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

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

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“We have also
a more sure
Word of
Prophecy”

2 Peter 1:19



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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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God's Word, Holy Scripture, Is Clear. Are You?

Keynote Sermon for the 62nd Annual Convention

Preached by President Edward J. Worley

Friday, June 28, 2013

at Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, Oak Forest, Illinois

Text: **Psalm 119:105, 130**

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ our Savior and the Holy Ghost our Comforter:

Our sermon text is actually two verses from Psalm 119, verses 105 and 130. Hear the clear Word of the only true God, the Holy Trinity: *“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. ...The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”*

Dearly beloved, in and of ourselves lost in the darkness of total depravity and doomed to eternal darkness, everlasting damnation but, by the grace and merit of Christ alone, delivered unto eternal life by the light of the Gospel:

Our convention theme for 2013, the 62nd Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, continues our recent series on the properties of Holy Scripture with “The Perspicuity of Holy Scripture.” Is that clear? When the discussion was on-going about this year’s theme, some asked, “Is the word *perspicuity* clear to our people?” The word, ironically, means “clearness, clarity”! We choose to retain it as a standard term used for centuries by those who speak as the oracles of God, the theologically orthodox.

The definition of this attribute of Holy Scripture is simply this: God’s Word is clear in and of itself, most especially in matters of salvation. Scripture teaches clearly (and perfectly) whatever we sinners need to know to obtain eternal life! The Bible sets forth in words so clear, simple and plain all the teaching regarding the salvation of sinners that the doctrine can be understood by all *without* the need of any other “source” or “helper” but

solely by the words themselves (through the enlightening power of the Holy Ghost, of course). Therefore, the intention, the purpose of the Author, God Himself, in giving us His very Word is also clear: “*And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” (II Timothy 3:15-16).

May God bless each and every one of us as we consider from the heart:

God’s Word, Holy Scripture Is Clear. Are You?

Our main points are as follows:

I. Holy Scripture *is* God’s very Word; **II.** Holy Scripture is *clear* in and of itself; **III.** Holy Scripture is clear *especially* in regard to God’s two-fold purpose; and **IV.** Have *you* received the eternal benefit of God’s clear Word, Holy Scripture?

“*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path*” (v. 105). The Psalmist begins with a connection vital to all which follows. Two simple words *Thy* and *Word* are connected. The result? The result is clear! The Holy Scripture *is* God’s very Word! The true God Himself, the Holy Trinity, gave sinners His inerrant and infallible Word, the Holy Scriptures. Everyone should be as the Psalmist and as the Thessalonian believers regarding whom the apostle declares: “*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe*” (I Thessalonians 2:13). Only the Holy Ghost, by His grace and power alone, working through His very Word, can work such reception of Holy Scripture. Our Lord’s prayer for His own testifies to the fact: “*Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth*” (John 17:17). The Lord prayed also for all future believers: “*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their Word*” (John 17:20). In other words, He prayed for you!

Since Holy Scripture *is* God’s very Word, it is also *clear* in and of itself. As a lamp lights the dark night, and the sun lights the day, Holy Scripture enlightens, illuminates, shining continuously to fulfill God’s purpose.

As we use a lamp to light the dark hours and have the light of the sun to

rule the day, providing light continuously, we enjoy continuous 24 hours a day light! Holy Scripture, God's Word, is our continuous light, a clear shining of truth in the utter spiritual darkness. Without Holy Scripture we, by fallen nature, left to ourselves, would remain completely captive to darkness. The light is life-giving. The darkness is death-dealing. There is eternal damnation in the darkness. Scripture clearly teaches two sobering facts about spiritual darkness. All sinners are conceived and born in darkness and ruled by the prince thereof, the literal devil in the darkness! Consider these facts: God's Word, Holy Scripture, declares: "*Ye were... darkness*" (Ephesians 5:8a). Prior to enlightenment, all men are darkness and in darkness under the spiritual dominion of the prince of darkness, Satan himself! In unbelief, sinners are "*in darkness, [children] of the night... [children] of darkness*" (I Thessalonians 5:4-5), walking according to the dark world and the dark prince of this world, the spirit of darkness who works in all unbelievers (Ephesians 2:2-3). God's Word describes the unconverted this way: "*They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness*" (Psalms 82:5a).

Sinners cannot attain enlightenment in and of themselves. "*Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us; we wait for light but behold obscurity, for brightness, but we walk in darkness*" (Isaiah 59:9). In such darkness and blindness one result is inevitable. The Lord tells us: "*If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*" (Matthew 15:14b). How deep and dark is the ditch? Ultimately, it is eternally deep and dark! Holy Scripture, God's clear Word, describes the place in which all unbelievers will dwell forever after death and Judgment Day as "*the blackness of darkness for ever*" (Jude 13b; cf. II Peter 2:17), "*outer darkness*" (Matthew 8:12, cf. 22:13), and "*obscure darkness*" (Proverbs 20:20). The sad fact is, as the Lord says, "*He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth*" (John 12:35c). He does not even know his darkness, his spiritual plight, nor the final result of abiding in this spiritual darkness: eternal darkness, everlasting damnation! Unbelievers die and fall into the black hole, the "*bottomless pit*" (Revelation 9:1) of hell! Hell was "*prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matthew 25:41). God does not want any human being to end up in that place! He gave us His clear Word to prevent any sinner from going to hell.

