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Nos. 7 - 8

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Vol. LV II July - August 2012

## OFFICIAL ORGAN of the Concordia Lutheran Conference

This publication appears in a bi-monthly issue at a subscription price of \$5.00 per year.

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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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# Convention Digest



The 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention, held at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington, officially began on June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9:30 a.m. with a Divine Worship Service of Convocation in which the local Pastor, the Rev. Edward J. Worley, served as the liturgist and the Conference President, the Rev. David T. Mensing, delivered the keynote

sermon on this year's Convention Motto. He chose as his text Malachi 3:1, taking as his theme: *Christ, Our Divine Prophet—"The Messenger of the Covenant,"* and dividing it into two parts, namely, **I.** As to His divine person, and **II.** As to His divine work.



Following the service, the first session of the convention was called to order by the President, who first appointed the standard convention committees. Then in his annual report, President Mensing expressed thanks to the Lord for His gracious blessings upon our Conference over the past sixty years. Summarizing some of what would be presented in the reports of the various committee chairmen, President Mensing highlighted "a few of the significant events that transpired over the

course of the year." These highlights included the financial subsidy given by the Conference to St. Mark's congregation (Sauk Village, IL) and the Orthodox Lutheran Church of Ekaterinburg (Russia), the ongoing work of our seminary program, and the printing of the *Concordia Lutheran* and other materials by *Scriptural Publications*. The President also summarized the current the financial state of the General Fund and Student Aid Fund.

After the noon meal, sessions were opened with a devotion conducted by Mr. Daniel P. Mensing, Seminarian. In the initial report of the *Finance Committee*, Mr. Robert G. Bloedel, the Conference Treasurer, presented the Financial Report for fiscal year 2011–2012. The report showed a

beginning cash balance of \$ 28,223.61 in the General Fund plus total



receipts of \$ 31,371.31, yielding total cash available of \$ 59,594.92. Expenditures totaled \$ 36,510.93, leaving an ending cash balance as of May 31, 2012 of \$ 23,083.99. The report also showed a decrease in the *Student Aid Fund* from \$ 81,152.04 at the beginning of the fiscal year to an ending balance of \$ 59,494.80 on its closing date, May 31, 2012, due to the ongoing support of our full-time theological students. Total cash in all funds as of May 31, 2012

stood at \$82,578.79. The Treasurer mentioned that although the *Student* Aid Fund ended the fiscal year with much less than it began, it still has more than what had been anticipated on the basis of initial pledges. The Treasurer then distributed the Finance Committee's Budget Worksheet for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2012 through May 31, 2013. It showed a beginning cash balance of \$23,083.99 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$25,400.43, for an expected total cash available of \$48,484.42 in the General Fund. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$ 34,550.00 divided among the following items: Scriptural Publications—\$ 2,000.00; Ekaterinburg Subsidy—\$ 9,600.00; Ekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy—\$ 2,400.00; St. Mark's Subsidy—\$ 6,000.00; Convention Expense—\$ 1,000.00; Telephone Expense—\$ 100.00; General Travel Expense—\$ 2,000.00; Seminary Instructors' Salaries—\$ 9,450.00; and Miscellaneous Expenses—\$ 2,000.00. In the Student Aid Fund, the estimated income for the new year totaled \$ 24,980.00, with the student support expenses totaling \$ 50,400.00. According to projections, the General Fund may only have approximately \$ 14,000.00 at the end of the next fiscal year.

The chairman of the *Committee on Theological Education*, Pastor Worley, gave his report in which he referred to the work of the seminary students over this past year and emphasized how Satan will continue to try to undermine the important work of our seminary. For this reason, we must remain vigilant, prayerful, and steadfast in the Word and work of the Lord. It was mentioned that due to unusual circumstances, the coursework for the Spring semester could not be completed. The plan is to complete this work during a four-week Summer quarter and to conduct the yearly colloquy in a Pastoral Conference to be held this Fall in Oak Forest, Illinois, on October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

Professor Lietz gave his interest report as a Seminary Instructor, in which he reviewed the coursework that he taught to the three students.

In *Dogmatics III*, the divine works chiefly ascribed to the Holy Ghost were the focus of study—the creation and preservation of saving faith, justification by faith, and sanctification in the narrower sense. In *Symbolics I*, the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession were covered. During the four-week Summer session, Professor Lietz will be taking the students through the Smalcald Articles. The *Symbolics* coursework included the study of the confessions themselves as well as Bente's historical introductions to the confessions. Pastor Lietz expressed his appreciation for his congregation's willingness to allow him to divide his time and energy between his congregational work and the seminary instruction.

