

The
Concordia  *Lutheran*


"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

"Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path." Psalm 119:105.

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**"We have also
a more sure
Word of
prophecy."**

2 Peter 1:19



"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35
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The Concordia Lutheran Editor:

The Rev. Edward J. Worley
5350 South Fountain Street
Seattle, WA 98178

Book and Tract Editor:

The Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

Lay Member:

Mr. Paul L. Natterer
3333 SE Oak Street
Albany, OR 97322

Address subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: **Scriptural Publications, 17151 S. Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913.** A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

Officers of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

PRESIDENT:

The Rev. Robert J. Lietz
233 North Cuyler Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

VICE PRESIDENT:

The Rev. Edward J. Worley
5350 South Fountain Street
Seattle, WA 98178

SECRETARY:

The Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

TREASURER:

Mr. Robert G. Bloedel
10017 - 61st Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98178

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

To set forth in simple and plain language the pure doctrine of God's Word as taught by the true Lutheran Church in full accordance with the **Book of Concord of 1580** and the **Brief Statement of 1932.**

To show, **on the basis of Scripture,** what true Christians are to believe and how, out of love for their Savior Jesus Christ, they are to lead Godly lives.

To furnish aids for Bible study and articles for Scriptural devotion and meditation.

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or false church body, but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them.

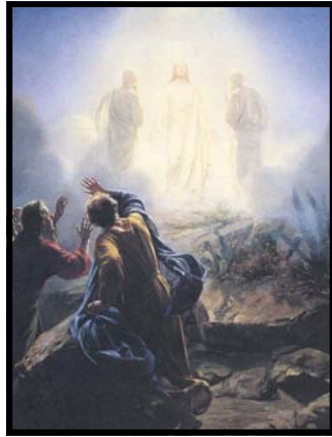
To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are *"perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*

To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

To expose particularly the false teaching and practice of the various so-called "Lutheran" church bodies by comparing their teachings and practices with what is plainly recorded in the Word of God, in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the old orthodox Lutheran writings.

To expose false teaching and practice wherever it makes its appearance and to keep abreast of the current happenings in the church and among the nations as signs of the times.

To be truthful and factual in our reporting and freely to correct any misinformation of which we are not aware and which has been called to our attention. Also to clarify any information or statement of doctrine or practice which may be unclear to our readers or which may create a wrong impression.



The Testimony of Peter, a Witness of Jesus' Transfiguration

“We were eyewitnesses of His majesty” —II Peter 1:16

Witnesses are always to speak the truth of what they have seen, heard, or read; no lie should come from their mouth, whether they are witnesses in a courtroom, witnesses of a car accident, or witnesses to what God teaches in His Holy Word. God Himself says to each of us: *“Thou shalt not bear **false witness** against thy neighbor”* (Exodus 20:16). Our God loves the truth and hates what is not true. God hates *“a lying tongue”* and *“a false witness that speaketh lies”* (Proverbs 6:17, 19). Just before His ascension, Jesus gave this instruction to the disciples standing before Him and to His disciples of all time, including each of us: *“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me”* (Acts 1:8), that is, **true** and **faithful** witnesses of Him and of His precious Word (Mark 8:38).

In his second epistle chapter one, we have the testimony of Peter, one of the witnesses of Jesus’ transfiguration. He actually saw, with James and John, Jesus’ divine majesty; he actually heard, with James and John, the heavenly Father’s voice; and yet he points to the reliable, written Word of God as the ultimate witness.

One day, while He was still visibly present here on earth, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into a *“high mountain”* (Matthew 17:1), where He *“was transfigured before them; ...His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light”* (Matthew 17:2). He was showing Peter, James, and John in an awesome way that He was indeed true God when He permitted them to see His divine glory and majesty shining forth from His truly human body. The Apostle Paul, in the sec-

ond chapter of his epistle to the Colossians, said of Christ: “*In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” (v. 9); and Peter, James, and John actually **saw** the evidence of Christ’s personal union in the communication of divine majesty to His human nature on that holy mount. This was a striking reminder to these three disciples as to who Jesus really was; it was also to be a great comfort to them that their Savior, the God-Man, was well able to carry through on the prophecies and promises concerning His substitutionary work for the world of sinners.

A number of years after this transfiguration of Jesus, Peter, in his second epistle, referred to this event and experience when he said: “*We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty*” (2:16). Peter testified that he, James, and John were not believers in, nor followers of, myths, fables, and fiction when they were teaching people about Jesus’ almighty power and His divine majesty, plus also teaching the people about the Savior’s first coming to be their Redeemer and His second coming to be their Judge. How could Peter make this bold statement? He, James, and John had been **actual eyewitnesses** of the majesty of Jesus on the mount of transfiguration; they actually saw Jesus’ divine majesty; they had actually seen that Jesus was God and Man in one person. In his first epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul wrote: “*There is **one God** and one Mediator between God and men, **the Man** Christ Jesus*” (2:5).

It is noteworthy that Jesus did not take only Peter with Him to witness His transfiguration; He also took James and John, so that “*in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established*” (II Corinthians 13:2). This Scriptural principle of needing two or three witnesses to establish, confirm, verify, and document facts is a very important principle to remember in our work together in our congregations and in all areas of our earthly life. In the three steps of Christian admonition, set forth by our Savior in Matthew 18, He also brings in this vital principle when He says: “*But if he will not hear thee [after you have admonished the brother alone], then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established*” (v. 16). This principle is a powerful weapon against sinful judging in Christian congregations, in Christian families, and in all of our life.

