

The
Concordia Lutheran



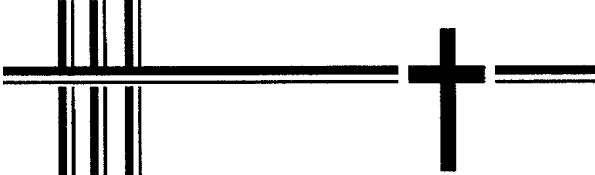
“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35.

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

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“God is
our Refuge
and Strength.”

— Psalm 46:1





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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.

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Why Did Luther Write His Small Catechism?

In II Thessalonians chapter 2, the Apostle Paul declares by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit that already at his time “*the mystery of iniquity doth already work*” (v. 7). The arrogant spirit of opposition to God’s Word and the daring usurpation of Christ’s authority in the church (which in time gave rise to the Roman Papacy), was already rearing its head. And in the course of many years one false teaching after another established itself until the Papacy was clearly manifested as “the very Antichrist” described in detail by the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonian churches. The Roman pope, declaring himself to be “the Vicar of Christ on earth,” assumed an authority contrary to the words of the Son of God, “*One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren*” (Matthew 23:8). The pope sought to be the sole authority of his gigantic hierarchical kingdom outside of which, he now brazenly but falsely claims, there is no salvation. He set forth at his own will laws and articles of faith, and he demanded obedience from all professing Christians, whether they were kings or peasants, threatening excommunication to all those who challenged his authority. History records the brave efforts of the relatively few who possessed sufficient courage to speak out against his self-assumed authority and refused to do his bidding. The consequences for such opposition were dire indeed! Opposition resulted in severe punishment and generally ended in the execution of protesters by the civil authorities who were under the control of the papacy. After all, the papal hierarchy taught that the pope wielded two swords — the *spiritual* and the *temporal*; and with this self-asserted dual power the pope safeguarded his “unquestioned” authority and made sure that it remained unquestioned.

We might well ask: “Where was the Word of God during the rise of this hierarchical system?” It lay buried beneath the debris of man-made doctrines. The Scriptures were regarded as being obscure and requiring the interpretation of the Roman hierarchy. Consequently, the Bible remained in the hands of the clergy who sought to keep it out of the hands of the common people. The main translation at that time was the “Vulgate” of Jerome, which was written in *Latin*, the official language of the Roman Empire and of the Roman Church. This translation contained numerous errors and was not readily accessible to the vast majority of people who were uneducated, unable to read, and particularly not able to read and understand Latin. Prior to Luther’s time there were some *German* translations which were available only to those in northern Europe who were financially able and willing to pay a large sum of money. But these translations, which were stilted and difficult to read, were also seriously flawed with inaccuracies and errors in conflict with the original languages or simply carried over from Jerome’s *Vulgate*.

Is it any wonder then that, when Luther came on the scene in the Sixteenth Century, he found gross darkness on the part of the people who were woefully deficient concerning their knowledge of God’s Word? This was the case not only with the common uneducated masses of people but also with the clergy who were more familiar with the man-made doctrines of the Roman hierarchy than with Scripture itself. We hear Luther lament in his preface to the *Small Catechism*, “The deplorable, miserable condition which I discovered lately when I, too, was a visitor [to local churches], has forced and urged me to prepare this Catechism, or Christian doctrine, in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Good God! What manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and, alas! many pastors are altogether incapable and incompetent to teach (so much so, that one is ashamed to speak of it). Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, have been baptized, and receive the holy Sacraments. Yet they do not understand and cannot even recite either the Lord’s Prayer, or the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live like dumb brutes and irrational hogs.”

Thus *the Catechism* came into existence because Luther earnestly desired to make known to the people the chief doctrines of God’s Word. And since, by God’s wise providence, the printing of books with moveable type had been invented by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany, about seventy-five years earlier, a process that made whole books much more economical to produce than hand-copied editions, both from the

standpoint of money and that of time, Luther's catechisms would eventually make their way into every Christian home! Already in 1518 Luther had completed a detailed exposition of the Ten Commandments. By 1520 he had finished a more concise explanation of the Commandments. Then in January of 1529 he was busy working on the *Large Catechism*. Finally, in April of 1529, the *Large Catechism* appeared in print; and in May of the same year the *Small Catechism*. He divided the Small Catechism into six chief parts: **I.** The Ten Commandments, **II.** The Creed, **III.** The Lord's Prayer, **IV.** The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, **V.** How the Unlearned should be taught to Confess, and **VI.** The Sacrament of the Altar. Note how he logically arranged these parts: First comes the Law, and only then the Gospel which permeates through all these chief parts. Luther's *Small Catechism* has been translated into most of the languages of the world. The first translation into English was done by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1548, two years after the death of Luther. The *Small Catechism* is written in simple and understandable language. While it is brief, it is at the same time inestimably rich in Christian wisdom and knowledge, setting forth the pure teachings of God's Word.