Professor Mensing then gave his interest report as a Seminary Instructor, in which he detailed the courses that he had taught: *Church History II* (the period of the Lutheran Reformation and counter-reformation through the Thirty Years' War), *Homiletics I* (principles of preaching, text selection and study and sermon outlining), *Exegesis of Romans* (during the first semester), and *Biblical Hebrew*. The underlying doctrine in all of the coursework (taught by both professors) was the chief doctrine of the Christian religion, namely, Justification (the forgiveness of sins). Pastor Mensing mentioned that now all of the seminary students are married—being blessed with Godly wives. He encouraged the Conference brethren to remember our seminary (students and professors) in their prayers. In response to several questions from the floor, Professor Mensing described the anticipated preaching assignments and experience which our students can expect over the next two years, as well as the current housing situation of the three students and their families.

In a most entertaining way, Seminarian Jason Mabe contrasted his pre-



vious daily routine as a full-time engineer and parttime seminary student with his current schedule as a full-time student. He thanked the members of the Conference for their financial support that allowed him to quit his secular work and to focus his attention completely on his theological training with fewer distractions. Seminarian Mabe thanked the brethren for their prayers, especially for the fervent prayers brought to the throne of grace in behalf of

his youngest daughter in her recent heart surgery and subsequent recovery. He briefly summarized the various course material that he studied this past year and expressed thanks to his professors for their patience in teaching him.

Seminarian Daniel P. Mensing followed with his interest report. He expressed thanks to the Lord for having given him this past year a



Godly wife, Megan, and a dear son, Rowan. He mentioned that he happily adjusted to the new Godgiven responsibilities of being a husband and a father together with the challenges of being a full-time seminary student. Dan expressed his own struggles with learning the Hebrew language, and he thanked his Hebrew professor for his patience. He compared his second year course in *Catechetics* to the third year course of *Homiletics I*, in which he

studied how to teach and instruct through the preaching of carefully crafted, Scripturally textual sermons.

Next, Seminarian David J. Mensing gave his report in which he mentioned that he is currently a little over half way through his seminary training; and he confessed his need for continued growth in his knowl-



edge and understanding of Holy Scripture. The last two years of seminary training will be very important. He especially highlighted his appreciation for *Symbolics I*—having the opportunity for detailed study of the Lutheran Confessions. With regard to *Homiletics I*, he referred to the intimidating prospect of outlining, writing, and finally delivering sermons on a regular basis. He mentioned that he and his wife are expecting the birth of twins some-

time in July, and he besought the prayers of the brethren for these soon-to-be-born little ones, future lambs of the Lord Jesus through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Finally, Seminarian David Mensing conveyed his heartfelt thanks to the Conference brethren for their generous financial support.

Pastor Mensing, chairman of the *Editorial Committee* and Editor of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN*, then presented his report in which he stressed the chief work of the committee in the editing of the official organ of our Conference. Chairman Mensing stated his appreciation for the help of the other members of the committee in editing the articles submitted by our pastors. He also expressed his special gratitude to Mr. Phillip Martin—Print Shop Manager of *Scriptural Publications*—for his work in the layout and printing of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN*. The Conference laymen were encouraged to give regular feedback to the Editorial Committee—

suggesting topics for future articles and spotting any errors that might have crept into the publication but were not caught before printing.

Pastor Lietz, the chairman of the *Publishing House Board of Control*, began his report by thanking the Lord for mercifully granting us the printing tools used by our Conference publishing house. During this past year, *Scriptural Publications* provided especially our Nigerian brethren with important printed materials—printing 30 New Testaments in the Kalabari language as well as printing and sending various materials requested for the training of the seminary students in Nigeria. As its on-going publishing project, *Scriptural Publications* is responsible for the bi-monthly printing of the *Concordia Lutheran*. The chairman expressed thanks to the other members of the Committee—Mr. Phillip Martin (Printshop Manager) and Mr. David J. Mensing (Business Manager)— as well as to Mr. Martin Trusty of Peace congregation for his work in hosting, maintaining and updating the Conference website,

Mr. David J. Mensing, Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, then presented his report, which consisted in a detailed balance sheet summarizing the finances of our publishing house. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$ 3,161.04; total receipts of \$ 4,256.66; total expenditures of \$ 4,251.78; and an ending balance of \$ 3,165.92.

