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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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“Unto you is
born a Savior,
Christ, the
Lord!”

— Luke 2:11



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

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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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Remembering to Give Thanks unto the Lord

*“O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
because His mercy endureth forever!”*

Psalm 118:1

By the world's standards, this country of ours is one of the most affluent if not the richest land on the face of the earth. For, in spite of pockets of extreme poverty here and there—in the backwoods of Appalachia, in areas of the deep south, and in the blighted neighborhoods of our “inner cities”— and aside from the ravages of underemployment, unemployment, foreclosures, and homelessness which have beset so many people in the devastating recession following 2008 and in our “flat,” slow-growth economy—the average American today **has** and **earns more** *per capita* than his counterpart anywhere else in the world. And that's taking into full consideration the relative cost of living in different places. All one has to do is watch the news on television, or some “special” about so-called “third world” countries, or an appeal from social relief agencies like “Feed the Children” to be struck with the **great bounty** that we enjoy as Americans compared with other people!

And yet, the word “thanks” has almost disappeared from our everyday vocabulary! Kids nowadays are seldom trained by their parents anymore to say “Thank-you” to people who give them something or do them a favor! Indeed, many regard their standard of living with all its comforts, amenities, and luxuries as a sort of “right” to which they are entitled as Americans, for which they owe no thanks to anyone but **themselves** for their hard work, diligence, and perseverance (Cf. Deuteronomy 8:17)! And they don’t hesitate to add concerning the less fortunate here in this world that such people “have only themselves to blame.”

Even we Christians have nothing to boast of concerning our exemplary gratitude to the Lord for His blessings. For our old sinful flesh is just as ungrateful as that of the worldlings round about us, so that we need to be reminded over and again by God Himself in His Word of how much we owe Him for His grace and mercy to us poor, undeserving sinners, yea, for ALL His benefits both temporal and spiritual! And that is precisely why the Lord’s Psalmist exhorts us in this well-known table prayer which serves as the title-text of our article:

“O Give Thanks unto the Lord!”...

not only for His **benevolent providence** of us and of all His creatures, but especially for His **enduring mercy** to us poor sinners in Christ Jesus, our Savior!

Indeed, as we look about us and behold the world in which we live and the wonders of creation brought forth in the beginning by God Himself using only the power of His almighty Word, we must confess with the Psalmist: “*O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all! The earth is full of Thy riches!*” (104:24). The very existence of the world and universe “*declares the glory of God*” and His unspeakable “*handiwork*,” the Bible tells us (Psalm 19:1). Before man’s fall into sin, that terrible act of disobedience by which all of God’s creation became blighted and ruined, “*God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good*” (Genesis 1:31), incapable of improvement; for it had been fashioned by Him who is the epitome of goodness, God Himself. Consequently, when we behold His wonders, which today bear the weaknesses, scars, and imperfections which sin brought upon them, they still appear marvelous in our eyes —far too complex to have come about by pure chance, as the evolutionists claim —far beyond the ability of man to produce even in cheap imitation of God’s creation! And we “*stand in awe of Him*” (Psalm 33:8) as we peer into outer space with electron and satellite-mounted telescopes, as

we stand on the rim of the Grand Canyon, as we fly at 600 miles per hour over and through magnificent cloud formations, and as we watch by means of microphotography the development of a tiny baby in the womb of its mother! Yes, the creation of our own body cries out and demands that we render due thanksgiving to God for His goodness, so that we declare with David: “*I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made! Marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well!*” (Psalm 139:14) — “***O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good!***”

But the evidence of God’s goodness is not limited to His creation. For the world is not just “coasting along” on its own, re-creating itself, maintaining itself in its so-called “balance of nature,” nor yet providing for itself as a self-sustaining entity. No, that too is the **Lord’s** doing, who not only created all things but, the Bible says, also “*uphold[s] all things by the Word of His power*” (Hebrews 1:3). In His benevolent providence of us and of all His creatures, God further demonstrates His **goodness** in the way He “*preserves man and beast*” (Psalm 33:6) by “*giving them their meat in due season*” (Psalm 145:15), satisfying their needs, even clothing them and giving them shelter. And this He does **very especially** for US, who “*are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:26), for **US** whose “*heavenly Father,*” Jesus says, “*knoweth that [we] have need of all these things*” (Matthew 6:32). What things?? We confess with Luther “that He richly and daily provides [us] with **all that [we] need** to support this body and life” (*First Article*).