Since Luther's *Small Catechism* sets forth nothing more than the chief doctrines of Holy Writ, and it is **Scripture alone** that is the norm and standard according to which we are able to judge all religious teachings, Luther's *Small Catechism* is one of the *confessional documents* of our Lutheran church to which both our pastors and our confirmands pledge their allegiance because it is a correct exposition of God's Holy Word in those matters which it treats. At their confirmation, both children and adults are asked, in these or very similar words, "Do you hold all the books of the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God and the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from the Bible, as you have learned to know it from your study of the Scriptures themselves and, in summary, from Luther's *Small Catechism*, to be the true and correct doctrine?" And they answer: "I do." "Do you also, as a member of this Evangelical Lutheran congregation, intend to continue steadfast in the confession of this church and suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?" Answer: "I do so intend, with the help and by the grace of God." And so we rightly and gratefully sing with the hymnwriter:

*Lord, help us ever to retain
the Catechism's doctrine plain,
as Luther taught the Word of Truth
in simple style to tender youth.*

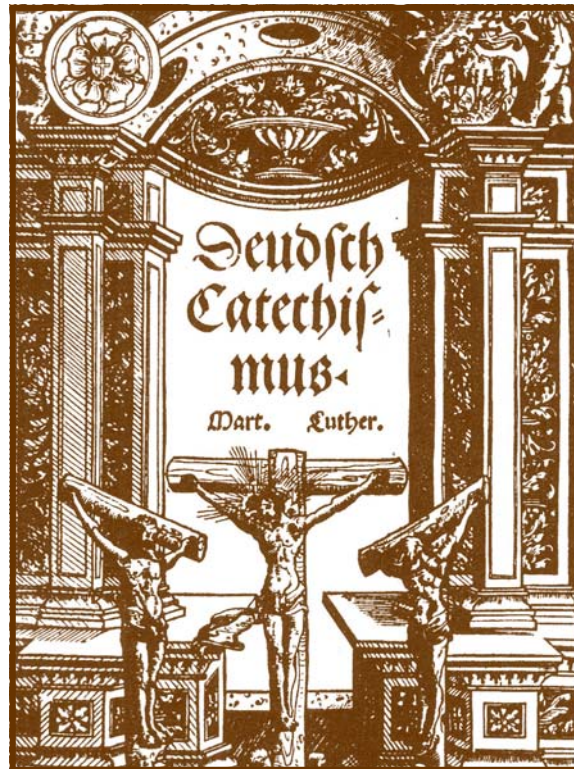
(TLH 288, 1).

Would to God that everyone who would bear the name “Lutheran” might know and believe, teach and confess, the chief parts of Christian doctrine set forth in Luther’s *Small Catechism*! But unfortunately that is not the case in these last evil days, “*for the time will come*” writes the Apostle Paul to Timothy, “*when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*” (II Timothy 4:3-4). Without doubt, that time is already here! With many, the *Small Catechism*, setting forth the “*sound doctrine*” of Holy Writ, has become something that is simply out-of-date and is commonly regarded as a mere historical document, its use being subject to the discretion of the local pastor. Many will simply not “*endure,*” that is, put up with, its pure teachings. This reminds me of the conversation I once had with the Episcopalian chaplain at our local hospital. He was extremely liberal concerning even the most fundamental teachings of Scripture. And when I referred to the *Thirty-nine Articles* of Reformed doctrine found in their *Book of Common Prayer*, he stated without any hesitation that those articles, while officially adopted back in 1801, are no longer regarded as a confession of their faith; instead, they simply are looked upon as a historical document which they have shelved and have removed from their current *Book of Common Prayer*. Just so it is with many who bear the name “Lutheran” in these latter days of sore distress regarding Luther’s precious Catechism! Its straight-forward presentation of Scripture doctrine is set aside in favor of smoothly-worded, socially- and politically-correct “*fair speeches*” which deceive the hearts of simple Christians (Romans 16:18) who naively follow belly-serving false prophets down the broad and easy road that leadeth to destruction (Matthew 7:13, as well as vv. 15-23).

May the Lord graciously preserve us from such apostasy! By God’s grace, as a solid exposition of His precious Word, Luther’s *Small Catechism* still serves as the chief instructional textbook in both our adult and children’s classes preparatory to communicant membership in our congregations. It is clearly the responsibility of faithful *pastors* (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2ff., II Timothy 4:1ff.), but especially of Christian *parents* (Deuteronomy 6:6-7) and particularly of Christian *fathers* (Ephesians 6:4), to inculcate upon the hearts and minds of their children the Word of God in all of its truth and purity. And what better method than using Luther’s *Small Catechism* to do that! Look at the blessings that are bestowed upon those who make the right use of Luther’s *Small Catechism*: **1)** Being fortified with God’s Word, they will be able faithfully to apply the Law and the Gospel in their own lives and examine

themselves properly that they may be worthy recipients of the Lord's Supper; **2)** they will be able to ward off the attacks of the devil, the world and their own flesh with appropriate words of Holy Scripture; **3)** they will then be able to “try [test] *the spirits* [teachers of religion] *whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world*” (I John 4:1); **4)** they will then know that, in whatever trials they must experience in this life, God loves them in Christ, their Savior, and that “*all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28); **5)** and, when they are faced with “*the terrors of death*” (Psalm 55:4), they need not fear; for they have the blessed comfort that, in the hour of their death, “*he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life*” (John 3:36). May the Lord, for Jesus' sake, “strengthen and preserve us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. [For] this is His gracious and good will” (Luther: Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer, The Third Chief Part; *Small Catechism* of 1529).

— M. L. N.