The next morning, sessions began with a devotion led by Mr. David J. Mensing, Seminarian. Pastor Edward J. Worley then began his essay entitled: "Christ, Our Divine Prophet—'The Angel of the Lord' in the



Old Testament." His essay was divided into three parts, namely, Part I: ...who spoke directly to the patriarchs; Part II: ...who spoke directly to Moses and the prophets (and through them to the people); and Part III: ...who speaks in the Old Testament Scriptures to us still today. In his introduction, the essayist noted how the Old Testament often uses the expression "the Angel of the Lord" in ways that show it refers to the pre-incarnate Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, by as-

cribing to Him titles, attributes, works, or glory that can only properly be ascribed to the Lord God Himself. Various quotations from the Old Testament, together with passages from the New Testament that support them, were cited to illustrate many instances where "the Angel of the Lord" must be taken as indicating the <u>uncreated</u> "Angel," the preincarnate Christ, because of the clear expressions of divinity that are

used with reference to that Angel. As our divine Prophet, "the Angel of the Lord" spoke directly to His people and indirectly through the written Scriptures of the Old Testament; and through these holy writings, the Divine Angel still speaks to us today. After the conclusion of the essay, discussion continued concerning different ways that the expressions "Angel of the Lord" or "Angel of God" are used in the Old Testament.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Seminarian Jason A. Mabe. The Vice President and chairman of the Committee on Lutheran Union, Pastor Lietz, then presented his committee's report in which he summarized a meeting that took place in early January between the committee and a Lutheran assistant pastor from Sweden, Jacob Fjellander. While this meeting provided some interesting information about "Lutheranism" in Sweden, it did not give any evidence that there is a likelihood, or even a great interest on the part of Rev. Fjellander himself, that doctrinal fellowship might be achieved between his group and ours. This meeting was the only official work of the committee over the past year since no other inquiries concerning our Conference were received from other church bodies. After the report concluded, some of the pastors spoke about how consecrationism (one of the false doctrines held to by Pastor Fjellander's group) is becoming more and more common among Lutherans who profess themselves to be "conservative" and "confessional." Also. in opposition to the common position of many such groups, various offices auxiliary to that of the local pastor (such as assistant pastors, elders, and teachers) were explained and judged on the basis of Scripture to be man-made and not divinely instituted.

Pastor Robert J. Lietz, the chairman of the *Committee on Missions*, then presented his report of that committee in which he gave an update on the financial assistance that the Conference had extended again this past fiscal year to St. Mark's congregation in Sauk Village, Illinois. By the grace of God, owing to generous contributions both from within the congregation and from other brethren in the Conference, St. Mark's has applied this year for a monthly subsidy of only \$ 500.00 from the Conference (down from \$ 900.00 the previous fiscal year). Next, Chairman Lietz summarized some of the many crosses that the Lord in His grace and wisdom has laid upon our brethren in Nigeria. All of the Nigerian pastors, for example, have various levels of financial debt (because of the high cost of food and medical expenses); and, at the solicitation of the Committee, they have detailed the specific amounts needed to relieve that debt. Because of the current state of the *General Fund* of the

Conference, instead of recommending that the Conference itself send monetary relief, the Committee is encouraging the individual congregations of the Conference to consider the needs of these brethren and to determine what can be done, coming from the congregations themselves, to send financial assistance out of love for the Savior (I John 3:16–18; 4:11). The chairman then gave an update on our brethren in Russia. Due to large medical expenses for Pastor Schurganoff, who was seriously ill this past year, an increased amount of subsidy for his pastoral salary (from \$ 700 to \$ 800 per month) for the next fiscal year was recommended by the Committee. In response to a request from the Committee on Missions for current information about his pastoral work in Russia, Pastor Schurganoff has agreed to send the chairman one of his sermons each month at the same time he sends his monthly report. Chairman Lietz concluded his report with a quotation from the 2008 report of the Committee on Missions that sets forth the principles of the Eighth Commandment about putting the best construction on everything, especially with regard to our Christian brethren abroad, from whom we do not always have the most up-to-date information.