Peter, in verses 17 and 18 also declared: “*For He [our Lord Jesus Christ] received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in*

whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount.” Peter, with James and John, on the mount of transfiguration, had actually **heard** a voice out of the cloud which said: *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him”* (Matthew 17:5). So the heavenly Father identified Jesus as the Son of God, true God with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, the heavenly Father had perfect love for His sinless Son, and was well pleased with, approved of, and was delighted over His work for the world of sinners, namely, His sacrifice as the ransom price for all, and His perfect obedience and submission to the Law of God to satisfy all of its demands of all people. Peter, James, and John had also heard the heavenly Father say to them concerning the Lord Jesus: *“Hear ye Him.”* They were to show their faith in, and love for, the Savior by hearing, believing, revering, and following His words. We are also to keep on hearing, believing, revering, and following the words and promises of our Savior as they speak to us in the Scriptures. Jesus told His enemies: *“He that is of God heareth God’s words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God”* (John 8:47).

Beyond the eye and ear witness of the three disciples to Jesus’ transfiguration, Peter goes on to say: *“We have also a more sure Word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Daystar arise in your hearts; knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (vv. 19-21). Peter says that there is something greater than eye and ear witness of Jesus’ transfiguration, and that is the reliable, sure, certain, and written Word of God, which, above all, we are to listen to and follow; for it is like an ever-shining light in this dark world, especially revealing Him who is *“the Way, the Truth, and the Life”* (John 14:6), the One who alone can bring souls to heaven through His perfect obedience to the Law of God for them, and through the sacrifice of His sinless suffering and death to pay to God the full bill for the sins of all in the world. This Word of God will keep on shining until the last day of this world; and then we too, as true believers in the Savior, will see with our own eyes that bright, morning, merciful Star, the Light of the world, who paid the full price for all of our sins (I Corinthians 6:20; I John 1:7) and hath shined in our hearts (I Corinthians 4:6) to bring us and all true believers to heaven.

This Word of God is God’s precious gift to us; we are not to add to it or

subtract from it; we are not to interpret it as we please, nor as we want, nor are we in any way to support those who pervert what God says and teach what He never said or taught in the Scriptures regarding any doctrine or anything else clearly revealed in the Word of God.

Rather, let us remember and ever be grateful that God marvelously and miraculously used Christian men to write down the Holy Scriptures word-for-word, *“as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (v. 21). Most of all, what a blessing that we have had revealed and made known to us in the Scriptures the Gospel of grace, pardon, peace, and everlasting life, which astoundingly tells us that *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation. ... For He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* (II Corinthians 5:19; 21). *“It is finished”* (John 19:30). *“He that believeth on Him [Christ] is not condemned”* (John 3:18). We also have heard the testimony regarding Jesus’ transfiguration, as we have seen it written down and described in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and also in Peter’s account. On this basis we are, by God’s grace, to believe this testimony and bear witness regarding it to others. Let us more and more, in gratitude for Jesus’ work in our place, be witnesses to others, as God through the Holy Scriptures has witnessed to us, His dear children, of His free grace, mercy, and loving kindness in Christ Jesus for our completed redemption, our finished forgiveness, our free justification, our perfect righteousness, and our total freedom from everlasting condemnation. *“O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever”* (Psalm 136:1).

—R. J. L.





What Is a Truly Godpleasing Engagement?

It bears noting at the outset that our reasons for separating from the *Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* back in 1951 were not limited to the unretracted “A Statement” of 1945 and the adoption of the *Common Confession* in 1950. For there were also *other* matters of doctrine and practice — “actually taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications” (*Brief Statement*, §29) and officially tolerated within its midst without correction and appropriate doctrinal discipline, which demonstrated that the Missouri Synod had indeed forfeited its orthodox character. Not the least of these was the published opinion (May, 1949) held by the St. Louis seminary faculty “that betrothal, or engagement, must not be regarded as tantamount to marriage;” that betrothal, or engagement, is “of human origin;” and that the mutual promise given in a rightful betrothal may be *broken* when “such serious situations should arise as would at once preclude a happy married estate between the betrothed” —in other words, that the *mutual consent* expressed in a public wedding ceremony may not be violated, but that *the very same mutual consent*, sincerely and freely given at the time of engagement, at the time of commitment, may be broken *when conditions so warrant* (according to someone’s opinion). In opposition to this unscriptural opinion, the then Springfield (Illinois) seminary faculty held (as we do) that “God instituted the state of marriage, or wedlock,” including “the salient part of it, the mutual consent or betrothal.” and that “‘betrothal’ and ‘marriage’ as spoken of in the Word of God are identical in essence and differ only as does the possession of privileges and their use.” (Quoted from *Reports and Memorials*, 26th Delegate Synod, 1950, pp. 497-499.) Although the convention upheld the wording in the *Synodical Catechism*, it stopped short of declaring the St. Louis opinion to be unscriptural and only asked each faculty for a “clarification.” (*Proceedings*, 1950).