Moreover, in His Kingdom of Power, our “*good*” Lord also rules and governs all things to His own glory, for the welfare and safety of His creatures great and small, and particularly in the interest of His believing children. Accordingly, “He defends [us] against all danger and guards and protects [us] from all evil” (Luther, *First Article*), so that we can and should confidently “*cast all [our] care upon Him,*” who careth for us, Peter reminds us (I Peter 5:7). And “all this” our Lord does for us “purely out of fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in [us]” (Luther, *op. cit.*).

This **benevolent providence** is then the FIRST reason for which the Lord’s Psalmist exhorts us: “*O give **thanks** unto the Lord!*” Don’t just take all these temporal blessings for granted, as if they are “coming to you” as some sort of natural right; —they’re NOT! They are the **gifts** of the Lord’s **goodness and mercy** to us and to all creatures, “for all

which it is [our] DUTY (as grateful recipients of these gifts) to **thank** and **praise**, to **serve** and **obey** Him” (Luther, *op. cit.*). —**Ingratitude**, on the other hand, is a grievous sin and shame before God, born of selfishness, greed, and sinful pride which boasts, “**My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth!**” (Deuteronomy 8:17). It is the boast of those who “*forget God,*” the Bible tells us, who “*walk after other gods and serve them and worship them*” (v. 19) —**idols** such as Mammon and one’s Self, the love of which in the religion of Materialism ends up drowning men in destruction and perdition (I Timothy 6:9)! “*O give thanks unto the Lord,*” your all-wise, almighty, and benevolent God, “*for He [alone] is [truly] good!*”

But that is surely not the only reason for which we should render Him our thanks. The very **BEST** and **MOST IMPORTANT reason** follows in this prayer, as the Psalmist declares, “*because His mercy endureth forever.*” The context of the entire 118th Psalm shows without a doubt that the “*mercy*” of which David speaks by inspiration of the Holy Ghost is not merely God’s benevolence (or kindness) to all men, to all His creatures, in His divine providence; but this is a special “*mercy,*” the Lord’s “*enduring mercy*” to poor sinners for Christ’s sake! For this is the mercy according to which He gives us not only temporal gifts (as to His dear children by faith in Jesus), but the spiritual gifts by which He made us His children in the first place by bringing us to saving faith, makes us live as His children here in this world, and keeps us His grateful children unto our earthly end, when He shall ADD the gift of eternal life — purchased and won by His only-begotten Son — in **fulfillment** of His merciful commitment to those who “*endure unto the end.*”

Why should we Christians give thanks unto the Lord? Oh, it is because these **spiritual gifts**, above all other gifts, are the result of His **enduring mercy** and grace to us poor undeserving sinners in Christ Jesus, our Savior. Justifying grace, the **chief** gift from which all other spiritual gifts flow, is not an absolute gift out of God’s *sovereign will* (as are His providential gifts in the Kingdom of Power, which all men and even the animals receive from His hand); but His **grace** is bestowed upon the sinner only for Christ’s sake, —because of the fact that Jesus, by His *vicarious satisfaction*, paid the price of our redemption required by God’s justice, kept God’s Law in our place, and bore the punishment that we deserve because of our sins, so that now God can be merciful to us —kind to us wretched, undeserving sinners— *for Jesus’ sake* forgiving us all our iniquities!