When the convention took up the *Election of Officers and Standing Committees*, Pastor Edward J. Worley was elected *President*; Pastor Robert J. Lietz was elected *Vice President*; Pastor Paul E. Bloedel was elected *Secretary*; Mr. Robert G. Bloedel was elected *Treasurer*; Mr. Raymond Kusumi was elected *Board Member at Large* from the "far west"; and Mr. Erik Roe was elected *Board Member at Large* from the "middle west."

The results of the elections of the "standing committees" are as follows: The *Editorial Committee* — Pastor David T. Mensing, Chairman and Editor of the *Concordia Lutheran*, together with Pastor Paul Bloedel and Seminarian Daniel P. Mensing; the *Committee on Missions* — Pastor Robert J. Lietz, Chairman, together with Pastor Worley and Messrs. Tim Bloedel, Stephen Richter and Tom Fedor; the *Committee on Theological Education* — Pastor Edward J. Worley, Chairman, together with Pastor Bloedel and Messrs. Daniel Bloedel and Mark Mensing; the *Committee on Lutheran Union* — Vice President Robert J. Lietz, Chairman, together with Secretary Bloedel, Professor Mensing, and Seminarian Jason Mabe; the *Finance Committee* — Treasurer Robert G. Bloedel, Chairman, together with Messrs. Phillip Martin, Jerry Sidwell, and Paul Natterer; and the *Publishing House Board of Control* — Pastor Robert J. Lietz, Chairman; Seminarian David J. Mensing, Business Manager; and Mr. Phillip R. Martin, Print Shop Manager.

On Sunday morning, the local pastor, the Rev. Edward J. Worley, again served as liturgist, while Pastor Robert J. Lietz of Oak Park, Illinois, preached the sermon based on John 1:17–18. His theme was: *Christ the Divine Prophet Proclaimed the Grace of God through His Vicarious Atonement*, divided into two parts: **I.** He *redeemed* us from the



curse of the Law given by Moses on Mt. Sinai; and **II.** He *proclaimed* to us in the Gospel His grace and truth gained for all people. Delegates and visitors from the congregations of our fellowship then joined the members of St. Luke's as guest communicants at the Lord's Table to partake of the Savior's true body and blood for the remission of their sins, for strength to lead a holier life to the praise of His grace, and as a testimony of their unity in the

bond of peace.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Pastor Redlin. The convention then heard the second doctrinal essay: "Our Divine Prophet: Christ, the Messenger of the Covenant in the New Testament" by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel. In his introduction, the essayist mentioned different usages of the term "prophet" and then specifically focused on the application of this term to our Lord Jesus Christ. Part I of this two-part essay set forth: "What Christ did as our Divine Prophet during His public ministry." Following the basic Catechism description of the prophetic office of Christ, it was emphasized that, by His preaching and miracles, Jesus clearly revealed Himself to be the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and the Savior of sinful mankind. Part II of the essay focused on "What Christ is still doing today as our Divine Prophet." The ongoing prophetic work of Christ through the Gospel and through those who faithfully proclaim it was stressed. Even though pastors today are not guided in their preaching in the same way that the Apostles were, namely, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 2:13), anyone who preaches and teaches in full accord with the Scriptures is conveying the powerful and authoritative Word of the Lord Jesus, our divine Prophet.

Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi, the Conference statistician, delivered the *Statistical Report* for fiscal year 2011–2012. (The specifics of this report will be available in the official PROCEEDINGS when published.) In its final report, the *Resolutions Committee* submitted drafts of six resolutions to the Convention for its consideration and moved their adoption. In short, the following resolutions were presented and unani-

mously adopted: 1) Thanks to Pastors Worley and Bloedel for their edifying essays; 2) Thanks to last year's officers for their service and an exhortation to pray for the newly elected officers; 3) Thanks to Pastors Mensing and Lietz for their sermons; 4) Thanks to the Seminarians and



Pastor Redlin, who provided devotions opening the various sessions of the Convention; 5) Thanks to Mr. Timothy Bloedel for the beautiful organ music, and to the choir of St. Luke's congregation together with other members of the Conference under the direction of Mr. Jerry Sidwell for the choral music that enhanced the worship services; 6) Thanks to St. Luke's Lutheran Church and its pastor for hosting the convention and for their loving

and generous hospitality, and thanks to the Lord for preserving among us the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace through His Word.