By God’s grace, we continue to hold on the basis of clear Scripture, with no divisions among us (I Corinthians 1:10), that “marriage is the lifelong

union of one man and one woman unto one flesh;” that “marriage was instituted by God and is entered into by **rightful betrothal** or **engagement**” (*Synodical Catechism*, 1943 Ed., Q/A 61, p. 70). Throughout the Scriptures, with the perfect consistency we can expect only of the Holy Ghost, marriage is represented as an **estate** or **relationship** entered into by a man and a woman by *mutual consent* or *bilateral agreement*. The **ESSENCE** of marriage is therefore quite properly speaking a *contract* in which both parties agree to live as one entity (Genesis 2:24) characterized by mutual exclusivity (I Corinthians 7:2), indissolubility (Matthew 19:6b), and lifelong permanency here in this world (Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:39). In a **rightful** betrothal, all of those conditions are **agreed to** ahead of time; and the three **PURPOSES** of marriage, as set forth in Holy Scripture, are acknowledged and **agreed to** as well, namely, **a**) mutual companionship and love (Genesis 2:18, 20b; etc.), **b**) the lawful procreation of children (Psalm 127:3-5; 128), and **c**) the prevention of unchastity (specifically of *fornication*) in promiscuous intimacy outside of marriage (I Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 13:4). That **mutual consent** or bilateral commitment **IS** marriage *in the sight of God*. As clear testimony of that principle, when Joseph and Mary were “*espoused*” to one another, before their relationship was physically consummated, God’s angel called Mary Joseph’s “*wife*,” and Joseph Mary’s “*husband*” (Matthew 1:18ff.).

However, for such *mutual consent* to be a **rightful** (i.e. *legitimate*) *betrothal*, certain conditions must have been met by the parties betrothed to one another; and these, too, are Scriptural conditions: **1**) The parties must be “*marriageable*” people, that is, they must be **eligible** to enter upon the married estate, particularly in the sight of *God* but also according to the regulations of the *state*; and the former, of course, takes precedence over the latter (Acts 5:29). Thus, it must be a heterosexual couple (Romans 1:26ff.); neither of the parties may be already married [i.e. exclusively committed] to someone else (Exodus 20:14); neither may have been the guilty party in a divorce and therefore ineligible to re-marry (Matthew 19:9); the couple may not be of such near kinship that their relationship would be regarded as incestuous, either by Scripture or by the state; both parties must be of sufficient age to contract marriage legally, or, if minor children, have their parents’ consent; and both parties must be of sound mind so that they are able to discern both the nature of and the responsibilities inherent in marriage and thus to make their commitment on the basis of appropriate knowledge. **2**) The mutual consent must be solemnly, sincerely, and freely given. Engagement contracted in jest is no **rightful** betrothal, nor is mutual consent given in an intoxi-

cated state of any legitimate value. Since a life-long relationship is being contracted and established, appropriate time should be taken for due consideration of the matter; and, particularly for Christian couples —of any age— whose Gospel-motivated desire to honor their fathers and mothers according to the Fourth Commandment also comes into play, the advice and blessing of their parents should be sought, valued and considered as part of the process (Proverbs 23:22), even though absolute obedience is not required of grown offspring (Genesis 2:24, etc.). For minor children, the explicit consent of the parents is usually required, particularly by the state; and children [τὰ τέκνα] must “*obey*” their parents when consent is refused and not try to circumvent their authority (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20; Proverbs 30:17). And finally, neither party may be under duress of any kind to consent to marriage unwillingly.

Thus, marriage is not “paperwork;” it is not a “ceremony,” a “service,” or a “party” as some have tried to represent it. Marriage is an “estate” which requires no “third party” (pastor, judge, justice of the peace, ship’s captain, etc.) to bring it into existence and to legitimize it *before God*. Nevertheless, witnessed ratification is usually required by the state to make the union a matter of “record” and to enforce the “contract” *before men*; and a public ceremony is generally deemed advisable to avoid the offense that would be given by a couple “living together” on the basis of a *clandestine* engagement or a *secret* marriage. However, a pastor or judge does not “join” two people in holy wedlock; they made the commitment that “joined” them long before they got to “the altar.” Rather, the state-authorized official merely “solemnizes” the marriage, conducting a formal ceremony or ritual in which the mutual consent, already expressed *privately* at the time of engagement, is repeated publicly to make it a matter of witnessed record (II Corinthians 13:1). It goes without saying that a *Christian* couple should want to have their marriage solemnized by their God-given shepherd because a Christian pastor and *Seelsorger* then has special opportunity to instruct his sheep (and the assembled guests) from God’s Word concerning the proper conduct of husbands and wives toward one another according to *God’s* ordinance, to beseech God’s blessing upon their marriage in prayer, and to lead the assembled witnesses (congregation) in a proper, God pleasing celebration of their union.

Since marriage is properly-speaking a *civil* estate, that is, one created for mankind here in this world for the purposes noted above, namely, **a)** mutual companionship and love (Genesis 2:18, 20b; etc.), **b)** the

lawful procreation of children (Psalm 127:3-5; 128), and **c**) the prevention of unchastity (specifically of *fornication*) in promiscuous intimacy outside of marriage (I Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 13:4), a *legitimate* or legally binding marriage may be entered into or “contracted” by the mutual consent of two marriageable unbelievers. Christian faith is not *essential* to a legitimate, binding, and divinely-instituted civil union; for “*marriage is honorable in all*,” the Scriptures tell us (Hebrews 13:4); and that union, even between unbelievers, should be respected as *God’s* ordinance and kept unbroken until the husband and wife are parted in death (Matthew 19:6; Romans 7:2).