As a lamp and light to your feet, Holy Scripture enlightens you in the way of salvation (God's chief purpose). And it provides you with all you need to lead a God-pleasing life through faith alone in Christ (His secondary purpose). The Psalmist understands God's Word as the lamp

and light to *his* feet. This is as personal an application as there can be. It is *your* walk, *your* path, the way of each step, each foot placement, each movement of *your* feet as you progress in life, *your* life. Remember the danger in the dark abysses on every side! Remember that the way is narrow, for there is only one path that leads to life forever in heaven! Remember that death's dark valley awaits as we travel continuously in its shadow! Remember that there are dark forces at work, unseen by the human eye! Use God's Word as God intends! Use God's Word as He alone can move you to desire and to do! *Your* feet need the light for *your* path. No one but *you* can walk this path for you! No one can be saved by another's faith! Although the way to heaven is always the same (solely by God-wrought faith in Christ), each person must believe for himself, by the grace and enlightenment of the Holy Ghost through the Gospel. Do you receive Holy Scripture and especially the Gospel as the light shining in a dark place, guiding your feet in every step, past the dark dangers on every side, "not with a dim and uncertain illumination," Dr. Kretzmann notes, "but with a direct and clear ray, which line makes each foot of the way unmistakable" (*Popular Commentary*, O. T., Vol. II, p. 189). In other words, as our last point asks, "Has the clear Law of God convicted you of your darkness (total depravity and sin) unto true contrition? Has the clear Gospel of God converted you, turning you from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, from eternal death to eternal life in the inheritance of Christ (righteousness and remission of sins)?" This is God's chief purpose in giving sinners His clear Word, Holy Scripture... to work saving understanding in all (even the simple!). Our text makes this perfectly clear: "*The entrance of Thy Words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple*" (v. 130).

The Law of God is clear and is declared in Holy Writ primarily to expose to you *your* personal darkness, *your* total depravity and sin. The Holy Ghost uses the Law to penetrate your heart, exposing your sin, guilt and well-deserved eternal curse: *You deserve hell!* Until you are driven to despair of any merit or hope in yourself, this work of the Law must continue blasting away at your pride and supposed "self-sufficiency." It is not pretty. It is painful. But it is necessary. You need to see what a spiritual "cockroach" you truly are by fallen nature! Like a cockroach, impenitent sinners run from the light! "*This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved*" (John 3:19-20).

But when the Holy Spirit by the Law convicts you, bringing you to true sorrow, then the clear Gospel comes to convert you. Conversion is described in these clear and powerful terms by Jesus Himself: *“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me”* (Acts 26:18). The Holy Ghost works faith in your heart, calling *“you out of darkness into [Christ’s] marvelous light”* so that *“the eyes of your [spiritual] understanding [are] enlightened [by the Gospel] that [you]...know what is the hope of His calling, and [know] the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And [know] what is the exceeding greatness of His power [toward you] who believe, according to the working of His mighty power”* (Ephesians 1:18-19). God gives you this wisdom of salvation as a sheer gift of grace for Jesus’ sake alone (Philippians 1:29). He grants you the revelation of His grace and mercy, working in you the saving knowledge of Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:17). Do you possess the blessing of the simple, childlike believer? Do you believe the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ? You are directed to ask yourself this very question in God’s clear exhortation: *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”* (II Corinthians 13:5). Do you accept the clear Word of God that your Savior spoke: *“It is finished”* (John 19:30)? Do you know that Jesus lived your life in complete righteousness to fulfill the Law of God in your place? Do you trust in this righteousness alone before God for salvation — the righteousness offered, given and sealed to you in the Gospel? Do you know Jesus that died your accursed death, the very death you earned, the very damnation you deserved, to appease God’s wrath against you, to pay for all your sins, to fulfill the eternal plan to redeem you for heaven? God forgives you, He remembers your sins no more, because of Jesus’ blood ransom! Do you believe the finished salvation offered, given and sealed to you in the Gospel? Do you use God’s clear Word as God intends? *“This then is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar; and His word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus*

Christ the righteous” (I John 1:5-2:1). Is this not clear as crystal? Do not let the doubts of your sinful flesh convince you otherwise! *“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son: He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record: That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ...These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God”* (I John 5:9-11, 13). God’s Word, Holy Scripture, *is clear*. Are you? God has clearly lit the path to heaven. It is a gift, a purchased inheritance, received by faith alone in the Savior, *“who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel”* (II Timothy 1:10b). God works to enlighten you continuously through His Word. Our Savior rejoiced over this work: *“I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight”* (Matthew 11:25-26).

An old preacher from the 1880’s relates this illustration:

Going two miles into a neighbourhood where very few could read, to spend an evening in reading to a company who were assembled to listen, and about to return by a narrow path through the woods where paths diverged, I was provided with a torch of light wood, or “pitch pine.” I objected; it was too small, weighing not over half a pound. “It will light you home,” answered my host. I said, “The wind may blow it out.” He said “It will light you home.” “But if it should rain?” I again objected. “It will light you home,” he insisted.

Contrary to my fears, it gave abundant light to my path all the way home, furnishing an apt illustration, I often think, of the way in which doubting hearts would be led safely along the “narrow way.” If they would take the Bible as their guide, it would be a lamp to their feet, leading to the heavenly home. One man had five objections to the Bible. If he would take it as a lamp to his feet, it would “light him home.” Another told me he had two faults to find with the Bible. I answered him in the words of my good friend who furnished the torch, “It will light you home.” – *(From the American Messenger, 1881)*.

May the light of the glorious Gospel continually shine unto you and into your heart! It will clearly “light you home” to heaven. In Jesus’ saving name, who is our Light unto life, Amen.

PERSPICUITY

§ 15. The *perspicuity* of the Bible is that clearness of Holy Writ which renders all the doctrines and precepts laid down in the inspired Word freely accessible to every reader or hearer of average human intelligence and sufficient knowledge of the languages employed, and of a mind not in a manner preoccupied by error as to preclude the apprehension of the truths themselves, however clearly set forth in words of human speech.

Psalm 119:105 *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

Psalm 119:130 The entrance of Thy words *giveth light; it giveth understanding* unto the *simple*.

II Peter 1:19 We have also a more sure *Word of prophecy*; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto *a light that shineth in a dark place*, until the day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your hearts.

Psalm 19:8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, *enlightening the eyes*.

Ephesians 3:3–4 How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; as *I wrote* afore in few words, whereby, *when ye read, ye may understand* my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

John 8:31–32 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and *ye shall know the truth*, and the truth shall make you free.

II Corinthians 4:3–4 But *if our Gospel be hid*, it is hid *to them that are lost*: in whom the god of this world hath *blinded the minds* of them which believe not, lest the *light of the glorious Gospel* of Christ, who is the image of God, should *shine* unto them.