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church of Oak Park, Illinois, extended to the Conference its invitation to host the **62**<sup>nd</sup> **Annual Convention**. (Dates: *Pastoral Conference*: Tuesday and Wednesday, June 25 and 26; *Board of Directors Meeting*: Thursday, June 27; the *Convention*: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 28, 29, and 30, 2013.) The Conference President concluded the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference* with a devotion that included the singing of the Common Doxology (Hymn 644), the reading of Psalm 134, a prayer, and the customary concluding formularies.

— P. E. B.



## Sermon for the Service of Convocation Sixty-first Annual Convention of the

# Concordia Lutheran Conference

Seattle, Washington

by

## The Rev. David T. Mensing, Conference President

Text: Malachi 3:1

In the Name of Jesus Christ, the only Savior and Head of His Church, dearly beloved hearers of His Word:

What a blessed privilege it is for us today, as Christian brethren, dwelling by God's grace in "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of



peace" (Ephesians 4:3) to be gathered together here in Seattle for the Sixty-first Annual Convention of our beloved Concordia Lutheran Conference! For, although a conference (or other similar synodical organization) has NOT been ordained by God, either as a divine institution, as a "superchurch" among and <u>over</u> its member congregation, or even as necessary agency for the preservation of true unity among Christians, we genuinely cherish

this organization, not so much for its history of survival against the attacks of adversaries from within and without for now well over six decades, — not even as a vehicle through which we, as its constituent congregations, can accomplish specific goals which otherwise would be difficult at best for our little flocks to fulfill on their own, — not even because our Conference, by God's grace, is able by means of its official organ, our *Concordia Lutheran*, and by means of its presence on the "Worldwide Web" to hold forth the Lamp of God's precious Word before the world in these latter days of spiritual ignorance on the one hand and of rank apostasy on the other — but because of the *opportunity* it affords us as brethren, in the exercise of our Christian liberty, to confess to and with one another —for our mutual encouragement and edification— that, by God's grace and in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we "all speak the same thing and that there [are] no divisions among

[us], but that [we are] perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10) on the basis of God's inerrant, clear, authoritative, verbally-inspired Word.

This Word of God, as we well know from its own perfect and reliable testimony, is not just "a book," or even "the Good Book," of selected and collected human writings of Godly men who wrote at their own instance and pleasure by the same "inspiration" that moved great *secular* authors to write, or even the impetus that caused Luther to write volumes of treasured Scriptural works with a goose-quill pen. No, the Word of God, our Holy Bible, is God's own revelation of Himself to sinful men in His very own words, communicated by His Holy Spirit to holy men to write down word-for-blessed-word, so that by that Godinspired record we might be made "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15) and be thoroughly equipped for a Godly life as the fruit and evidence of our confidence in Him as our Savior (v. 16).

Last year, as the motto of our *Sixtieth* Annual Convention, we focused on the **AUTHORITY of Scripture** as the fountain and foundation, the source and standard, of all Christian doctrine and practice. This year we consider **Jesus Christ**, the Savior and Head of His Church, as the very **SOURCE** of the Word of God, the Eternal "Word" (John 1) even before His incarnation, who, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, caused it to be "written for our learning" (Romans 15:4). On the basis of the prophecy of Malachi before us this morning, a text that regrettably is often treated only in the holy *Advent* season, we observe

Christ, our Divine Prophet — "The Messenger of the Covenant" revealed by the pre-incarnate Christ Himself (I) as to His divine PERSON, and (II) as to His divine WORK.

I.

Interestingly and significantly, the very name, in Hebrew, of the prophet who served as the Holy Spirit's amanuensis or secretary in recording these words means "My messenger," the messenger of the Lord God unto His people as His chosen prophet, the <u>last</u> prophet in the Old Testament canon. And yet, **Malachi** was not <u>either</u> of the "messengers" referred to in our text. <u>Christ Himself</u> is speaking, as He promises the coming of His **forerunner** in the fulness of the time to "prepare the way before [Him]." That forerunner was John the

Baptist, prophesied even hundreds of years earlier by Isaiah as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!'" (40:3). THAT way-preparer was to be "My messenger," says the preincarnate Christ in our text, "and he shall prepare the way before Me." And John, as he preached in the desert and baptized in the Jordan River, identified himself as that very messenger, saying to the people, as we find it recorded in John 1:23, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as said the prophet Esaias." It is for our comfort and assurance that God had so many "messengers" to proclaim "repentance and remission of sins" among all nations" (Luke 24:47) as evidence that God indeed "will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4), the "knowledge of salvation...by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Benedictus, Luke 1:77-79).