Nevertheless, it is of no small significance that marriage was instituted by God for mankind *before the fall into sin*, that is, when Adam and Eve still possessed the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and thus led truly God pleasing lives in perfect conformity with His will. Moreover, as sinless beings, they were perfectly joined together in their relationship with one another, perfectly happy and blessed, not yet having suffered the ravages of sin which produce “*the works of the flesh*” (Galatians 5:19-21) and damage and often decimate the blissful relationship that God intended for man and woman to enjoy in the holy estate of matrimony. When, however, both Adam and Eve willingly hearkened unto the tempting voice of Satan and disobeyed God’s explicit prohibition concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, sin entered into the world (Romans 5:12) and spoiled, along with everything else, the God pleasing relationship of man and woman in marriage. Man completely lost the image of God and became totally corrupt, so that still today man by nature is without true fear, love and trust in God, is devoid of righteousness, is disposed only to evil, and is spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God (Cf. Catechism Q/A 94 and 95).

Consequently, while marriage is still God’s institution for an “*honorable*” relationship between a man and a woman in this present world and for the orderly establishment of the family as the basic unit of human society, not every marriage is a *God pleasing* marriage, neither is every engagement (whereby marriage is entered into) a *God pleasing* engagement; for “*they that are in the flesh cannot please God*” (Romans 8:8), and “*without faith it is impossible to please Him*” (Hebrews 11:6). Only in **believers** is a beginning made of the renewal of God’s image in their lives of sanctification; and yet that renewal is incomplete because of their sinful flesh in which “*dwelleth no good thing*” (Romans 7:18), so that “*all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6) because of their imperfection and could therefore never avail, even in the slight-

est degree, for our *justification* in the sight of God (Galatians 3:11). Nevertheless, concerning our lives of *sanctification* and the fruit that saving faith produces in the Christian (John 15:5, 8; James 2:20; etc.), we confess in our Catechism that “in the sight of God a good work is everything that a *child of God* [i.e., a *true believer*] does, speaks, or thinks *in faith*, according to the Ten Commandments [in conformity with God’s Law], for the glory of God, and for the benefit of his neighbor” (*Luther’s Small Catechism*, 1943 Ed., Q/A 170).

Thus, with reference to the specific topic of this present discussion, only a **true believer**, and only with another true believer, can, by mutual consent, enter into a truly **Godpleasing** marriage by way of a truly **Godpleasing** engagement. And the Lord Himself in His precious Word makes that **abundantly clear**, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In the *Old Testament*, God explicitly prohibited His people from entering into marriages with the heathen (Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Joshua 23:12; I Kings 11:2-4), not merely to keep the “gene pool” of Israel pure from Gentile adulteration (cf. Rahab, Ruth, etc.), but to keep His people from becoming *spiritually* contaminated, led away unto *idolatry*, and ultimately lost for *heaven*. The tragic results of such “mixed marriages” are documented in Holy Scripture (Genesis 6:2; 26:34ff.; Judges 3:5-7; I Kings 16:31; etc.) and are readily recognized in life experience as the **norm** rather than the exception.

It is often claimed, of course, that, in the *New Testament*, God nowhere *absolutely forbids* religiously-mixed marriages, that those *Old Testament* taboos belonged to the Ceremonial Law or to the Political Law of Israel, and that they are no longer binding upon Christians today. “Don’t forget,” such people argue, “we are no longer under the Law but under grace! Besides, it’s not an absolute certainty that an unbelieving spouse will lead a believer away from the true faith.” Nevertheless, if such a tragic result were even a *statistical probability*, and therefore wise counsel would suggest that religiously-mixed marriages be avoided, why would a consistent Christian heedlessly dismiss such Godly advice? Why indeed would a believer, whose Savior redeemed him from all iniquity and purified him unto Himself a special person zealous of good works (Titus 2:14), deliberately ignore the spiritual *dangers* that the Bible warns are *imminent* in any close association with the wicked and even with the herodox (I Corinthians 15:33; etc.)? And why would a child of God despise the Lord’s own valuation of a truly virtuous wife and refuse to recognize the *deceitfulness* and *vanity* of mere “*favor*” and “*beauty*” when it comes to marriage with a person who is not a believer (Proverbs 31:30)?

The Christian is directed by the Apostle Paul to view marriage (and the relationship of husband and wife *within* marriage) as a type or picture of the *spiritual intimacy* that exists between Christ and His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:22-27). There is, of course, NO spiritual intimacy between a believer and an unbeliever, between the orthodox and the heterodox, between those who are “*unequally yoked together*” without being in God-pleasing fellowship with one another, without real spiritual communion or unity, without true concord on the basis of God’s Word, without sharing a common faith, without agreeing in their confession of faith (II Corinthians 6:14-16). Husband and wife who are not in fellowship with one another cannot pray together, cannot worship together, cannot establish a “family altar” in their home, cannot jointly bring their problems and cares to the Lord, and cannot together recognize Him as the Head of their house and His Word as the chief nourishment for their family. Moreover, the unbelieving or heterodox spouse dare not be permitted to teach or influence the children in matters of faith and life; for that would give grave offense to Christ’s little ones and endanger their souls (Matthew 18:6). And the *pious* spouse (particularly a *pious father*) will have to warn the children of the other parent’s dire spiritual condition and jeopardy for eternity and teach them diligently the truths of Scripture if indeed they are to be brought up “*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Ephesians 6:4). The mere fact that the *pious* spouse is married to an unbeliever or even to a heterodox professing Christian may well give offense to the children because it appears that he does not take his own faith seriously and that his actions speak more loudly than do his words.