That is the **foremost** gift of all, to which the Apostle Paul refers in II Corinthians 9:15, where he says: “*Thanks be unto God for His **unspeakable Gift!***” It is the gift which is bestowed by God’s grace alone, the gift that we receive by faith alone—faith in the merits of Christ, totally apart from any work or worthiness of our own; and it is that gift from which all other spiritual gifts flow our way! Without that gift of the Lord’s **enduring mercy** in Christ Jesus, all His other gifts would be of temporary value only, here in this life; “*for what is a man profited,*” Jesus asks us, “*if he shall gain the **whole world** [full of temporal benefits] and lose his own **soul**? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his **soul**??” (Matthew 16:26).*

We Christians have the **most** to be thankful for of all creatures on the face of the earth. For “[*we*] know the **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 8:9); **we** have the **Means** of His **Grace**, the precious Gospel and the Sacraments, through which that grace is both announced and conveyed to us; **we** have the gift of His **Holy Spirit**, who works through those Means of Grace in our hearts, who called us to faith in Jesus, enlightened us with His spiritual gifts, sanctified our lives to be conformed to His will and dedicated to His service, and still preserves us in the true and saving faith by Jesus’ Word, in which we are to “*continue*” with all diligence if we are to remain “[*His*] disciples indeed” (John 8:31). —**We** have the **most** to be thankful for, “*because His mercy endureth forever,*” even to **us** who have often rewarded His mercy with ingratitude and indifference, with lukewarm affection for His Word and Sacrament, and lives in which we have all too often served ourselves and had to be reminded, prodded, and provoked to lift a finger in His service! It is indeed of **His enduring mercy** that we have not been consumed by His wrath, that His compassions have not failed us, and that He still extends to us His mercy and grace in the pure teachings of His precious Word!

So what are we going to **do** about it? “*Shall we continue in sin,*” in **ingratitude**, in **disregard** of our spiritual blessings, “*that [His] grace may abound?? **God forbid!***” writes the Apostle Paul in Romans 6, verses 1 and 2. “*How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?*” What shall we **do** then? “***O GIVE THANKS unto the Lord, for He is good; because His mercy endureth forever!***” And let us make sure, by God’s grace, that our thanksgiving is not merely the expression of our mouth, but the heartfelt expression of our heart and soul, as we speak to ourselves (Ephesians 5:19) the exhortation of the Psalmist: “*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who for-*

giveth all thine iniquities” (Psalm 103:2-3) as the foremost of His blessings! And let us then put our **actions** where our **mouths** are, and ever more gratefully, ever more diligently day-by-day, gladly hear, gladly learn, gladly meditate upon, and gladly keep His precious Word, the “delivery-wagon” (Luther calls it) in which He conveys all these unspeakable blessings to us; until by His grace we enter His eternal home and kingdom above and render Him at last the **perfect** thanksgiving that His mercy **deserves**, to the everlasting glory of His grace in Jesus Christ, our Savior!

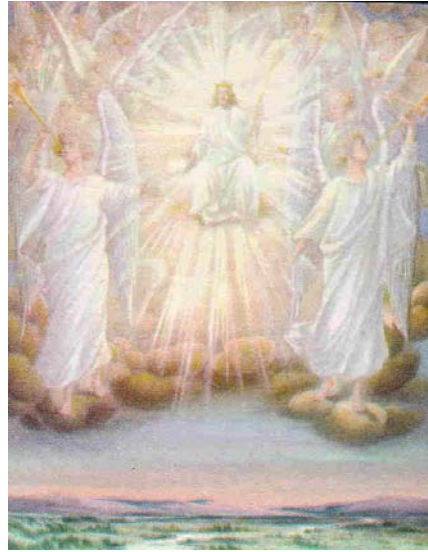
***Then shall thanks and praise ascending
for Thy mercies without ending
rise to Thee, O Savior blest!
With Thy gracious aid defend us;
let Thy saving Word attend us;
bring us to Thy home of rest!***

(TLH 282, 4, adapted)

— D. T. M.