"The LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple... 'Behold, **He** shall come,' saith the Lord of Hosts." This was not merely still another "messenger," another prophet who would come further to announce the advent of God's Messiah, the anointed Redeemer of Israel (Isaiah 43), indeed, the Redeemer of "the world" (John 1:29). For THIS "messenger," the "Messenger of the covenant," would be "the LORD" Himself! Remember how John the Baptist sent his own disciples to Jesus with this question: "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3)? And the Savior confirmed Himself to John's disciples as the true Messiah on the basis of Isaiah's prophecy —on the basis of the miracles predicted of the promised Messiah in Isaiah 35:4. He showed them that He Himself was "He that should come," that He Himself was "The LORD, whom ve seek," the Eternal Word, who, John testifies in the first chapter of His Gospel, "was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (v. 14).

This was the **Messiah of God**, whom His people had been "seeking," Malachi writes in our text, "the LORD" for whom they had been waiting in confident anticipation for so many years as the fulfillment of God's promises. This was "the Lord" whom Eve had expected as her firstborn son (Genesis 4:1); this was the "Seed" of Abraham in whom

all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 22:18); this was "the Lord, our Righteousness" who would be raised up unto David as a righteous Branch (Jeremiah 23:6).

Yes, this was "the LORD" who "[would] suddenly come to His Temple," Christ says of Himself through Malachi — NOT to that temporal edifice in Judea, but to "[His] people" (Isaiah 40:1); to His Church, the "daughter of Zion," with His "salvation" (Isaiah 62:11); to the "Jerusalem" that longed to be comforted by His coming and to be "pardoned" for her "iniquity" (Isaiah 40:2). —He came, as promised, to the company of believers who waited and longed for His appearing and who, "when the fulness of the time was come" (Galatians 4:4), "suddenly," when they least expected Him, saw Him manifest Himself unto them, saying "I am He."

And John writes, "They received Him not!" (John 1:11). In the suddenness of His coming, they "[knew] not the time of their visitation" (Luke 19:44) "but...DENIED the Holy One and the Just" (Acts 3:14), "they denied the Lord that bought them" (II Peter 2:1). Only by the grace of God did His disciples and a precious few others, recognize and embrace Him in His divine person, saying: "Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God!" (John 6:69).

## II.

But when "the LORD," the Christ of God, whom so many "sought [in faith], ... when He "suddenly came" to His people, what message did He bring them? — Certainly NOT that He would be their temporal deliverer "out of the hand of [their] enemies" (Luke 1:74), out of colonization by Roman armies; certainly NOT that He would be their "meal-ticket," feeding thousands of them with merely temporal food; certainly NOT that He would be their temporal king, on a temporal throne, "restor[ing] again the [temporal] kingdom to Israel," as even His own disciples imagined in their sin-blinded weakness as late as the day of His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:6). — No, "the LORD" would be "the Messenger of the Covenant," writes Malachi in the words of Christ Himself.

Just what was the "Covenant" that caused His people to "delight in [Him]," to "seek" Him, to look forward to His coming with joyful anticipation? This was the "good news" or Gospel "Covenant" of redemption, reconciliation, justification and salvation which God prepared for sinful men and declared for them in love "before the founda-

tion of the world" (I Peter 1:20). Having foreseen but not willed the disobedience of His foremost visible creatures and their rebellion against Him — the transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden which brought sin, wrath and death upon all mankind — God "foreordained" or chose and anointed ahead of time His only-begotten Son to be the Substitute and Scapegoat for sinners under His justice; to take their place under the requirements of His holy Law — demands which they could never fulfill; to suffer in their stead the punishment they deserved and thus to earn and secure for them, as a free, unmerited gift, reconciliation with God, peace with Him in the forgiveness of their sins, and ultimately the "inheritance" of life in heaven instead of "the wages of sin" in hell.

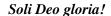
This "eternal decree of redemption," this "covenant of peace" (Is. 54:10), was communicated or announced to mankind already in the Garden of Eden with the first promise of the Savior, it was repeated down through the Old Testament in unmistakable prophecies of the Savior's coming; and, "when the fulness of the time was come [and] God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4), that "Covenant" continued to be proclaimed by Jesus Himself, by His evangelists and apostles, and still today in the preaching of the Gospel, as He sends forth pastors in His office as our Divine Prophet, as "the Messenger of the Covenant," as "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father [from all eternity]" and "hath declared Him" (John 1:18) and His will of grace, His "Covenant of peace," for all the world.