The fact that, particularly in I Corinthians 7:12-14 and I Peter 3:1, the Lord’s apostles point out that a difference in faith is not *grounds for divorce*, but that an unbelieving spouse may indeed be influenced and even gained for heaven by the chaste behavior and Godfearing way of life of the *believer*, those words in no way contradict Scripture’s warnings against religiously mixed marriages. In the early days of the Christian church, it was common that, in an already-existing marriage between two unbelievers, one spouse became a believer, while the other did not. That *spiritual disunity* after-the-fact did not entitle the believing spouse to desert or break the marriage, but neither did it constitute a kind of “contrary precedent” for others to follow in *establishing* marriages with unbelievers (or with the heterodox) contrary to the Word of God. Neither do the words of Paul and Peter guarantee success in winning an unbelieving spouse for heaven, any more than every contact with the Gospel ensures conversion to saving faith (Cf. Romans 1:16 with 10:16). In point of fact, experience teaches the very opposite, both with respect to religiously-mixed marriages and to the preaching of the Gospel, as both Isaiah (53:1) and St. Paul clearly testify.

Therefore, the factor that distinguishes a truly **Godpleasing** engagement and marriage from a merely *legitimate* and *valid* one is that the **mutual consent** to live together in the holy estate of matrimony according to God's ordinance and in conformity with His Word be sincerely and freely given to one another by a marriageable man and a marriageable woman who are "*the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 3:26), "*as being heirs together of the grace of life*" (I Peter 3:7), enjoying "*the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Ephesians 4:3). For the Apostle Paul exhorts **Christian husbands and wives**, as he exhorts **all** who profess having been "*called unto the fellowship of [God's] Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, ...that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (I Corinthians 1:10). Thus pious Joshua challenged the Children of Israel regarding their resolve to be *more* than a "valid" family, *more* than a "legitimate" nation, *more* than the "nominal" people of God, and to dedicate themselves and their families to live as *God's children* in His faith and fear: "*If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; ...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!*" (Joshua 24:15).

Yes, blest that house where faith ye find,
and all within have set their mind
to trust their God and serve Him still
and do in all His holy will!

Blest such a house! It prospers well!
In peace and joy the parents dwell;
and in their children's lot is shown
how richly God can bless His own!

Then here will I and mine today
a solemn covenant make and say:
Though all the world forsake Thy Word,
I and my house will serve the Lord!

(TLH 625, 2, 4, and 5)

—D. T. M.



Regarding the ecclesiastical names for the Sundays in Lent ...



...these are taken from the first word(s) of the **Introit** [IN-tro-it] for each of the Sundays, as these may be found in the *Lutheran Hymnal* in the front portion, page 62ff. The names themselves are by tradition in **Latin** and read as follows:

Invocavit [inn-vo-KAH-vitt] from *“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him...”* (Psalm 91:15)

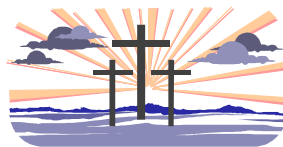
Reminiscere [ray-minn-ISS-er-eh] from *“Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses...”* (Psalm 25:6)

Oculi [O-koo-lee] from *“Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.”* (Psalm 25:15)

Laetare [lay-TAH-ray] from *“Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all ye that love her.”* (Isaiah 66:10)

Judica [YOU-dee-kah] from *“Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation.”* (Psalm 43:1)

Palmarum [pahl-MAH-room] —an *exception* to the rule that these titles come from specific passages. The word means *“palms”* —referring to the palm branches strewn in Jesus’ path upon His entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19). **Palm Sunday** marks the beginning of **“Holy Week,”** the week of Jesus’ suffering and death.





WHY JESUS ANTICIPATED HIS SUFFERING WITH GREAT JOY

“Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

—Hebrews 12:2

How much unlike mere mortals the Son of God and Son of Man is! In our sinful weakness, we hesitatingly and sorrowfully make our way to the hospital for surgery, knowing that pain and suffering will await us there, even though modern methods and technology have led to some reduction of pain. And then, when surgery is finished, more pain may follow, necessitating the use of pain pills. Even further surgery may become necessary, intensifying the sorrow and suffering, and taxing our resistance.

But this is only one example of our trying to avoid sorrow and suffering as human beings. Each day can bring many more of the same. And, unlike the shame that our Savior faced as our substitute, there may be no shame connected with *our* sorrow, unless sin of some kind is involved. When sin is involved, our sorrow is to be expressed by God-wrought contrition and repentance, for as the Psalmist declares: “A *contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise*” (Psalm 51:17b).

Speaking of Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Bible commentator, Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, wrote that our success in the necessary activity of daily contrition and repentance depends on one condition, namely, “having our eyes fixed on the Leader and Perfecter of faith, Jesus, who, in consideration of the joy which was set before Him endured the cross, thinking nothing of the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. . . . His example consists in this, that He willingly endured the cross, the entire burden of the Passion culminating in His crucifixion, at the same time disregarding the shame and disgrace which men were heaping upon Him” (*Popular Commentary of the Bible*, New Testament, Vol. II, p. 487). And He always had the prize in mind – the redemption of mankind.