Drinking and Drunkenness

“*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.*” —Ephesians 5:18

During these latter days of sore distress on the earth, wherein the children of the world blatantly display their spiritual depravity, unbridled lust, debauchery, and hedonistic behavior without the slightest apology, they regard God and His Word and will to be foolishness (I Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:5-8). And, even while drowning in destruction and perdition as the result of their materialism and worldliness (I Timothy 6:9), they deny the reality of sin, of sin’s guilt, and of sin’s consequences, refuse to repent, and continue down the broad and easy road that leads to hell (Matthew 7:13), literally destroying themselves in the process (Hosea 13:9a). Sadly and tragically, they ignore the hammer of God’s Law (Jeremiah 23:29) and seek instead to deny their accountability, to escape their reality, to mask their pain, to dull their anxiety, and to drown their sorrows in various kinds of intoxication. In so doing, however, they only compound their troubles in *the sin of drunkenness*, which destroys the inhibitions and curb of the Law and produces even more sin and vice out of their unbridled hearts (Matthew 15:19). And this is more pronounced today than in any other period of history.

Our title-text for this topic contains a crystal-clear divine prohibition of drunkenness, a definition which shows why it is a sin, and an exhortation to the Godly alternative. We note, however that St. Paul does not say, “Do not drink wine!” He condemns the *abuse* not the *use* of alcohol. Scripture certainly allows the *moderate* use of alcoholic beverages, as belonging to man’s daily bread, and indicates their legitimate purposes (Cf. Psalm 104:14-15; Proverbs 31:6-7; Ecclesiastes 9:7; 10:19; Zechariah 10:7). We also have the following specific examples: Our Savior’s first miracle was the production of 90 to 120 gallons of the finest wine from water at a wedding feast in Cana, thus graciously providing a completely legitimate beverage for the proper enjoyment of the guests (John 2:1ff.). Our Lord Himself drank wine as a beverage with His meals; and, although He never sinned by doing so, His enemies falsely accused Him of overindulgence, slandering Him as a “*wine-bibber*” (Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34). The Apostle Paul instructed the young pastor Timothy to use a little wine to help relieve his stomach problems (I Timothy 5:23). The New Testament clearly forbids

the judging of anyone because of *what* they eat or drink: “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat (food) or in drink*” (Colossians 2:16). As Christians we are simply to follow this general principle laid down by Christ’s Apostle Paul: “*Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer*” (I Timothy 4:4-5). The Bible tells us, for example, in Psalm 104:14-15: “*He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.*”

However, while the moderate, conscientious and judicious *use* of alcohol is a matter of Christian liberty, the **abuse** of alcohol resulting in **drunkenness** is absolutely forbidden by God. Paul says: “*Be not drunk,*” thereby prohibiting overindulgence, inebriation, and intoxication, all of which belong to “*drunkenness.*” To be “*drunk*” is to be intoxicated as the result of *excessive* consumption of alcohol, to be stupefied, impaired, and rendered incompetent and ultimately unconscious. Most state laws contain a similar definition of “intoxication” when referring to “driving under the influence” of alcohol and other substances that impair one’s judgment and responsible operation of motor vehicles. While such secular definitions are instructive in their limited scope, Solomon, as the penman of the Holy Ghost, describes both the condition and the result of drunkenness in Proverbs 23:31-35 as a spiritual evil; for drunkenness, as he points out, also leads to other sins such as sexual sins —sexual lust and filthy language— as well as to a host of other sins and offenses (cf. Proverbs 31:5, Isaiah 5:22-23, 28:7, Hosea 4:11, Habakkuk 2:5, 15-16, etc.). The Bible’s reference is specifically to “*wine*” commonly consumed in ancient times, while today wine is but one example of many substances, the abuse of which can render a person “*drunk,*” intoxicated, and “high.” The prohibition: “*Be not drunk*” covers all such situations.

Jesus earnestly warns us, His latter-day disciples, even as He warned the twelve apostles: “*Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting (Gk., becoming giddy, “tipsy,” “buzzed” by overindulgence in alcohol), and drunkenness (Gk., heavy drinking), and cares of this life, and so that day (Judgment Day) come upon you unawares*” (Luke 21:34). Drunkenness robs a person of proper *awareness*, not only for the Last Day now nigh at hand, but also for the temptations of the devil (I Peter 5:8), the world (I John 2:15-17), and our sinful flesh (I Peter 2:11), all of which create and

belong to the “*cares of this life*,” the anxieties which are often blamed for “driving us to drink” in the vain hope of escaping the stress, tension, responsibility and frustration of everyday life. We should beware of this powerful temptation and, with the help and by the grace of God, “*cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for [us]*” (I Peter 5:7)!

Some people get drunk only *occasionally*, such as when they attend a party; but this is no excuse, nor does it mitigate the sin of drunkenness. The Bible specifically mentions what we would call today “binging” and becoming “party drunks.” I Peter 4:3-4: “*For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries; wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.*” In Galatians 5, such wild partying (“*revellings, banquetings*”) and the “*drunkenness*” that typically results from it are listed under the manifest works of the flesh; and Paul says: “*They which do such things [Gk., they who perpetrate and persist in such things] shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (v. 21). The same combination is noted in Romans 13:13-14: “*Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness.... But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*”

The Bible also speaks of *habitual* drunks, whom we identify today as “alcoholics,” people who cannot control their drinking but have become at least psychologically, and perhaps even physically, *addicted* to alcohol. Alcohol has become their master. But that fact does not relieve the alcoholic of his responsibility before God for his drunkenness. St. Paul describes addictive drinking in the phrases “*given to wine*” (I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7), referring to one whose constant companion is alcohol, and “*given to much wine*” (I Timothy 3:8, Titus 2:3), indicating those who are literally “enslaved” by wine in excessive amounts. The fact that these descriptions occur in Paul’s discussion concerning the qualifications of pastors and deacons shows that such addiction can indeed occur among professing Christians.