John 8:43–45, 47 *Why do ye not understand My speech?* even because ye *cannot hear My Word*. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye *will do*. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And *because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not*. (47) He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, *because ye are not of God*.

II Peter 3:15–16 Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also *in all his epistles*, speaking in them of these things; *in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures*, unto their own destruction.

(Excerpt from *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology* 1898 Edition—A.L. Graebner)

The Perspicuity, or Clarity, of God's Precious Word

Sermon for the Sunday Service
Sixty-second Annual Convention
of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*

Preached by Pastor David T. Mensing • Oak Forest, Illinois

Text: **II Peter 1:19-21**

In the Name of Jesus Christ, the only Savior of lost mankind, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and the Head of His dear Church, beloved hearers of His precious Word:

At this Sixty-second Annual Convention of our beloved Concordia Lutheran Conference, we are centering our attention, as the motto of our meeting and the theme of our doctrinal essay and of the sermons delivered in our services, on a doctrine that is scarcely believed nowadays, even by most professing Christians! It is nevertheless a “*sound doctrine*,” based squarely, pointedly, and undeniably upon passages of Holy Scripture as its foundation. Our president preached his keynote sermon on one such passage of Holy Writ, a passage which our children learn by heart in their Sunday School classes and presumably also in their Christian homes, the passage which, in its graphic form, is the seal and “trademark” as it were of our Conference, appearing on our official stationery and on the masthead of our *Concordia Lutheran*, on our official documents and on the homepage of our official website. You know the verse, and the *children* can say it with me: “*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path*” (Psalm 119:105). Our convention motto upgrades our vocabulary with a word which seldom finds its way into our everyday conversation, but nevertheless a word that aptly describes an attribute, a characteristic, a quality of Holy Scripture, namely, its **perspicuity**. “Perspicuity” simply means the quality according to which a person can “see through” something, as, for example, a pane of plate glass. “Perspicuity” indicates complete transparency, clarity, lack of obscurity, intelligibility, exactness, and precision in definition, so that the Psalmist declares of Holy Scripture in verse 130 of that Psalm: “*The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*”

Many Christians, especially those fancying themselves as “conservatives,” easily confess the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, its authority, and even its sufficiency for faith unto salvation and the norm for Christian living; but *few* regard the Bible as clear, precise, easy to understand, truly enlightening, and as containing no contradictions. Sad, isn’t it, that they ascribe to the Holy Ghost the “shady” motive of keeping people in the dark, of confusing them, of frustrating their understanding, of making it practically impossible to understand God’s revelation of Himself to sinful men! But in the text before us this morning, the Apostle Peter debunks that claim and sets before us in clear and certain terms, for our information, admonition, exhortation and edification:

The Perspicuity, or Clarity, of God’s Precious Word

(I) clear as to its **surety**, (II) clear as to its **purpose**, and (III) clear as to its **source**.

I.

In the preceding context, specifically in verse 16, Peter tells his readers of then and now: “*We have not followed cunningly devised fables [or myths] when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*” The apostles and evangelists had not been spinning yarns, relating legends, and spreading tales about the Lord Jesus — artfully contrived lies and myths about His power manifested forth in His miracles and about His coming as God’s bonafide Messiah, the Savior of mankind promised throughout the Old Testament. No, they were “*eyewitnesses of His majesty*”! They **saw** what they saw; they **heard** what they heard. They **witnessed** His miraculous *Transfiguration* “*in the holy mount,*” when Moses and Elijah appeared talking with Him (as reported by Matthew, Mark and Luke in their Gospel accounts). Peter, James and John **witnessed firsthand** Jesus’ “*majesty*” as the Son of God; and they **heard** the Father’s voice from heaven, saying: “*This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!*” They were **positive** of what they saw, **confident** of what they heard, and **sure** of what they had **witnessed** with their very own eyes and ears! Their testimony, therefore, could have stood the test of parole evidence in a court of law!

But Peter now says in our text concerning the Holy Scriptures: “*We have also a **MORE sure** word of prophecy!*” “***More sure***” than eye-witness testimony?? Isn’t that what he said?? “***More sure***” than ear-

witness testimony?? You heard right! That's what he said! "**More sure**" concerning "*the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" than the word of the apostles on-the-scene! "**More sure**," my dearly-beloved hearers, than if you and I had been there on the Mount of Transfiguration to witness the event for ourselves!

This is the "*word of prophecy*," Peter tells us, "*whereunto ye do well that ye **take heed***," that is, *pay attention to!* This "*word of prophecy*" is so clear and so unmistakable in what it sets forth, so sure and so steadfast in what it declares, so inerrant and so reliable in what it teaches, that we can and should absolutely trust and believe, rejoice and take comfort in its **surety**!

II.

Why?? What **purpose** does the clear and sure testimony of the Scriptures serve? Peter says in our text that we are to "*take heed*" unto this word of prophecy "*as unto a **light** that shineth in a dark place.*" This is precisely the imagery that the Holy Spirit caused the Psalmist to use in the motto-text of our convention, as we noted before, and as President Worley expounded it on Friday morning. The same God "*who [by means of His Word] commanded the light to shine out of darkness*" on the first day of creation, saying, "*Let there be light*" (Gen. 1:3), "*hath shined in our hearts*" (I Cor. 4:6a), again, by means of His enlightening Word, to dispel the gloom of our sin-darkened, spiritually dead souls, as Zacharias sang at the birth of John the Baptist: "*To give **light** to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*" (Lk. 1:79).

What kind of "*light*"? Merely the light of moral self-awareness, of intellectual historical faith, of an "inner light" of spiritual consciousness, of an "infused" light that enables men to cooperate with the Holy Ghost in their own conversion, of the light of "infused grace" according to which people can exercise their free will and do good works toward their own salvation?? Absolutely NOT! For such "lights" are the deception of Satan in opposition to the revealed Word and will of God!!