Our Lord and Savior anticipated His shameful suffering and dying on the cross under the burden of our sin and guilt with great joy. Why? Because, in perfect obedience to His Father's will, He knew He would accomplish the redemption of the entire world of sinners and be received up into glory to sit down at the right hand of the throne of God. The great joy that was set before Him was the salvation of sinners!

In the Hebrews passage quoted above, He is showing His love and gracious good will which He shared with God the Father and the Holy Ghost from eternity, namely, His earnest desire that all mankind would come to the knowledge of His perfect sacrifice and be saved by faith in His merits alone. Jesus declares in John 3:16-18a: *“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned.”* This was the cause of Jesus' great joy. As Christians, we also find great joy in the salvation of sinners. We rejoice, as the angels do in heaven, *“over one sinner that repenteth”* (Luke 15:10). And, at every infant baptism, we joyfully thank God that He has regenerated a poor sinner *“by the washing of water with the Word”* (Ephesians 5:26) and that believing child now has by faith the benefits of Christ's joyful work of redemption.

As *“we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God”* (Acts 14:22), we are to look unto Jesus, considering Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, *“lest [we] be wearied and faint in [our] minds”* (Hebrews 12:3). For He, who created our faith by the Gospel, preserves our faith by the same means. The Gospel declares as the cause of our salvation the perfect active obedience of Christ in our stead and His vicarious suffering and death. Out of thankfulness for the gift of eternal life through Jesus' blood and righteousness, we should willingly endure suffering for His sake, who willingly and joyfully endured the cross for us. *“For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously; who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls”* (I Peter 2:21-25).

—D. G. R.

*Looking
Forward
to Our
Nigerian Visit*



“Come over into Macedonia, and help us” —Acts 16:9

The 2006 visit to Nigeria, the Lord-willing (James 4:15), will be to six congregations of the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations – Nigeria (F.L.C.N.). As is evident from this name, these six congregations were in fellowship with the F.L.C. here in America, some of them for over twenty years. At the 2004 C.L.C. Convention, when, by God’s overflowing, rich grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, the C.L.C. and the F.L.C. merged into one body or gathering-together of like-minded congregations (I Corinthians 1:10; Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 4:3), it was a God-pleasing fruit of that merger that there was exploration of possible fellowship with the F.L.C.N.

That exploration had already begun at the October, 2003 C.L.C. Pastoral Conference, where one of the Nigerian pastors, who was also the president of the F.L.C.N., Pastor Nimi B. Fyeface, willingly submitted to a two-day colloquy to determine like-mindedness with the C.L.C. in Scriptural doctrine and practice. What was the outcome of that colloquy? This question is answered in the November – December, 2003 issue of *The Concordia Lutheran*, where the following was reported: “On October 27 and 28, 2003, Pastor Nimi Fyeface, President of the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations of Nigeria (FLCN), at our recent Fall Pastoral Conference held at Holy Scripture Ev. Lutheran Church, San Antonio, TX, underwent an intensive and thorough colloquy. We are pleased to announce, with all praise and thanks to God, that Pastor Fyeface was found to be in full agreement with us in both doctrine and

practice and is therefore a true confessional Brother in the faith.” This was the **first official, direct contact** for our Conference with someone from the F.L.C.N.

The **second official, written contact** for our Conference with the F.L.C.N. was at last year’s annual convention, when Pastor Worley, as the chairman of the Committee on Lutheran Union, reported that he was “pleased to announce the *Resolution on Doctrinal Fellowship* with our Conference by the FELLOWSHIP OF LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS – NIGERIA, dated November 13, 2004, declaring that the six congregations comprising that body have unanimously declared themselves in full agreement in doctrine and practice and are thus in fellowship with us” (*The Concordia Lutheran*, July – August 2005, page 90). What was the reaction to this announcement? “This news was joyfully received by the convention, and the motion was unanimously carried that we thankfully receive the resolution of fellowship from the FELLOWSHIP OF LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS – NIGERIA and express our gratitude in the Lord for this blessing of His grace” (Also from page 90 of the above issue of the *CL*). The six F.L.C.N. congregations are listed in the back of this issue of the *CL* under “**Churches in Fellowship** with the Concordia Lutheran Conference.”

At the 2005 Convention, after the unanimous reception and recognition of the Doctrinal Fellowship Resolution with the F.L.C.N., the convention delegates, at the invitation of the F.L.C.N., unanimously authorized a visit to Nigeria by Pastors Mensing and Lietz as representatives of our Conference. This visit was tentatively scheduled for January, 2006, but in recent months was rescheduled for **September, 2006**, due to civil/political unrest in certain areas which are not too far away from some of our sister congregations there. Further detail on this visit was provided in the Convention Digest on pages 90 and 91 of the July – August 2005 issue of *The Concordia Lutheran*: “The chief purpose of the trip being to colloquize the Nigerian pastors trained by Brother Fyneface to determine to the best of our ability the thoroughness of their theological training, their aptness to teach the precious truths of God’s Word in their purity, and in all other respects their qualifications for the pastoral office of which they are incumbents. Additional but also extremely important purposes of the trip include **a)** to demonstrate our genuine interest in these brethren in the faith and our support of their efforts to endeavor, together with us, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; **b)** to explore effective, efficient and secure ways of facilitating communi-

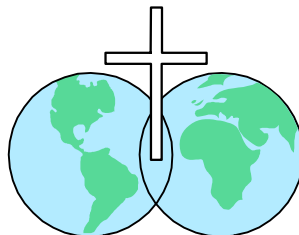
cation between us and our Nigerian brethren; and **c)** to determine what is the best, perhaps a more economical, but above all the most secure means of transferring funds to Nigeria.”