The question is often asked whether a person can be a true Christian and an alcoholic, a drunkard, at the same time. If a person continues to get drunk and allows alcohol and other intoxicants to be the master of his life, the answer is obvious: He is not a Christian. Since drunkenness is listed among the gross outward sins of the flesh and typical of the ungodly unbelievers, as we have already noted (I Peter 4:3; Romans

13:12-13; Galatians 5:21; etc.), no one who is a Christian dare *continue* in such sins (Romans 6:1) and *deliberately commit them* (Hebrews 10:26ff.) lest he make shipwreck of his faith (I Timothy 1:19) and despise both the redeeming blood of his Savior and the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost (Hebrews 10:29)! “*God forbid!*” Paul cries out. “*How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein??*” he asks in Romans 6:2. “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*” (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Drunkenness is not a spiritual “misdemeanor” to be excused or condoned; it is to be condemned according to God’s Law, so that drunkards see the greatness of their sin and repent. Impenitent drunkards “*shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (See above); and our refusal to partake of their sins (I Timothy 5:22) and to be their “drinking buddies” is itself a testimony of the Law to them, as Paul writes in I Corinthians 5:11: “*But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*” The sinner, be he a “casual” drunkard, an chronic alcoholic, a hapless drug addict, or one who persists in *any* manifest transgression of God’s holy Law must learn first to see himself as God sees him in the mirror of that Law: hopeless and helpless, unable to save himself in any way, without excuse, unquestionably guilty and deserving of eternal punishment. And he must recognize his need of deliverance, his need of salvation by the work and power of another, namely, by one who is truly capable of accomplishing the otherwise impossible. Until he is brought to such knowledge and realizes his hopeless condition under the indictment of divine justice (Romans 3:20), he cannot be converted to saving Christian faith. He cannot be helped even by the Gospel; for he rejects the very idea of sin and guilt and thus sees in himself no need for salvation. He must first be able to cry from a heart crushed by the hammer of the Law, convicted by its justice, and terrorized by its threats: “*What must I do to be saved?!*” (Acts 16:30).

Then, and only then, is the precious Gospel or “good news” of salvation in Jesus Christ meaningful to the contrite sinner! Then, and only then, is he ready to hear that his merciful and gracious God loved him in spite

of himself and did something, already in eternity, to rescue him and all mankind from sin and lack of righteousness: “*Before the foundation of the world*” (I Peter 1:20), God determined to save the world of sinners through His Son, Jesus Christ, whom He gave of His free grace to be their Savior (John 3:16). In the fullness of time, He sent Him (Galatians 4:4-5) to live our life under the Law perfectly, from the womb to the tomb, to give us a righteousness that alone avails before God, to take our sins, guilt and full punishment upon Himself, willingly suffering in His own soul and body the hatred and wrath of God, with the full agony of damnation, as He hung on the cross in darkness, God-forsaken, in your place and mine. Shedding His blood as the ransom-price of our salvation (I Peter 1:18-20), Jesus bought us back and redeemed us to God as heirs of eternal life. We are declared righteous by God’s undeserved love for the sake of the Righteous One, God’s Only-Begotten. In Him we are accepted before God as His children, in Him we are redeemed, restored and forgiven. This Gospel message works simple childlike faith in our hearts (Romans 10:17) by the power of God’s Spirit, as also does “*the washing of regeneration*” (Titus 3:5), Holy Baptism.

Now, when Paul says in our title-text literally, “*On the contrary: Ever be being filled with the Spirit,*” he refers to the renewing of the Holy Ghost begun at conversion, which continues throughout the life of the believer through the power of Gospel. The Holy Spirit of God constantly renews us in the new man, as Paul says in Ephesians 4:22-24: “*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*” The putting on of the new man includes that, as we clothe ourselves by faith in the righteousness of Christ, we do nothing to accommodate the flesh in which “*dwelleth no good thing*” (Romans 7:18), that is, to enable the flesh to gain the upper hand over the new man of faith; for Paul writes in Romans 13:14: “*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*” Bringing forth “*the fruit of the spirit*” (Galatians 5:22) is evidence of spiritual resurrection to a living faith (John 12:24; 15:5, 8), a faith that lives *unto Christ* out of gratitude for His priceless vicarious atonement (II Corinthians 5:15). “*Walk in the Spirit,*” Paul instructs us, “*and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh... If we live in the Spirit (if we are really alive spiritually), let us also walk in the Spirit*” (Galatians 5:16, 25).

The Spirit working through the Gospel renews us day by day so that we are able to glorify God in our body, the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Corin-

thians 3:16, 6:19), mortify (that is, kill) the sinful flesh by true contrition and faith (Romans 8:13-14, Galatians 5:16-25, 6:7-8), and produce good works, spiritual sacrifices of thanksgiving, acceptable to God by virtue of Jesus' blood and righteousness (Ephesians 2:10, I Peter 2:5). So let us turn to the Gospel in time of need, in times of stress, in times of anxiety, not to alcohol or drugs; and we will find help that never fails. The Psalmist sings: "*The Lord is my Light and my Salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?*" (Psalm 27:1). Even though the world and our own deceitful flesh considers drunkenness a trifle to be laughed off or a simple escape from care, we Christians know better. Ephesians 5:18 tells us the truth of the matter: "*Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.*" By the grace of God and His Spirit of grace in the Gospel, order your life according to God's clear Word, and desire as His dear child what David longed for: "*One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple*" (v. 4). God grant it for Jesus' sake.