What then? Peter *enlightens* us, saying that this "*light shineth*" "*...until the **day** dawn and the **Daystar** arise in your hearts.*" With specific reference to the **Old** Testament Scriptures (since the **New** Testament had not yet been committed to paper), St. Paul wrote to Timothy and said: "*From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in*

Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 3:15). The Christians “*do well*,” Peter tells us in our text, to “*take heed*” to the Scriptures because of their clearly-revealed blessed **purpose**. Not only does Scripture convert and enlighten the sin-darkened soul, the “*dark place*” where there is no light unto salvation, so that by its means the Holy Spirit “turns on the lights for us,” and the light of spiritual day “*dawns*” and the “*Daystar*” —our precious Savior—*arises in our hearts*; ... not only does the Spirit “enlighten us with His gifts” by means of the Scriptures, “giving us the saving knowledge of Christ, our Savior, so that now we trust and believe, rejoice and take comfort in Him” (Catechism); **BUT** our **continued** “*heed*” of the Word of God **keeps** us in the true and saving faith, “*effectually work[ing] in [us] that believe*” (I Thess. 2:13), so that “*He which hath begun a good work in [us] will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*” (Phil. 1:6). Then “*the bright and morning Star*” (Rev. 22:16) will arise in glory at His great appearing, and “*every eye shall see Him*” (1:7) — the believers with joy, “*for [their] redemption draweth nigh*” (Lk. 21:28), the unbelievers in terror, as “*all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him*” (Rev. 1:7).

III.

The perspicuity of God’s precious Word concerning all of these things is particularly sure and reliable because of its **source**. Peter tells us that we should “*know[...]* *this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.*” How often do we hear people claiming the “right” to interpret Scripture according to their own opinion, according to the dictates of their private conscience NOT bound in the Word of God, according to their own rationalistic ideas and pre-conceived agendas! “What’s so nice about the Bible,” they say, quite comfortable about their “right” of *private interpretation*, “is that it is flexible and non-judgmental in its teachings. No two people read it the same way, after all; and what it says to one person it doesn’t necessarily say to another.” —And every *sectarian*, that is, false religion or church body that purports to be “Christian” in one way, shape or form, claims that its teachings are drawn from the Bible — teachings that are as opposite from one another as night is from day!! Indeed, they cite Scripture after Scripture, “*wresting*” the passages, Peter says in chapter 3 of this same epistle, that is, twisting them, perverting them, interpreting them, “*unto their own destruction!*” (v. 16b). Why? Because, Peter tells us, they are “*unlearned and unstable*.” They don’t really know the Holy Scriptures (having never really learned them), and they are not grounded in them. They are “loose cannons,” instead of “straight shooters;” they are

like paper boats on a breezy pond, instead of ships tied up at a wharf built upon “*the foundation of the apostles and prophets.*” Scripture is not **theirs** to interpret! Scripture interprets **itself**! Scripture is **its own** light! Scripture has **its own source** independent of man and of man’s judgment!

How do we **know** that? How do we recognize that with **clarity**? How can we be **sure** of Scripture’s independent, objective, and unprejudiced Source?? Peter gives us the reason for our comfort and assurance: “*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man.*” Moses didn’t just sit down one day and decide to write down what the modernists call “the allegory of Genesis.” The Psalmists didn’t just put together a song book of 150 poems that they thought would resonate with the people of Israel! And Isaiah did not become known as the Evangelist of the Old Testament because of his “creative writing.” “*But holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*”

The fact that “God the Holy Ghost moved the holy men to write and put into their minds the very thoughts which they expressed and the very words which they wrote,” that blessed doctrine of **verbal inspiration**, specifically set forth by and grounded in *sedes doctrinae* or Bible prooftexts — passages so clear in and of themselves that they neither need nor permit of any interpretation, passages including this verse of our text, passages including the motto of our convention — **that** is the basis of our confidence in the **perspicuity** of Holy Writ! St. Paul writes to the Corinthians in his first epistle to them, chapter 2, verse 13: “*We speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth,*” which would make them suspect, fallible, unclear, biased, and unreliable; but “*we speak... in the words...which the Holy Ghost teacheth.*” The words of Scripture are **God’s** words — word for word, jot for tittle, syllable for blessed syllable. “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable,*” not merely advisable, commendable, or even useful ... “*profitable for doctrine*” (since it sets forth teachings in clear and certain terms), “*for reproof*” (since it clearly distinguishes truth from error), “*for correction*” (since it is God’s perfect norm of truth), “*for instruction in righteousness*” (to train us in holiness of living according to **God’s** standards as the fruit of saving faith in His Son), “*that the man of God [the believer] may be perfect [completed and readied], thoroughly furnished [equipped] unto all good works*” (II Tim. 3:16). God has left nothing “to the imagination” of sinful man’s heart, which is “*evil from his youth*” (Gen. 8:21), but has clearly, *perspicuously* set forth “*for our learning*” (Romans 15:4) everything that we need to

know for our faith, for our life, for our everlasting salvation. “*God who commanded the **light** to shine out of darkness hath **shined** in our **hearts**, to give the **light** of the **knowledge** of the **glory of God** in the face of **Jesus Christ**” (II Cor. 4:6). “*To wit 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**” (II Cor. 5:19).**

*How precious is the Book Divine
by inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine
to guide our souls to **heaven!***

My dear brethren, “when God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow God’s Name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh, but strengthens and preserves us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end, **this is His gracious and good will**” (Luther, *Third Petition*). May God grant it to each and every one of us, by the effectual working of His Spirit through His holy, verbally-inspired, inerrant, authoritative, all-sufficient and *perspicuous* blessed Word, for Jesus our Savior’s sake! Amen.

Soli Deo gloria!



Convention Digest



The 62nd Annual Convention, held at Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, Oak Forest, Illinois, officially began at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, June 28th, with a Divine Worship Service of Convocation in which the local Pastor, the Rev. David T. Mensing, served as the liturgist.