As we shall hear in the two-part essay delivered on Saturday and Sunday at our Convention this year, Christ, our Divine Prophet, anointed from all eternity to His Messianic threefold office as our Redeemer — His office as our Prophet, Priest and King—functioned as "the Messenger of the Covenant" already before His incarnation in the Virgin Mary, long before the onset of His public ministry in His state of humiliation. For in the Old Testament, the pre-incarnate Christ was identified as our Divine Prophet by His name "the Angel of the Lord" — the word "angel" [ma LÁCH in Hebrew] being the very same word as "messenger" in our text—the Lord's eternal Messenger of peace, His "Messenger of the Covenant" of peace, to poor, lost and condemned sinners. Listen to His "message" of peace in the **Old** Testament: "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:10).

And the very same message of enduring peace, "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1), Christ Himself, "the Messenger of the Covenant," declares in John 14:27, saying: "Peace I leave with you; MY peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you: Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!"

From all eternity, God "remembered His holy covenant, the oath which He sware" (Luke 1:72-73) in His eternal decree to grant forgiveness, reconciliation, justification and peace to all lost and condemned mankind for the sake of the perfect propitiation of Christ offered "for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2). Thus, true to His Word, to His holy Covenant, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:19), the good news, the Gospel declaration, of the covenant of His peace for Christ's sake, "as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began" (Luke 1:70), yea, as He proclaimed it very particularly by His Divine Messenger, "the Angel of the Lord," "the Messenger of the Covenant," Christ, our Divine Prophet, for our knowledge unto salvation (I Tim. 2:4).

May we ever gladly and gratefully hear and heed that blessed message of salvation brought to us by our precious Savior, with ears and hearts opened by His Holy Spirit to treasure it as our most priceless possession, so that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1), "the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), unto life everlasting! Amen.





## In memoriam...

# a Pastor Luckyn B. Kaladokubo a

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." — Hebrews 13:7

Our almighty God, in His all-wise providence and at the time appointed by Him according to His grace in Christ Jesus, has summoned out of this vale of tears to Himself in heaven the soul of another of our dear brother pastors in Nigeria. **The Rev. Luckyn Bray Kaladokubo** was the beloved Pastor of **St. Clement's Lutheran Church** in Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, Nigeria; and his presence will be sorely missed.



Pastor Kaladokubo, by God's grace alone His humble and faithful servant, was born on May 15, 1944, to Mr. Bray Kaladokubo and his wife Fanny, both of whom preceded him in death. He was baptized in 1960 and was confirmed in 1982 at St. Paul's Nyemoni Cathedral in Abonnema. He originally prepared for a career as a school teacher at the Teachers' Training College in Omoku, Rivers State, completing his studies in

1980. In 1992 he began his pastoral training at Abonnema in the ministerial program of the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations in Nigeria; and, upon the successful completion of his theological studies, he was called to be the pastor of St. Clement's Lutheran Church in Elem-Sangama, where he was ordained and installed in 1999.

On Thursday, July 12th, Pastor Kaladokubo succumbed to a long illness in a military hospital in Port Harcourt and died there in the morning hours. A surgery which had been planned was never performed because of his deteriorating condition and resulting weakness. His health problems apparently went back to 2009, when he unknowingly bought and took fake malaria drugs which not only did not help him but compromised his system, attacked his vital organs, and caused him a great deal of pain. But the Lord in His mercy did not permit Brother Kaladokubo to be tried and tested beyond his ability in humble, childlike faith to endure those chastisements; but, true to His promise, He made a way

to escape them (I Corinthians 10:13), as He did for the martyr Stephen, Acts 7:55-56; 60, and received our brother into the peace and rest of heaven, where in God's presence he now experiences only "fulness of joy [and] pleasures" at [His] right hand forevermore (Psalm 16:11).



Pastor Kaladokubo is survived by his beloved wife of thirty-five years, Oluba, eight grown children, and ten grandchildren. Care of St. Clement's congregation in the vacancy of its pastoral office is being undertaken temporarily by Mr. Biobele Aaron, its lay leader and one of the F. L. C. N.'s theological students, with the help and supervision of the nearby pastors.