— E. J. W.

*O keep me watchful, Lord, and humble
And suffer me no more top stray.
Uphold me when my feet would stumble,
Nor let me loiter by the way.
Fill all my nature with Thy light,
O Radiance, strong and bright!*

*I thank Thee, Jesus, Sun from heaven,
whose radiance hath brought light to me!
I thank Thee, who hast richly given
all that could make me glad and free!
I thank Thee that my soul is healed
by what Thy lips revealed!*

TLH 399, 4 and 3

Putting the Best Construction on Everything

*“Charity ...thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity,
but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things,
believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”*

—I Corinthians 13:4a, 5d-7

“The tongue,” as James so accurately testifies, “is a little member” (2:5). Furthermore, James declares that, though this tongue is a “*little*” member, yet **no human being can “tame” it**; “it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (vv. 8-10). However, the almighty and gracious **God is well able to tame the human tongue**, and He already has done this marvelous work in the lives of His “people” (I Peter 2:9-10) since the creation of the world, and continues to do this marvelous work in the lives of His dear believing children, His dear sheep and lambs, yet today in these times.

And how did He ever accomplish this marvelous work? He did it **through the finished redemptive work of Christ Jesus** carried out in our behalf and in behalf of the entire world (Romans 3:24), that work which was completely satisfactory to Him (the one true God), not only as the full payment which took care of the huge penalty accumulated by the sins of all mankind (**Christ’s passive obedience** in His suffering and death “for all” – II Corinthians 5:15; see also I Peter 3:18), but also as the total fulfillment by Christ of God’s demands of all mankind that His divine Law be perfectly obeyed (Matthew 5:48; Leviticus 19:2), this being **the Savior’s active obedience**, confirmed in the clear words of Matthew 5:17 and Galatians 4:4-5. The Apostle Paul refers to this redemptive work of Christ when he addresses the Christians at Corinth, saying to them: “*Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in*

your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20). It is the **"price" of Christ's vicarious satisfaction which, received by faith, equips the believers**, by God's grace and out of love for Him, to **"tame" the tongue** and use it to glorify and honor God, even to put the best construction on everything.

In Luther's *Small Catechism* (CPH, 1943), under the Eighth Commandment, "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor*" (Exodus 20:16), we have this timely question: "What does God require of us in the Eighth Commandment?" (Question 69, page 77). In part C of the answer, we have this statement: "We should put the best construction on everything." What Scripture passages are used to support this statement? There are two: **1.** "*Charity shall cover the multitude of sins*" (I Peter 4:8), and **2.** "*[Charity] believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*" (I Corinthians 13:7). This second *sedes* is, therefore, properly referred to under the title for this article.

The thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians stresses the importance of "charity" (Greek: *agape*, pronounced ah-GAH-pay). This is the highest form of love in the Holy Scriptures; it is the sacrificial love which we are not only to show toward the one, true, and Triune God ("*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*" — Matthew 22:37); but it is also the sacrificial love which we are to show toward all other human beings ("*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*" — Matthew 22:39), even toward our enemies ("**Love your enemies**" — Matthew 5:44). This is the love which our God through Christ showed toward us when we were His enemies (Romans 5:8, 10), when we were still in darkness (I Peter 2:9), before He found us, converted us, and regenerated us. Our Savior speaks of this love of God in and through Him when He announces to us that "*God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son*" (John 3:16). This world was a world of enemies toward God, for "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him*" (I Corinthians 2:14); and "*the carnal mind is enmity against God*" (Romans 8:7). The world of sinners, on its own, wants nothing to do with God and with Christ. But yet "*God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*" (John 3:17).

And, furthermore, God wants every single sinner in the world to be a true, believing Christian, to be a member of His kingdom of grace, to be brought out of the spiritual darkness and blindness which are the result

of sin, and to be brought to the marvelous light of “*the Light of the world*” (John 8:12), Christ Jesus. St. Paul tells us in I Timothy 2 that God “*will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (v. 4). This love of God in Christ for the world of sinners is the most outstanding display of *agape*, charity, sacrificial love. The Apostle John wrote priceless words in his First Epistle concerning this one-sided love when he said: “*In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*” (4:9-11). Moreover, the Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 13, stresses to his fellow believers, to those who have been brought to faith in the love of God through Christ toward the world of sinners, the importance of having on-going “*charity,*” that is, “*love*” (*agape*), toward others in all of their lives, when he makes this personal confession: “*Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*” (vv. 1-3).

For this article on “Putting the Best [the God-pleasing, that is, the Scriptural] Construction on Everything,” let us “dig into” the words of God from I Corinthians 13 (the title-text at the beginning of this article):

1. First of all, “*Charity...thinketh no evil*” (v. 5d). To demonstrate the unity of Scripture, the Old Testament Prophet Zechariah **twice** “zeros in” on this same characteristic (as set forth by the Apostle Paul) of *agape*, charity, the highest form of love, when he (Zechariah) writes: “***Let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart***” (7:10b) and “***Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath, for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord***” (8:17). This on-going practice of avoiding the thoughts and imaginations of evil is one way to put the best and not the worst construction on everything.