The Conference President, the Rev. Edward J. Worley, delivered the keynote sermon. He chose as his text **Psalm 119:105 and 130**, taking as his theme: *God's Word, Holy Scripture, Is Clear. Are You?*, and dividing it into four parts, namely, **I.** Holy Scripture is God's very Word; **II.** Holy Scripture is clear, in and of itself; **III.** Holy Scripture is clear especially in regard to God's twofold purpose; and **IV.** Have you received the eternal benefit of God's clear Word?



Following the service, the first session of the convention was called to order by the President, who first appointed the standard convention committees. In his annual report, President Worley reviewed the purposes for which our Conference has been established as these are set forth in the Constitution of the Concordia Lutheran Conference. He also reviewed Question & Answer 186 in our Catechism (with the passages cited), dealing with the God-pleasing application of the Doctrine of the Church in the life of a Christian. President Worley stressed that according to God's Holy Law we are all unprofitable servants; but for our great comfort, the Gospel and Sacraments give us the assurance of the Lord that all our sins are completely forgiven.

After the noon meal, sessions were opened with a devotion conducted by Pastor Mensing. In the initial report of the *Finance Committee*, Mr. Robert G. Bloedel, the Conference Treasurer, presented the Financial

Report for fiscal year 2012–2013. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$23,083.99 in the *General Fund* plus total receipts of \$30,306.85, yielding total cash available of \$53,390.84. Expenditures totaled \$31,094.60, leaving an ending cash balance as of May 31, 2013 of \$22,296.24. The report also showed a decrease in the *Student Aid Fund* from \$59,494.80 at the beginning of the fiscal year to an ending balance of \$38,622.61 on its closing date, May 31, 2013, a decrease not unexpected since the fund as structured is intended to fund student support through the fifth year of study ending in the spring of 2014. Total cash in all funds as of May 31, 2013: \$60,918.85. The Treasurer then distributed the Finance Committee's *Budget Worksheet* for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2013 through May 31, 2014. It showed a beginning cash balance of \$22,296.24 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$24,908.00 for an expected total cash available of \$47,204.24 in the General Fund. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$38,850.00 divided among the following items: *Scriptural Publications*: \$1,500.00; Ekaterinburg Subsidy for Pastoral Support: \$12,000; Ekaterinburg Facilities Rental Subsidy: \$2,400.00; St. Mark's Subsidy: \$5,700.00; Convention Expense: \$1,000.00; Telephone Expense: \$100.00; General Travel Expense: \$2,000.00; Seminary Instructors' Salaries: \$12,150.00; and Miscellaneous Expenses: \$2,000.00. In the *Student Aid Fund*, the estimated income for the new year is \$24,980.00, which, when added to the ending cash balance of \$38,622.61, should be sufficient to defray the student support expenses totaling \$50,400.00.



Pastor Robert J. Lietz, the chairman of the *Committee on Missions*, presented his report in which he first of all gave an update on the financial assistance that the Conference has extended to St. Mark's in Sauk Village over the past fiscal year. It was mentioned that St. Mark's had requested a monthly subsidy from the Conference of \$475.00 a month; that, however, was prior to the Divine Call that St. John's only recently sent to Pastor Bloedel, which call he has now accepted. Since Pastor Bloedel will be leaving St. Mark's as pastor and another pastor will have to be called, the actual subsidy needed by the congregation is somewhat uncertain at present, but it may even be lowered somewhat.

With regard to Pastor Schurganoff and his congregation in Ekaterinburg, the Committee Chairman mentioned that a new law has been

passed in Russia that makes it illegal for the brethren in Ekaterinburg to use a private residence to conduct their congregational services. Chairman Lietz reported that Pastor Schurganoff has been very compliant with the Conference's request to send regular sermons (in both Russian and English) together with his monthly reports, and that his consistency in communication has been much better over the past year compared to previous ones. The congregation in Ekaterinburg is requesting an increased subsidy for their pastor's salary over this next fiscal year; and the Committee on Missions is recommending that the Conference increase the subsidy for his monthly salary from \$800.00 to \$900.00, as well as giving him an extra \$100.00 a month in order to help him pay off his medical debt.



About Pastor Fyneface and our Nigerian brethren in the F.L.C.N., Pastor Lietz reported that some of the congregations in our Conference (especially St. John's) have contributed very generously to the congregations in fellowship with us in Nigeria. He also noted that, within a very short period of time, three pastors in Nigeria have died, so now there are only five pastors who are serving a total of nine F.L.C.N. congregations. There are currently 13 seminary students being trained by Pastor Fyneface, but there are no qualified candidates at present. The economy is very bad right now in Nigeria, so that three of the pastors have been able to receive only half of their normal salaries in recent months. During the discussion of the report, various concerns about the financial needs of our Nigerian brethren were addressed; and it was suggested that the Committee Chairman try to get more specifics from Pastor Fyneface concerning his own and his brother pastors' particular needs so that these can be brought to the attention of the brethren in our Conference.



Pastor Mensing, chairman of the *Editorial Committee* and Editor of the *Concordia Lutheran*, presented his report in which he focused on the main work of the committee, namely, the publication of our official organ. He spoke of the important witness of orthodox theological articles primarily for the members of our Conference, but also for those outside our Conference who might come into contact with the *C. L.* The Editor stressed the importance of our various pastors writing the articles assigned to them and submitting

them in timely fashion for publication. Special thanks were extended to Mr. Philip Martin, print shop manager of *Scriptural Publications*, for his work in the layout and printing of the *C. L.s*. During the discussion following the report, it was suggested that it might be nice to see some of the articles from years past reprinted in new issues of the *C. L.* The Editor mentioned that he is always open to suggestions from members of the Conference concerning topics that might be covered in future articles, and he earnestly encouraged the brethren to contact him regarding such.

Pastor Lietz, the chairman of the *Publishing House Board of Control*, referred to the work of the Publishing House (*Scriptural Publications*) in printing the *C. L.s* every two months as well as other books and tracts. Gratitude was expressed for the work of Mr. Martin Trusty in updating and maintaining the Conference website. Mr. Philip Martin, the Print Shop Manager, has been working at reprinting the three historical essays in the series documenting the slide of the Missouri Synod into heterodoxy and the formation of our Conference, as well as copies of the New Testament in the Kalabari dialect for use in Nigeria. Mention was made about the various doctrinally sound products that are available from *Scriptural Publications*, and how these make wonderful gifts for a variety of occasions.