Although the tentatively-scheduled visit is a few months off, some preparations for it have already been carried out: **1)** Contact has been made with Travel Document Systems in Washington, D.C. This business will help, at a very reasonable fee, with the processing of the visa applications for Nigeria. **2)** Communication has been made with Pastor Fyneface concerning the invitation letter which he has to officially address to the Nigerian ambassador in our nation’s capital. **3)** Pastor Mensing has a valid passport, Pastor Lietz has applied for and has received his last fall. **4)** Some investigation has begun concerning plane schedules and airfare costs **to and from** Nigeria, as well as travel **within** the country.

As much as our Nigerian brethren want us to come over to their country to visit, fellowship, and consult with them (Acts 16:9), so much do we also look forward to visiting, fellowshipping, and consulting with them. *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”* (Psalm 133:1).

Finally, we ask you to remember this visit in your prayers (II Thessalonians 3:1), requesting the Lord God (Philippians 4:6) that, if it be His gracious will, He direct all further and final preparations, provide safe travel, and, above all, bring about great profit from the actual visits with these Nigerian brethren for His great glory and honor, as well as for the edification of our dear brethren both in Nigeria and here in America. Oh, let us remember and treasure the unchanging promise of our merciful God toward His beloved children in Psalm 121: *“The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even forevermore”* (v. 8).

—R. J. L.



Looking Back on our Effort in Midland, Michigan



In September, 1982, *Cross of Christ Lutheran Church* in Midland, Michigan, unscripturally deposed its pastor, the Rev. Erick E. Erickson, for purely personal reasons, many of which were dredged up after the fact; and both the pastor and his faithful members were literally “locked out” of the church’s facilities. The *Lutheran Churches of the Reformation* initially upheld that ouster and regarded *Cross of Christ* as being in good standing, and it was served by a vacancy pastor from that fellowship. Thereupon the faithful remnant of twenty-two communicants and eight voting members constituted itself as an independent congregation, *Concordia Lutheran Church*, recognized Pastor Erickson still to be its shepherd in the sight of God, and held regular services in the local civic center.

About a year later, after the new congregation had carefully investigated the doctrine and practice of our Conference and Pastor Erickson had submitted to a thorough colloquy by our Committee on Lutheran Union, *Concordia Lutheran Church* declared itself to be in fellowship with us and, in June, 1984, was received as a member-congregation of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*.

In the fall of 1985, Pastor Erickson became the Missionary-at-Large of the Conference but continued to serve the Midland congregation as its vacancy pastor; and when that Conference program was discontinued in 1987, the congregation decided to call him back again into the pastoral office in their midst. However due to a personal falling out with one of the members there, he suddenly left both the congregation and the Conference and returned, of all things, to the Missouri Synod against which he had preached and protested for over thirty years.

Faced with a sudden and unforeseen vacancy, and one which would apparently continue for some time due to a lack of pastoral candidates



and the inability of the little group adequately to support a pastor of its own, the church officially dissolved in September of that same year; and its constituent membership joined *Peace Ev. Lutheran Church* in Oak Forest, Illinois, to be served as a “remote contingent” of that congregation by its pastor, the Rev. David T. Mensing, and to worship regularly in chapel facilities maintained in Midland under the auspices of Peace congregation.

For over eighteen years Peace maintained that chapel in Midland, the first seven years in the home of Mrs. Linda Clothier, and the last eleven years in the conference center of the *Ramada Inn* (now the *Midland Motor Inn*) on Saginaw Road. Every first and third Sunday, barring an occasional blizzard or ice storm, Pastor Mensing left Oak



Forest immediately after services there and traveled the three-hundred miles northeast to Midland, either by air or by car, arriving just in time to begin the Sunday School and Bible Class hour at 6:30 p.m., then followed by the worship service at about eight o'clock. After an overnight stay, he spent all day Monday calling on the sick and infirmed in hospitals and nursing homes, instructing prospective adult members, conducting a special doctrinal review Bible class for those who were interested and able to attend, and teaching confirmation classes for adolescent catechumens. Most classes were held in the homes of the instructees, some as far as an hour or more outside of Midland. Then, either on Monday evening or early on Tuesday morning, the pastor set out on the return trip back to the Chicago area and home to resume his regular schedule in Oak Forest.

In spite of some gains over the years and a consistently cordial relationship between the people and their pastor, the “remote contingent” of the congregation grew gradually fewer in numbers, twelve having been received safely into the glory of heaven. But others tired of late Sunday evening services; those who lived some distance from Midland wearied of an hour's drive; and still others found the congregation's sound position in doctrine and practice on the Word of God no longer worth fighting for. After bearing the burden and heat of the day (Matthew 20:12), some for quite a few years, they sinfully left the congregation and our

fellowship to seek easier religion elsewhere (I John 2:19) and thus contributed to the waning size of the group. Only one family, having transferred to our sister congregation in Jackson back in 1999, still attends there as faithful members and remains our cherished brethren.