And what ought to move us willingly and cheerfully to think “*no evil*”? We ought day after day to be moved willingly and cheerfully to

think “*no evil*” because of the absolutely true and changeless Gospel assurances from our gracious God concerning His thinking toward us: “*I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil*” (Jeremiah 29:11). His thoughts toward us “*of peace and not of evil*” are the direct result of “*the propitiation*” [the blood payment, the complete ransom] of “*Jesus Christ, the righteous, ...for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:1-2), that propitiation which completely satisfied the holiness (Leviticus 19:2), the justice (James 2:10; Matthew 5:48; Exodus 20:5b; Galatians 3:10b, 12b; etc.), and the wrath of God (Psalm 5:4-6; Romans 1:18; Ephesians 2:3b; John 3:36b; etc.) toward all sinners and toward all sin, so that on account of the perfect substitutionary active obedience, the perfect substitutionary suffering, and the perfect substitutionary death of Christ Jesus for all sinners, God has declared every single sinner justified, righteous, and forgiven (Romans 3:24; 5:18-19; II Corinthians 5:19). This is the wonderful Scriptural teaching of *objective*, universal justification of the whole world of sinners on account of (and *only* on account of) of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ Jesus. Now, “*being justified by faith* [which receives, by God’s grace, God’s justification of all sinners through Christ alone], *we* [including all who have been brought to faith in Christ and His vicarious satisfaction] *have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1). This is what constrains, motivates, and impels us, the sheep and lambs of Christ, to strive (according to our “*new man*” — Ephesians 4:24) to “*think no evil*” toward our God or toward our fellow human beings, whether those human beings would be our spouse, our children, our friends, our enemies, our neighbors, our pastor, the members of our congregation, our brethren in our Conference and in our fellowship (which would include our brethren in Russia and Nigeria), the heterodox, the heathen, our employer, our employees, our co-workers, our students, our teachers, our governor, our senators, our representatives, our president, etc., etc.

And the followers of Christ Jesus will, because of “*the Gospel of the grace of God*” (Acts 20:24d), the Gospel of “*the Prince of Peace*” (Isaiah 9:6c), the Gospel of the “*one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all*” (I Timothy 2:5-6), “*hear...and...follow*” (John 10:27) the voice of their Savior as He speaks to them in the Holy Scriptures (John 8:31-32; 14:23), delighting (Psalm 119:24) in His words of instruction in Philippians 4 concerning what they ought even to *think*: “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,*

*whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things***" (v. 8).

2. Secondly, "[Charity] ...rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (v. 6). These are further ways by which our God, through the revelation of His Word, instructs us on putting the best construction on everything. We are **not** to persist in being glad, joyful, and grateful over sin, which is "*the transgression*," the breaking, the disobedience "*of the Law*" (I John 3:4). Does this include our own sins? Most certainly! Does this include the sins of others? Of course! Should we be glad, happy, and thankful when we ourselves sin in **thoughts** of sexual lust (Matthew 5:28), of hatred (I John 3:15), of revenge (Romans 12:19), and of coveting (Hebrews 13:5)?? Should we rejoice in our **words** of selfishness (Philippians 2:4; Matthew 16:24-25), of ingratitude (Luke 17:17-18), of arrogance (Revelation 3:17), and of spite (Ephesians 4:31)?? Should we be happy about our **actions** of hearing and passing on rumors and gossip (I Timothy 5:13; I Peter 4:15), of failing to defend and speak up for someone in his absence (Proverbs 31:8-9), of neglecting the regular study and hearing of God's Word in our homes and in our congregation (Luke 10:16, 41-42; Hebrews 10:25)?? Should we be satisfied with not willingly, cheerfully, regularly, and generously supporting the on-going, important "*business*" or work of God's faithful, orthodox kingdom (Luke 2:49b; see also Proverbs 3:9-10; II Corinthians 9:6-7) in our own congregations and in our Conference, so that for the present and the future, there will be "*sound doctrine*" (Titus 1:9b) and practice (James 1:22) for the edification of precious souls, both young and old (Acts 20:32)?? Should we be happy with not willingly practicing, humbly submitting to, and cheerfully following what God teaches us in His doctrine of fellowship (Romans 16:17-18; I Timothy 6:3-5; etc.) when we are together with friends and relatives with whom we are not "*perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (I Corinthians 1:10)??

Instead of rejoicing in and remaining with our own sins or the sins of others, the Word of God instructs us to "*Repent...and believe the Gospel*" (Mark 1:15b), to confess as the psalmist did: "*I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*" (Psalm 32:5), to "*confess [our] faults one to another*" (James 5:16a), to "*bring forth ...fruits worthy of [giving evidence of] repentance*" (Luke 3:8a; see also vv. 8b-14), to remember the words of Jesus:

“Take heed to yourselves; If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4), and to *“abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good”* (Romans 12:9b), “good” according to the instruction from God’s Word. So putting the best construction on everything is *“rejoic[ing] not in iniquity,”* but *“rejoic[ing] in the truth.”*

We are to keep on being glad, joyful, and grateful for all the precious teachings of God’s Word of truth, especially the sweet, comforting, genuine, and everlasting truth of the Gospel, which announces to 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 and 21). There is no higher **truth** in all of the world than the truth that God has *“justified [us and all other sinners] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 3:24) —*objective* or universal justification. And we are gratefully to **rejoice** when that justification, that declaration of total forgiveness for all sin, is apprehended by faith, when by God’s grace alone (Ephesians 2:8-9) the individual believers receive God’s objective justification and forgiveness in and through Christ Jesus, which gives them **1)** freedom from the condemnation (John 3:18a; Romans 8:1) deserved because of our inherited and actual sins, **2)** the great blessing of *“everlasting life”* (instead of everlasting damnation) — John 3:36, and **3)** *“an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven”* (I Peter 1:4). This is *subjective* or individual, i.e., personal, justification, the **receiving** of the accomplished, free, certain, and everlasting blessings announced and declared by God to all in His Gospel of grace (*objective* justification).