Mr. David J. Mensing, Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*, presented his report, which consisted in his detailed balance sheet summarizing the finances of our Publishing House. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$3,165.92; total receipts of \$2,609.50; total expenditures of \$2,429.57; and an ending balance of \$3,345.85.

The next morning, the Saturday sessions began with a devotion led by Mr. David J. Mensing, Seminarian. Pastor Paul E. Bloedel then began his essay entitled: “*The Perspicuity of Holy Scripture*,” **Part I**: What Holy Scripture teaches concerning its perspicuity; and **Part II**: Reasons why the perspicuity of Scripture is often denied. In his introduction, the essayist noted that there are a number of false opinions about the Bible (held also by many who claim to be Christians); and one of these is that the Scriptures are *unclear*. That opinion, however, finds no support in Holy Scripture, which consistently testifies to its *perspicuity*, or clarity. It was emphasized that the perspicuity of Scripture does not in any way render the pastoral office superfluous. On the contrary, the faithful pastor relies upon the Scripture’s perspicuity to do his job faithfully and directs his sheep to be-

hold the perspicuous doctrines for themselves. The ability of natural man to have a *literal understanding* of the Gospel was distinguished from his complete inability, by his own reason or strength, to have a *spiritual, salutary knowledge* of the Gospel. It was also stressed that even though many verses of Scripture may not seem clear to an individual (due to ignorance in doctrine, vocabulary, grammar, or Biblical history), this does not change the fact that the Bible is clear in and of itself.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Seminarian Daniel P. Mensing. The convention then took up the *Election of Officers and Standing Committees*. Pastor Worley was elected *President*; Pastor Mensing was elected *Vice President*; Pastor Bloedel was elected *Secretary*; Mr. Robert G. Bloedel was elected *Treasurer*; Mr. Raymond Kusumi was elected as *Board Member at Large* from the “far west”; and Mr. Tom Fedor was elected as *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 Edward J. Worley and Jason A. Mabe; the ***Committee on Missions*** — Pastor Robert J. Lietz, Chairman, together with Pastor Mensing and Messrs. Dale Peterson, Steve 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 David T. Mensing, Chairman, together with Secretary Bloedel, Professor Lietz, and Daniel Bloedel; 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.

The Chairman of the *Committee on Theological Education*, Pastor Worley, gave his report in which he mentioned how Satan looks to disrupt and thwart our best efforts in training faithful men so that they may be prepared to receive calls into the holy ministry in our midst. He reported that there had been a controversy in which the students did not forthrightly accept clear statements dealing with the doctrine of justification (both the objective and subjective aspects). Thankfully, the Lord, through the power of His Word, graciously brought about doc-



trinal unity once again between the students and their professors. Each of the students has now clearly repented for all offenses given and has given clear testimony concerning his oneness in faith with us. Next, Chairman Worley read a letter of resignation written by Mr. Jason A. Mabe, in which the former seminarian expressed his gratitude for the prayers and generosity of the Conference brethren toward him over the years, but also confessed that he has at this time lost the desire for the pastoral office. So the fifth year of seminary, beginning this fall, will go forward with only two seminarians (Daniel and David Mensing).

Professor Mensing gave his interest report as a Seminary Instructor, in which he referred to the controversy among the students relating to the doctrine of justification that had grown and receded and grown again over the course of approximately a year and a half. Because of this controversy, only just recently resolved, the teaching of the courses assigned to him was not nearly as enjoyable as in past years. The courses that he taught: *Church History III* (the period of the 17th through the 19th centuries), *Homiletics II* (sermon writing and preaching), and *Liturgics and Hymnology* (a study of the liturgy and “treasured hymns” in our hymnal). He noted that, due to the justification controversy, the work performed by the students in these classes was very poor compared to their work in previous years of seminary training.

Professor Lietz then gave his report in which he began by stressing, on the basis of Ephesians chapter six, the importance of diligently battling the devil—using the Word of God as our trusty weapon. He also referred to the same justification controversy that was described in the previous two reports. Professor Lietz did not excuse any of the students’ sins in this matter, but he emphasized how they have since confessed their sins, and are, therefore, completely forgiven by God and all of us. Ever since Pastor Lietz was involved in a car accident (on February 14th), in which the Lord graciously protected the lives of all involved, the seminarians have been driving up to Oak Park two days a week so that Professor Lietz would not have to continue driving down to Oak Forest to instruct them. In response to a question from the floor, the *practicum* work of the seminary students was discussed, as well as plans for the fifth year concerning teaching and preaching assignments at the three congregations in the Chicago area—Peace, St. Mark’s, and Trinity.

Seminarian David J. Mensing began his interest report by summarizing the coursework covered in the various fourth-year classes taught by both professors. He confessed the problems he dealt with over the past year and a half and how the devil had confused his thinking in the doctrine of objective justification. He also admitted that his attitude was not always God-pleasing—that he did not always humbly submit himself to the teaching of his professors. Dave expressed his gratitude for the continued support that he has received from the brethren—particularly highlighting his gratitude to his wife, children, and professors for their support and guidance. He confessed that he absolutely does not want to strive about words to no profit and prays that the Lord help him in this regard. Finally, he besought the ongoing prayers of the brethren for the Lord’s blessing upon his seminary training and spiritual growth.

Seminarian Daniel P. Mensing followed with his interest report in which he openly confessed his sins to the brethren concerning his involvement in the controversy surrounding the doctrine of justification, admitting that he had not humbly submitted himself to the teaching of his professors in this matter but had for a long while stubbornly resisted their efforts to correct him with the Scriptures. He besought the forgiveness of his professors, the C.T.E., and all of the Conference brethren who have given him consistent support over the years. In response to the report, all of the brethren assembled assured Dan of their forgiveness and, more importantly, the forgiveness of God through the merits of the Redeemer.