Why We Christians Joyfully Anticipate Christ's Second Advent



“When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” — Luke 21:28

According to the liturgical Church calendar, the last four Sundays before Christmas make up the holy Advent season. This word “advent” comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means “coming,” or “arrival.” Thus, the Advent season is that time period of the liturgical church year that is specially set aside for us to meditate, or focus, on the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to the various sections of Scripture selected in the historic lection for the season of Advent, which set forth His various significant “arrivals” to His Church, we also learn about and focus on the Lord’s *second* visible advent (Luke 21:25-36), namely, His arrival on the Last Day “to judge the quick and the dead” (Apostles’ Creed). This final advent of our Lord Jesus Christ is one that is typically portrayed as a **fearful** and **terrifying** day – and rightly so. For, as the Bible clearly tells us, the Last Day will be a day of judgment *“when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, [and He shall] sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left”* (Matthew 25:31-33). It will be a day when *“God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ”* (Romans 2:16); when *“all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth: They that*

have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

This hardly seems like a day that anyone would look forward to, being aware of his own sinfulness, either from the natural knowledge of God’s wrath against sin (Romans 1:18ff.), or from the revealed knowledge of sin and all of its consequences found in the Lord’s holy Law (Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7ff.). It would stand to reason that *no one* would want to have all of his secret faults, all of his most embarrassing and heinous crimes, and all of the sinful deeds which he has tried so desperately to keep hidden and out of sight, displayed openly by the Lord from His holy record-books (Revelation 20:12). So, how is it, then, that we Christians are able to anticipate Christ’s second coming with *joy*? Why is it that we Christians, who by nature are sinners and malefactors, can look forward to that day with “*boldness*” (I John 4:17)? It is only because the Holy Scriptures set before our eyes the wondrous Gospel of God’s forgiveness of the world’s sins for Christ’s sake!

Even though we Christians know and sorrow over the fact that “[we] were by nature the children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3b), conceived and born in sin (Psalm 51:5) and abhor and lament the sins which we have committed because of our sinful flesh, the Gospel of Christ comforts us with the fact that for the sake of His vicarious satisfaction of divine justice, which He rendered to His heavenly Father on behalf and in the stead of us and all mankind, God “*reconcil[ed] the world unto Himself, not imputing (or charging) their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19). Because God charged the world’s sins to Christ (II Corinthians 5:21), who paid the penalty of our guilt by His *passive* obedience, He has “*cast all [our] sins behind [His]back*” and, according to His New Covenant, “*[remembers] them no more*” (Isaiah 38:17; Hebrews 10:17). Moreover, we no longer need to fear the Lord’s judgment on the Last Day because of our lack of the righteousness that He demands since the active obedience of Christ to **both** tables of the Law earned righteousness for every soul of man (Romans 5:19). That righteousness is personally put on our account by God when we confide in His mercy for Christ’s sake, “*faith [being] counted for righteousness*” (Romans 4:5), so that we are regarded by God as if we had perfectly “*fulfilled the Law*” (Romans 13:8). The Apostle writes in Romans 8, “*For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*” (Romans 8:3-4).

As the Lord's grateful people, we look forward to His second coming with joy because, as we read in Psalm 98, "*He cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity*" (v. 9); and we have confidence that in that day we will "*be found in Him, not having [our own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith]*" (Philippians 3:9).

Let us look at some of the imagery which the Holy Scriptures use to set forth what the blessed relationship is between the Lord, "*the Righteous Judge*" (II Timothy 4:8) and His Church, namely, all true believers (Ephesians 2:19ff.), which the Holy Ghost has established by means of His precious Gospel. Holy Scripture sets forth the image, or metaphor, that Christ is the Lord of His household, and His people are His servants and stewards, waiting for the Lord to return to from His wedding (Luke 12:36). During His public ministry, when Jesus was visibly present with His disciples, they were glad because, as Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees, the Bridegroom was with them; and they had the advantage of learning about the Kingdom of God directly from Him (Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34). "*Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?*" the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus. He replied: "*Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is **with them?***" Then and there was **not** the time for "*fastings and prayers*" (cf. Luke 2:37), that is, for the outward manifestation of contrition and repentance in anticipation of the Messiah's coming, because Jesus, the Bridegroom, the Lord of His Church, was visibly with them.