Funeral arrangements are still pending due to political unrest in the community and the constant fear of confrontation and fighting. Pastor Kaladokubo's presence will be greatly missed by his family, his brother pastors, the sheep and lambs of his flock, and by the wider fellowship of our Conference; and we share with all of them their tears in this bereavement (Romans 12:15). At the same time, however, all of us together rejoice in his salvation by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, and look forward to a happy reunion with him and all true believers in heaven.

"Plessed are the dead which die in the Cord from henceforth! Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

—Rebelation 14:13

—D. T. M.



# Christ, Our Divine Prophet

Christ is the promised Prophet to mankind inasmuch as, being Himself the wisdom and the truth and having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, He in the days of His visible conversation on earth proclaimed unto man the will and counsel of God and the only true way of salvation, predicted future events, confirmed by manifold miracles wrought in His own power the divine authority of His doctrine, imbued with the Holy Ghost and commissioned as His infallible witnesses and messengers His holy apostles, charged all Christians to preach the Gospel unto every creature, gave the power of the keys and the sacraments to His church on earth, instituted the holy ministry, and still performs His prophetic office wherever in His name and by His order, publicly or in private, His truth and doctrine is preached and applied and His ordinances are administered.

- (From A. L. Graebner, *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology*, § 125; reprinted by Scriptural Publications, 2006)
- Malachi 3:1 The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.
- Matthew 17:5 This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him
- Ephesians 2:17 [Christ] came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.
- Acts 3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you.
- John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.
- Luke 10:16 He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.
- Ephesians 4:11 And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers ... for the edifying of the body of Christ.

## O Christ, our true and only Light

O Christ, our true and only Light, enlighten those who sit in night; let those afar now hear Thy voice and in Thy fold with us rejoice.

Jill with the radiance of Thy grace the souls now lost in error's maze and all whom in their secret minds some dark delusion haunts and blinds.

Oh, gently call those gone astray that they may find the saving way!

Let every conscience sore opprest in Thee find peace and heavenly rest.

Oh, make the deaf to hear Thy Word, and teach the dumb to speak, dear Lord, who dare not yet the faith avow, though secretly they hold it now.

Shine on the darkened and the cold; recall the wanderers to Thy fold.
Unite all those who walk apart; confirm the weak and doubting heart...

So they with us may evermore such grace with wondering thanks adore and endless praise to Thee be given by all Thy Church in earth and heaven!

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## **Churches in Fellowship**

## ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG

Ekaterinburg, Russia
The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor
P. O. Box 62
620088 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA
E-mail: lutheran@r66.ru

## **CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria Pastoral Vacancy at present

## ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria
The Rev. Onesimus Ekele, Pastor

## **HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Idama, Nigeria **Pastoral Vacancy at present** 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 **Pastoral Vacancy at present**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 LUTHERAN CHURCH

Kula, Nigeria **Pastoral Vacancy at present**St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

## ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria
The Rev. Nimi B. Fyneface and
The Rev. God'stime E. D. Douglas, Co-Pastors
P. O. Box 123
Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA
E-Mail: njohnfyneface@yahoo.co.uk



## **Directory of Member Congregations**

www.concordialutheranconf.com

## **GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH**

4090 South Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 Telephone (520) 721-7618

Worship Service ...... 9:30 a.m. Sunday School & Bible Class ...... 10:45 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor

4050 South Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 721-7618

E-mail: david.redlin@q.com

## PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171<sup>st</sup> Place. Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 Telephone: (708) 532-4288

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 Telephone: (541) 258-2941

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 EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Sunday School & Bible Class ...... 8:45 a.m. Worship Service ......10:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 (708) 757-6859

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.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



# COLLECT FOR THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

("False Prophet Sunday")

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, for Thine unfathomable mercy and grace to us in providing to the congregations of our precious fellowship diligent and faithful pastors or undershepherds of Thy local Preserve them in purity of doctrine and faithfulness in their practice, that they may preach and teach nothing contrary to or in compromise of the Holy Scriptures. Keep them steadfast and unmoveable on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, granting them courage to turn from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, and thus never to become guilty of causing divisions and offenses contrary to Thy precious Truth and thereby deceiving the hearts of the simple. Grant that, by Thy grace alone, they hold to no other source and standard for Christian doctrine and practice than the infallible, clear, all-sufficient and authoritative norm of Holy Scripture, that Thy precious Name may continue to be hallowed among us in the years to come by the faithful preaching, teaching and practice of Thy pure Word to the praise of Thy grace and to the salvation of our souls, all for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Lord and Savior, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end! Amen.