On Sunday morning, the local pastor, the Rev. David T. Mensing, again served as liturgist, and he also preached the sermon based on **II Peter 1:19–21**. His theme was: *The Perspicuity or Clarity of God’s Precious Word*, divided into three parts: **I.** ...clear as to its *surety*; **II.** ...clear as to its *purpose*; and **III.** ...clear as to its *source*.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began with a devotion conducted by Pastor Redlin. The convention then heard the remaining portions of the doctrinal essay: “*The Perspicuity of Holy Scripture*” by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel. Various consequences of denying the perspicuity of Scripture were listed, including the encouragement of “*private interpretations*” (II Peter 1:20), promotion of the sin of unionism, erosion of doctrinal certainty, and the defense of beliefs and practices that violate clear Scripture passages. A tremendous blessing that we receive from the perspicuity of Scripture is real *certainty of the truth* concerning the doctrines of the Law and Gospel, which stand against all ration-

alistic opinions of men —giving great comfort and completely reliable guidance in most glorious perspicuity for the spiritual and eternal benefit of men. The entire essay was adopted with thanks to the essayist, subject to review by the *praesidium* and necessary polish before publication in the Proceedings.

St. John’s Lutheran Church of Lebanon, Oregon, extended to the Conference its invitation to host the 63rd Annual Convention. (Dates: *Pastoral Conference*: Tuesday and Wednesday, June 24 and 25; *Board of Directors Meeting*: Thursday, June 26; *The Convention*: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 27, 28, and 29, 2014.)

Next, the former Vice President and Chairman of the *Committee on Lutheran Union*, Pastor Lietz, presented the committee’s report, in which he mentioned that he had been contacted by a pastor from Haiti. Upon request, this pastor submitted the doctrinal confessional statement of his group of congregations written in French; and it was translated by Pastor Mensing into English. Chairman Lietz still needs to reply with an evaluation of their confessional position and plans on doing so shortly in consultation with the newly elected Chairman. There was also a contact from a man in Romania —identifying himself as “an orthodox priest” who expressed the desire to have fellowship with our Conference. Pastor Lietz noted that he still needs to follow up with this man as well. As an aside, Pastor Lietz also mentioned that there had been a contact from a man in Russia who expressed interest in our Conference —including interest in studying in our seminary.

The Conference Treasurer presented his final report, which showed the following changes in the *Proposed Budget* for fiscal year 2013-2014: *Tuition* changing from \$1,020.00 to \$680.00, *Total Pledges* changing from \$25,474.00 to \$24,668.00, *Total Cash Available for Budgeting* changing from \$47,770.24 to \$46,964.24, and *Student Support Expenses* changing from \$50,400.00 to \$25,100.00. With these changes, the proposed budget was adopted by the Convention.

Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi, the Conference Statistician, delivered the *Statistical Report* for fiscal year 2012–2013. (The specifics of this report will be found in the official convention *Proceedings*.)

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 Pastor Bloedel for his edifying essay; **2)** thanks to last year's officers for their service, and an exhortation to pray for the newly elected officers; **3)** thanks to Pastors Worley and Mensing for their sermons; **4)** thanks to the seminarians and to Pastors Mensing and Redlin, who provided devotions opening the various sessions of the Convention; **5)** thanks to Mr. Mark Mensing for the beautiful organ music, and to the choir of Peace congregation together with other members of the Conference under the direction of Mr. John Mensing for the choral music that enhanced the worship services; **6)** thanks to Peace Ev. Lutheran Church and its pastor for hosting the convention and for their loving and generous hospitality; and thanks to the Lord for preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace through His Word.

The Conference President concluded the 62nd Annual Convention of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference* with a devotion that included the singing of the Common Doxology (Hymn 644), the reading of Psalm 133, and a prayer.

—P. E. B.



The Retirement of Pastor M. L. Natterer



Due to failing health and the effects of advancing age, in June of this year (2013), the Rev. M. L. Natterer retired as pastor of the congregation he had served for over 60 years—St. John’s Lutheran Church in Lebanon, Oregon. In the same month (June of 2013), a divine call was issued by the Holy Ghost through the voters of St. John’s to the Rev. Paul E. Bloedel of St. Mark’s Ev. Lutheran Church in Sauk Village, Illinois; and this call was accepted. Pastor Bloedel and his family have since relocated to Lebanon, and he

is already serving his new flock, even though the installation service is not planned until August 25th in consideration of the busy schedule of the Rev. Edward J. Worley, the pastor of St. Luke’s in Seattle, who has agreed to come down and conduct the installation.

Rev. Natterer graduated from Concordia Lutheran Seminary (Missouri Synod) in Springfield, Illinois in 1949. His first call was to a congregation in Fessenden, North Dakota; but shortly thereafter he accepted the call to serve as pastor in Lansing, Illinois.

However, because he refused to stay silent about errors in doctrine and practice that were taking hold in the Missouri Synod, synodical officials invaded his congregation and caused him to be deposed on October 31st (Reformation Day) in 1951. Without a congregation to serve, but still needing to provide for his family (himself, his wife, and two young daughters), Rev. Natterer secured secular employment; and he and his wife joined the congregation in our fellowship that was closest to their location in Illinois—Peace, in Tinley Park (now Oak Forest).





In 1952 Pastor Natterer received and accepted a call to be the shepherd and spiritual overseer of a congregation in Lebanon, Oregon, where he would remain for the rest of his time serving in the Lord's ministry. In Lebanon, God blessed Pastor and Mrs. Natterer with eight more children and a large number of grandchildren and great grandchildren; and what started out as a very little congregation has grown significantly during his ministry.

In his retirement, he and his wife will continue living in town and will remain beloved members of St. John's Lutheran Church. May God continue to bless in rich measure this faithful servant and the congregation that Rev. Natterer diligently served for so many years—all through the power of His Word proclaimed and taught in its full truth and purity!

— P. E. B.