3. Thirdly, *“[Charity]...beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things”* (v. 7). Consistently putting the best construction on everything involves **bearing all things** (crosses, afflictions, chastisements, burdens, difficulties, reversals, attacks on our reputation, false accusations, etc., etc.) out of gratitude to Him who *“was wounded for our transgressions, ...and with [whose] stripes we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:5), and out of thankfulness to Him who *“humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Philippians 2:8), ever remembering that *“the sufferings of*

*this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). Furthermore, putting the best construction on everything is **believing all things** (trusting, or at least assuming, that people are telling the truth unless there is evidence to the contrary, and not being suspicious of their motives, that is, not judging their hearts), **hoping all things** (anticipating or expecting the best of our neighbor and of his intentions when there is no just cause for doing otherwise), and **enduring all things** (willingly tolerating abuse —II Corinthians 11:20— and even suffering wrongfully —I Peter 2:19— especially for righteousness’ sake —I Peter 3:14), ever remembering and being encouraged by all that Jesus endured, suffered, and went through for us, for our reconciliation with God, for our righteousness before God, and for our salvation from the torments of hell, which is what we deserve for our sins.*

Yes, *putting the best construction on everything* is indeed God’s will, His ordinance, His standard of how we are to conduct ourselves; but the motive, willingness, strength, and help to put this standard of conduct into practice comes only from our one and only Savior, who has “*delivered [us] out of the hand of our enemies [sin, the devil, the curse of the Law, death, that we]...might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life*” (Luke 1:74-75), in demonstration of our love for and our gratitude to Him who “*first loved us*” (I John 4:19), “*who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar [special] people, zealous of good works*” (Titus 2:14).

—R. J. L.

Oh, let me never speak
what bounds of truth exceedeth;
grant that no idle word
from out my mouth proceedeth.
And then, when in my place,
I must and ought to speak,
my words grant power and grace
lest I offend the weak.

TLH395, 3



St. Mark's Celebrates Fifty Years, by God's Grace!

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

—Psalm 126:3

The verse quoted above was chosen by the voters of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Sauk Village, Illinois, as the celebratory theme commemorating its 50th year (1957-2007) of existence as a Christian congregation under the long-suffering grace and mercy of God. On Sunday, October 28, St. Mark's will be having a special fellowship service, to which the members of Peace, Oak Forest, and Trinity, Oak Park (as well as anyone else in our fellowship who can attend) are invited. Because of when this Sunday falls on the Church-Year calendar, the members of St. Mark's will be commemorating the astounding grace of God toward them, as this can be seen both in the 50th Anniversary of their congregation and in the Reformation of His Church that the Lord brought about through Dr. Martin Luther. Pastor Robert J. Lietz (who served St. Mark's for six years as their "vacancy pastor") has been asked to preach for this occasion and will be taking Psalm 126:3 as his text. A brief sketch of the fifty-year history of St. Mark's follows.

In 1957, a Missouri Synod congregation in Crete, Illinois — Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church— canvassed for mission prospects in a relatively new housing development on the northern Illinois-Indiana border, about six miles northeast of Crete. The outreach in this area known as *Sauk Village* resulted in regular services being conducted there in temporary quarters under the oversight of Trinity congregation. At that time, this preaching station was simply known as "Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Sauk Village."

In 1959, St. Mark's became an autonomous congregation — separate from but still in fellowship with Trinity.

And when in 1961 Trinity, with its pastor, the Rev. A. T. Kretzmann, left the Missouri Synod and joined the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (W. E. L. S.), St. Mark's made the same move. In the following year, the members of St. Mark's began looking for land to buy in Sauk Village with the help of loans from the W. E. L. S. Mission Board; and within three years, the congregation moved into its new (and present) church and school buildings located at 22012 South Torrence Avenue.

Fellowship with Trinity and the W. E. L. S. was severed in 1973 when the Wisconsin Synod called for the resignation of the current pastor of St. Mark's (Rev. Wayne Popp) without having any Scriptural reason or authority to do so. St. Mark's then existed as an independent Lutheran congregation until it became a member of the Illinois Lutheran Conference (ILC) in 1979. It is interesting to note that Pastor Edward J. Worley of St. Luke's in Seattle received his seminary instruction in the I. L. C.; and "Vicar Worley" served the people of St. Mark's as a lay-preacher from 1977 to 1979, in which year he completed his vicarage and accepted a call to a congregation in Anaheim, California.

In 1984, St. Mark's declared itself in accord with the doctrine and practice of the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations (F. L. C.), which it then joined in 1989. When the congregation lost its pastor (the Rev. Clarence Luke) to poor health in 1996, Pastor Robert J. Lietz of Trinity, Oak Park, served St. Mark's for six years during a lengthy pastoral vacancy there. In July of 2003, Candidate Paul E. Bloedel, a recent graduate from our Conference seminary, accepted the call of the Holy Ghost from the Voters' Assembly of St. Mark's to fill that vacancy and was installed as the pastor there in a service on August 17, 2003. Together with the F. L. C., St. Mark's had already declared itself to be in fellowship with the Concordia Lutheran Conference in 2002. When in 2004 the F. L. C. merged with the Concordia Lutheran Conference, St. Mark's did not immediately apply for membership, even though it remained in full agreement with the Scriptural doctrine and practice of the C. L. C. At its 2005 convention, however, St. Mark's officially joined our Concordia Lutheran Conference as a member congregation.