Finally this past fall, in an effort to draw the tiny remnant of only five remaining communicants closer to their brethren in Oak Forest and to afford them more frequent opportunity for assembling with the congregation for worship, for Holy Communion, for participation of the men in the Voters' Assembly, and for other fellowship opportunities (Hebrews 10:25), Peace Congregation offered to defray the cost of their travel down to Oak Forest one weekend per month, including the rental of a mini-van and the cost of fuel, and to afford them loving Christian hospitality in the homes of its members (as the Pastor had for many years enjoyed the hospitality of several of the Midland families). Thus, for not much more outlay of funds than for the pastor's bi-weekly trip to Midland, *all* the brethren there could have availed themselves of the blessed opportunities mentioned and, at the same time, more equitably shared the necessity of travel with their shepherd (Cf. II Corinthians 8:13-14).



Pictured left to right: Marc Linton, Bernice Linton, Roger Fischer, Angela Linton, Harry Manno, and Barth Cummins (at the last service in Midland)

After only one such trip, however, all of the members save one took note of the burden that such travel would mean for them and chose rather to transfer to our sister congregation in Jackson (only 120 miles away) where they now hope to be in regular attendance each Sunday and intend more fully to participate in the work of a local congregation of our fellowship. The four communicants were unanimously granted a peaceful release by the voters' assembly effective January 22nd, while one continues, at least for the present, as a "remote" and commuting member of the congregation in Oak Forest. The transfer has, of course, always been a completely legitimate option since Faith Ev. Lutheran Church in Jackson joined our Conference in 1999; but it required Peace on January 15th to close its chapel in Midland after the congregation's long and dedi-

cated effort on behalf of the dear brethren there, all to the glory of God and to the praise of His grace. Pastor Mensing and their brethren at Peace congregation wish them the Lord's continued blessing in their new church home, many more years of spiritual growth under the faithful feeding and diligent oversight of Pastor Ross Mahan, their new shepherd, and steadfast perseverance in the one true faith, until by God's grace, they reach their abiding homeland in heaven with all true believers in Christ Jesus, their Savior!

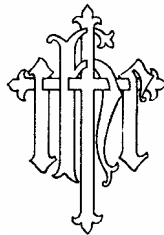
—D. T. M.

*Lord, may Thy pastors faithful be,
not laboring for themselves but Thee!
Give grace to feed with wholesome food
the sheep and lambs bought by Thy blood,
to tend Thy flocks and thus to prove
how dearly they the Shepherd love.*

*Oh, may Thy people faithful be
and in Thy pastors honor Thee,
and with them work, and for them pray,
and gladly Thee in them obey;
receive the prophet of the Lord
and gain the prophet's own reward.*

*So may we when our work is done
together stand before Thy throne
and joyful hearts and voices raise
in one united song of praise
with all the bright celestial host,
to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!*

(TLH 493, 2-4)



Churches in Fellowship

with the Concordia Lutheran Conference

Evangelical Orthodox Lutheran Church of Yekaterinburg

Yekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 62

620088 Yekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: lutheran@66.ru

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Nigeria

The Rev. Robinson Dodo, Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

Salem Lutheran Church

Abalama, Nigeria

The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Pastor

Thompson Compound Abalama

Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

St. Clement's Lutheran Church

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

The Rev. Lucky Kaladokubo, Pastor

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

The Rev. Allenson Karibi Asawo, Pastor

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

St. Paul's Nyemoni Lutheran Cathedral

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and

The Rev. God'stime E. D. Douglas, Co-Pastors

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Nigeria

The Rev. Onengiye C. Wariboko, Pastor

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA



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2175 Pioneer Drive
Jackson, MI 49201 (517) 750-3946
E-mail: rmahan@acd.net

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The Rev. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor
4050 South Melpomene Way
Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 721-7618
E-mail: david.redlin@worldnet.att.net

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Central Avenue at 171st Place
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 *Telephone: (708) 532-4288*
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The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 (708) 532-9035
E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

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Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
The Rev. M. L. NATTERER, Pastor
483 Tangent Street
Lebanon, OR 97355 (541) 258-2941
E-mail: m.l.natterer@comcast.net

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Wilmot, SD 57279 (605) 938-4710

E-mail: dierking@tnics.com

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Oak Park, IL 60302 Telephone: (708) 386-6773

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Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302 (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@yahoo.com

A Prayer for the coming Lenten season ...

Lord Jesus, precious Savior, who didst sacrifice Thyself on the cross to redeem me, a lost and condemned creature, graciously look upon me in this Lenten season and let me find cleansing and healing in Thy precious blood. My iniquities caused Thine agony in the Garden, my transgressions the scourging Thou didst suffer, and my sins nailed Thee to the accursed tree. Thou wast forsaken by God so that He could reconcile me unto Himself. Make me see the awfulness of my sin, which for Thy sake is no longer imputed to me, and let me always confide in Thy precious merit for salvation.

Grant that I may ponder day after day upon Thy Passion. Let nothing distract my thoughts from Thee. By Thy powerful Gospel, draw me ever closer to Thee, so that by faith I may always find in Thee forgiveness and peace.

Bless this Lenten season in our Conference congregations. Grant to the pastors grace to proclaim with boldness Thy saving Passion in its truth and purity, that all who hear the Gospel message of reconciliation may confide in Thy precious merit alone for salvation. Abide with us in our homes, and let sin have no dominion over us. As we behold Thee dying for our transgressions, may we daily crucify our Old Adam of sin and live ever better unto Thee who didst die for us and rise again. Amen.

Ash Wednesday	March 1st
Palm Sunday	April 9th
Maundy Thursday	April 13th
Good Friday	April 14th
Easter Sunday	April 16th