Installation at St. Mark's



Early in June of this year, the Rev. M. L. Natterer, one of our Conference's "founding fathers" in 1951, retired from the pastorate of St. John's Lutheran Church in Lebanon, Oregon. At the age of 87 and suffering debilitating infirmities that made his continuation in the office quite difficult for him, he stepped down from the pulpit and from the pastoral ministry. After graduating from the Springfield seminary of the Missouri Synod in 1949, he had begun his service when he received and accepted his first call to Fessenden, North Dakota. He then served for a short period of time in

Lansing, Illinois, from which congregation he was unscripturally deposed in 1951 at the instance of Missouri Synod officials. He then served the next sixty-one years as the pastor of St. John's. (Please see the article on his retirement elsewhere in this issue.)

His retirement left a vacancy at St. John's, and the congregation promptly called the Rev. Paul E. Bloedel of Sauk Village, Illinois, to be its pastor. Pastor Bloedel was at the time (and had been for almost exactly ten years) the pastor of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in that far south suburb of Chicago. Pastor Bloedel accepted the call of St. John's, received a peaceful release from St. Mark's, and together with his family relocated to the west coast on July 24th.

Just three days prior to his departure, his successor was installed at St. Mark's; and the congregation held a special fellowship supper immediately following the service, both to welcome its new shepherd and to bid a fond farewell to the Bloedel family.

Since there are no eligible candidates available in our fellowship at present, that is, trained theologians as yet without a call, St. Mark's extended a call to fill its vacancy to the pastor of our fellowship nearest to its location, Pastor David T. Mensing of Oak Forest. It was mutually understood that, if he accepted the call, he would serve *both* St. Mark's

and Peace Ev. Lutheran Church (his pastorate of twenty-seven years) *simultaneously*; and this understanding was officially acknowledged and approved by both congregations.

At the installation service on July 21st, Pastor Robert J. Lietz of Oak Park, Illinois, both conducted the liturgy and preached the sermon. He chose as his text **Acts 20:28** and stated as its theme: ***The Duties of a Christian Pastor***, both (I) toward himself and (II) toward his congregation. The service was well-attended, and guests included members from Peace, Oak Forest, and from Trinity, Oak Park. Following the service, letters of congratulation from pastors and congregations of the Conference fellowship were read, and a combination pot-luck supper and reception was held in the church's basement to welcome Pastor Mensing and to thank Pastor Bloedel for his service. It was a blessed opportunity, not only for the members of St. Mark's but also for the area brethren, to say good-bye to Pastor Bloedel, to his wife Laura, and to their delightful children, after having had them as neighbors and friends-in-fellowship for so many years. (Pastor Bloedel had begun his study for the ministry in 1998 under Professor Mensing in Oak Forest and completed his fifth and final year of theological training at the Conference seminary under Professors Lietz and Mensing in 2003, after which he was immediately called to St. Mark's.)

For those of our readership who are not acquainted with St. Mark's, its location, and its history, you are encouraged to log on to the congregation's website at for such information: www.StMarksEvLutheran.com.

We pray for both pastors the all-sufficient grace of the Lord Jesus to be their strength (II Corinthians 12:9) as they assume the care and oversight of their congregations, and we beseech Him to bless abundantly all their faithful labors to His glory and to the welfare of their respective flocks!

—Ed.



A Prayer for the Ministers of the Word

Dearest Lord Jesus, our divine Savior and Helper, thou hast established in thy Church the office of the holy ministry so that Thy Word may be preached and the Sacraments administered for the salvation of immortal souls. We pray thee, grant thy faithful ministers wisdom and strength from above for success in their holy calling. Make them fearless witnesses of Thy truth, instant in season and out of season. Keep them from error in their teaching and in their life. Make them strong in admonition, fervent in preaching, patient toward the weak, helpful toward the distressed, loving toward the erring, earnestly striving to walk in the way of Thy commandments, to place a good example before all men. May Thy Church through their work be established far and wide here on earth. Give to the members of our congregations grace that we may honor our Pastors, support them with prayers and financial support, and gladly accept the divine Word preached to us. Keep them and us faithful unto death and in the end the crown of life. In Thy name we ask it. Amen.

A Prayer for Our Fellow Pastors Abroad

O Thou great God, whose Son died on the cross to accomplish redemption for all the children of men, those that are near and those that are far off, we pray Thee to regard with compassion the many millions of fellow-men who are still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. They have an immortal soul as do we; and being flesh born of the flesh, they are under the curse and cannot bring about their own salvation. Grant our Pastors that are in distant lands that they may come to the spiritually lost with the message of the cross so that they may believe and live. Wherever these consecrated men are engaged in the blessed task of bringing the Gospel to the heathen, do Thou give success to their labors, open the hearts so the saving Word will be received, increase thy Church in the midst of the enemies, and let the fruits of true righteousness abound. Give Thy protection to all our Pastors abroad, ward off persecution to them and their congregations, keep them healthy and strong, give them the grace of faithfulness, and finally receive them and those they lead to Christ into heaven. We ask this in His name. Amen.

Churches in Fellowship

ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG

Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 27

620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: schurganoff@mail.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. Fyeface and

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

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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 171st 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. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355 (541) 258-2941

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

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

Adult Bible Class 3:00 p.m.

Worship Service 4:00 p.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452 (708) 532-4288

E-mail: pastormensing@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

Perspicuity

“Perspicuity” simply means the quality according to which a person can “see through” something, as, for example, a pane of plate glass. “Perspicuity” indicates complete transparency, clarity, lack of obscurity, intelligibility, exactness, and precision in definition, so that the Psalmist declares of Holy Scripture in Psalm 119:130 *“The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”*

Many Christians, especially those fancying themselves as “conservatives,” easily confess the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, its authority, and even its sufficiency for faith unto salvation and the norm for Christian living; but *few* regard the Bible as clear, precise, easy to understand, truly enlightening, and as containing no contradictions. Sad, isn’t it, that they ascribe to the Holy Ghost the “shady” motive of keeping people in the dark, of confusing them, of frustrating their understanding, of making it practically impossible to understand God’s revelation of Himself to sinful men!

Excerpt from the Sunday Convention Sermon. Pg. 94