We cannot thank our gracious God enough for preserving down through the years a faithful remnant at St. Mark's, who desire to have the Word of God as their only standard for the doctrine and practice of their congregation. Sadly, this on-going desire was not pursued and embraced by many former members who, especially in recent years, followed the wicked desires of their flesh (Romans 7:18; Ephesians 4:22) and placed

their own human reason over the clear instruction of God's Word, in open rebellion against II Corinthians 10:5. The sad result was that they took offense at, and then turned away from, the right preaching and practice of God's Word at St. Mark's (John 6:60-61, 66; 8:33-50; II Timothy 4:3-4). Only Satan himself, the father of lies and discord, could have been pleased because of so many defections from the congregation in recent years. The reason for their departures is clearly described in the following words of Holy Scripture: *"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us"* (I John 2:19).

May *"the love of Christ"* (II Corinthians 5:15) constrain and stir the members and pastor of St. Mark's to *"continue"* (John 8:31; II Timothy 3:14) in what they have learned from God's Word of truth and grace. And, no matter how many people may turn away from the truth and depart from our fellowship, may the Lord preserve in us all the faithful resolve articulated by Joshua on behalf of himself and his family: *"Choose you this day whom ye will serve. ...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15). Amen.

—R. J. L. & P. E. B.



Seminary update...

This past summer, we completed in an accelerated eight-week semester the first two credit hours of **Basic German**; and the class was *audited* by nine members of Peace Congregation, together with Pastor and Mrs. Lietz of Oak Park, providing greater opportunity for conversation and interaction. This was a truly “fun” class, providing everyone with a greater appreciation for “the language of the Reformation,” including Luther’s morning and evening prayers in German, which were used in our devotions.

Our new academic year began on Sunday, September 16th, in Oak Forest, Illinois, where our first-year classes, meeting on a part-time schedule, are held on Sunday evenings and on Thursday evenings between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Since we have no *full-time* students at present, our schedule is student-driven so that a man who is supporting a family (I Timothy 5:8) and studying for the Ministry (II Timothy 2:15) *at the same time* can reasonably and properly do *both*, with as few conflicts as possible.

During the fall term, we are continuing with the third and final semester of **New Testament Greek** (three credits each), and the third semester of **Dogmatics I**, covering the nature and concept of Theology through *Favor Dei*—the grace of God in Christ (also three credits each), as well as the *practicum* or on-going “internship” in the local congregation (2 credits per semester). It should be noted that eight credits of study on this advanced level is a rather hefty part-time load — exactly half-time progress through our standard curriculum. We are again joined by Mr. Phillip Martin of Peace and Pastor Lietz from Oak Park as “*auditors*.”

Looking ahead to the spring term, the six credit hours in New Testament Greek and Dogmatics will be replaced, God-willing, with **Introduction to the Holy Scriptures** — history, text and canon (2 hours), **New Testament Isagogics** (2 hours), and **Hermeneutics and Exegesis** (2 hours).

May the Lord of the Church continue to bless us in our mutual efforts, as a Conference of dear brethren, to train well-prepared candidates of the Ministry for the future; and may He bless in particular our matriculated student, Mr. Jason Mabe of Park Forest, Illinois, together with his wife, Gina, and their son, Aaron, as they share together the privileges of arduous labor and of great joy for their Savior’s sake!

—Prof. David T. Mensing



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 Und wenn die Voelckel viel beschern, und thut was er will
 So fürchten wir uns nicht, so ist uns doch gelien
 Von al, das frucht mit uns, es ist nicht
 Die frucht das frucht - von dem er sich nicht, er ist
 Und nicht ist, sein grüßem, er ist nicht, er ist nicht
 Und hoch macht, er ist nicht, er ist nicht, er ist nicht

A mighty Fortress is our God, a trusty Shield and Weapon.
 He helps us free from every need that hath us now o'ertaken.
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 Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight!
 On earth is not his equal!

Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us,
 we tremble not, we fear no ill; they shall not overpower us!
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 One little word can fell him!

TLH 262, 1, 3

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Sunday School & Bible Class 8:30 a.m.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 (708) 532-9035
E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth and Tangent Streets
Lebanon, OR 97355
Sunday School & Bible Class 10:00 a.m.
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

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street
Seattle, WA 98178 Telephone: (206) 723-1078
Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor
9658 – 54th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98118 (206) 723-7418
E-mail: revworley@comcast.net

NOTE: Services are also held in **Victoria, British Columbia** on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.

Worship Service 7:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.

Adult Catechism Class 8:30 p.m.

ST. MARK'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 S. Torrence Avenue

Sauk Village, IL 60411 *Telephone: (708) 758-6222*

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

22012 S. Torrence Avenue

Sauk Village, IL 60411 (708) 757-6859

E-mail: revbloedel@yahoo.com

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue

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

Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m.

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



The Formula of Concord on Martin Luther

*“By the special grace and mercy of the Almighty, the doctrine concerning the chief articles of our Christian religion (which under the Papacy had been horribly obscured by human teachings and ordinances) were explained and purified again **from God’s Word** by Dr. Luther, of blessed and holy memory.” (847, 1.)*

“In these last times, God, out of special grace, has brought the truth of His Word to light again from the darkness of the Papacy through the faithful service of the precious man of God, Dr. Luther.” (851, 5.)

