!" But there may be something you lack, and your colleague—who's treating you like a friend—may be able to provide it.

"What do you want Me to do for you?" Jesus already knew the answer, but He asked the question for several reasons. He asked in order to give the blind beggar dignity, which no one else was giving him that day—and maybe never had. Jesus asked so that Bartimaeus might confess his faith in Him and present his petition with confidence: "*Rabboni ("My Teacher"), that I may receive my sight*" (v. 51b).

"What do you want Me to do for you?" Jesus asked His question, and did as He was asked, to teach every person in the crowd—and every one of us—two important lessons: first, that here in Bartimaeus, the man they had rebuked, was an example of the persistent, faith-fueled prayer that pleases God; second, that here in Jesus we find the true Friend of sinners, who knows what we need and well provides it! The Lord encourages us to call on His name and ask Him for what we need in the same spirit as the man who once sat and begged beside the road to Jericho.

Then Jesus said to him, "*Go your way; your faith has made you well.*" And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road (v. 52). The road to Jericho was now the road from Jericho. It would lead to suffering and death, as Jesus prophesied, but also to resurrection and everlasting life.

Faithful Bartimaeus walked that road beside his Savior and Friend. How could he not, when his eyes had been opened by the Word of Christ? And how can we not do the same?

REMEMBERING THE Service Industry

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

“Good help is hard to come by!”... or so goes the saying. And whether you’re a consumer, an employer, or an employee, you’ve experienced the reality of this proverb in recent months, perhaps more than ever before. I’ve even noticed an extraordinary social media effort being made by one local restaurant group lately. They’re giving special honor to their service industry workers during this famine of “hard-to-come-by” help.

It seems to me that’s an appreciation effort well spent. And if it’s well spent in those who take orders and deliver plated meals, it’s not hard to see how well spent such an appreciation is on those who have devoted years of their livelihood, and in

some instances life itself, to the protection and preservation of our own lives and liberties. Just such an appreciation effort was recently made for one of our own ELS members, First Lieutenant **Norman Marozick** of Holy Cross Lutheran Church – Madison, WI. In May of this past year, Lt. Marzick (104 years old) was inducted into the Madison VA’s Hall of Heroes.

As part of the ceremony, 1st Lt. Marozick’s son, Rev. Mark Marozick, read a speech written by Norman about his first day in combat shortly after the D-Day landings on Utah & Omaha beaches in Normandy. An excerpt of Lt. Marozick’s speech is printed here:



1st Lt., Norman Marozick,
United States Army, (Ret)
Holy Cross Lutheran Church,
Madison, Wisconsin

“In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party grabbed power in Germany. He became dictator and built a powerful army and air force. He overran Western Europe, occupied France, Belgium, Luxemburg, Netherlands, and Norway, and bombed London every night. He had to be stopped!

When I graduated from Purdue in December of ’42 all of us who had taken all four years of ROTC Training at Purdue went home for Christmas. Then came right back to Lafayette, Indiana, and boarded a train for Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. After 12 weeks in Officer Candidate School, I was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the Field Artillery on April 15, 1943.

I was assigned to the 26th Infantry Division at Camp Garden, Georgia, for training. In August of ’43, I hustled to Lafayette, Indiana, and Marge and I were married. We “sort of” lived together for 4 ½ months. Then on New Year’s Eve, I boarded the Aquitania (British Ocean Liner) and didn’t see Marge again ‘til late 1945.

Then came 5 months of training while living in tents on the rolling hills near Cardiff, Wales. Each tent had a deluxe heating system – a pot-bellied stove in the center of the tent.

June 6th, 1944 brought D-Day landings in Utah and Omaha beaches in Normandy. I joined the 4th Infantry Division a few days later replacing an artillery officer who had a mental breakdown after just a few days as a forward observer in combat.

My first day in combat was a day I will never forget. I knew no one in the 4th Division. I had to get acquainted with the three enlisted men completing our team while closely following our attacking infantry company. One man carried the receiver/ transmitter on his back; one man carried the BA pack on his back; the third man had a direct artillery fire whenever and wherever the company commander needed artillery support.

So, we are walking along, and we hear shells coming in. We drop flat on the ground; shells explode around us. We pick ourselves up and I hear one of my men babbling away scared stiff. Shell fragments had ripped the musette bag off his back – only torn canvass remained. But none of us was hurt!

That evening, while digging my foxhole, I heard more shells coming in. I dropped into my partially dug hole. One shell landed between me and the next foxhole. Fortunately, my hole was dug deep enough for me to go unscathed. My carbine and canteen did not fare well. To make digging easier, I had removed my pistol belt and laid it (canteen attached) at the base of a tree and leaned my carbine against the tree. My carbine stock was shattered, my canteen multi-penetrated.

In my prayers that night, I thanked God for bringing me safely through my first day of combat. It had not taken long for God to show me that He was protecting me and that I need only to place my trust in Him to continue His protection. And he did, day after day.”

May God give us an ever-increasing appreciation for the service industry of soldiers – those whose lives are used by God to defend, preserve, and protect.

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

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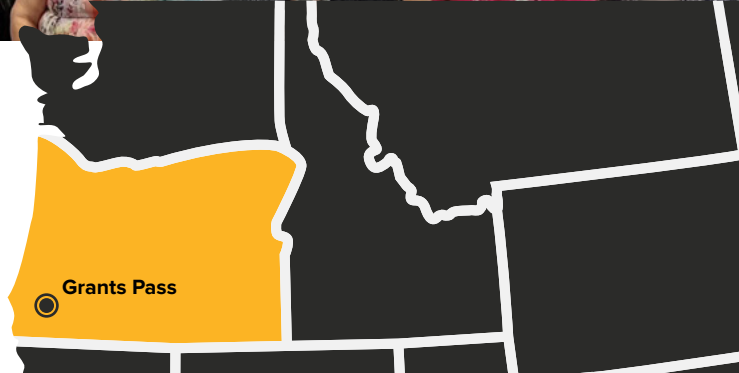
MEETING MY BROTHERS & SISTERS:

2022 Pacific Northwest Women's Mission Society Rally

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Grants Pass, Oregon



Our Savior Lutheran Church in Grants Pass, Oregon, hosted the 2022 Pacific Northwest Women's Mission Society Rally. ELS World Outreach Administrator **Rev. Tom Heyn** and Evangelism & Missions Counselor **Rev. Brad Kerkow** were the guest speakers. The theme was, "*Divine Comfort in Affliction.*" The Mission Society thanks Reverends Heyn & Kerkow for their excellent presentations.



Grants Pass