Jesus went on to explain to the scribes and Pharisees that there would again be a time to *fast*, namely, when He would remove His local, visible presence from among them, ascending up to heaven to sit on the right hand of the Father in His exalted state. "*The days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days*" (Luke 5:35). Since "*fasting*" as an outward act is no longer required in the New Testament, neither "*sitting in sackcloth and ashes*" (Luke 10:13) as a visible sign of repentance, the Lord's reference to fasting is a metaphorical image for *genuine* contrition, repentance and looking forward in faith to Christ's second advent. [Compare in this connection another example of the Old Testament image of *rending one's clothes* as an outward sign of sorrow (Genesis 37:29, 34; 44:13; Numbers 14:6; Joshua 7:6; etc.) giving way to the genuine sorrow of the heart that is truly Godpleasing (Joel 2:13; Psalm 51:17)].

Now, when He is not *visibly* present among them (cf. John 16:16ff.), is the time when Christ's Church on earth is spiritually "*fasting*," as it were, in true contrition and repentance, and "*praying*" for the Lord's quick return (Revelation 22:20) in anticipation of His second visible advent. During this time, we Christians, as His servants and stewards, are charged with the stewardship of the Lord's vineyard, household, and goods, namely, the ministration of the means of Grace in His local congregations, so that His Church daily has the assurance of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, and the means whereby the Holy Ghost gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and preserves believers unto salvation (Luther's *Small Catechism*, Third Article). We, as His servants, are constantly looking forward with joy to the Last Day when Christ will return to receive his believing sheep and lambs unto Himself (Matthew 25:34), always to be visibly present with His Church forevermore in the glory of heaven (Revelation 21:3). While we, as Christ's Church await the second coming of our Bridegroom, we are reminded from the Scriptures concerning all of the joy and blessings that the Lord will bring with Him. "*Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them...Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when He cometh shall find so doing*" (Luke 12:37, 43). In this way, we Christians can joyfully anticipate Christ's second coming.

In order to set forth the blessed relationship between the Lord and His people, Holy Scripture *also* uses imagery of Christ's Church as a militant force, fighting against sin (II Corinthians 10:4-5). True believers in Christ, as individuals, wage daily war against the devil (I Peter 5:8; Romans 16:20), the world (John 15:19; I John 2:15), and their flesh (Galatians 5:16-17; Romans 7:23). And, in addition, Christ's visible churches on earth wage spiritual warfare against all false teachers, churches and organizations which hold to and promote false teachings (II Corinthians 10:3-6; Titus 1:9-11; I Timothy 6:3-5).

This spiritual warfare conducted on the part of Christ's Church is in no respect easy, for it takes a significant toll on all who fight. The flesh of the Christian makes him weak at times and tired of fighting, wondering when the Lord will come again to relieve him from this constant fighting (Luke 18:7-8; Psalm 6:3; Psalm 73:2-3, 17). If it were not for the unfailing grace of God, all of us, as Christian soldiers, would fall down on the field of battle and yield to our sinful flesh, becoming conformed to the image of this world and devoured by Satan, the roaring lion (I

Peter 5:8). But the Lord has provided refreshment for His soldiers, whereby they are sustained and uplifted by the promises of Christ's gracious Gospel and Sacraments, through which the Holy Ghost works to strengthen them in their faith and to cause them to lead a holy life to the praise of His grace (Psalm 1:3; Isaiah 40:31; 55:11). Thus, only with His help and strength, taking to ourselves "*the whole armor of God,*" we are "*able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*" (Ephesians 6:13)

While fighting on the spiritual battlefield, we Christians look forward to Christ's second coming with joy because, on the Last Day, Christ and His heavenly hosts will appear to end the battle once and for all. While His Church militant anticipates the second coming of the "*Lord of Hosts*" (Psalm 46), who "*maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth,*" it is reminded from the Scriptures concerning all of the respite which the Lord graciously gives to those who have faithfully fought, and the reward of grace for their triumph, namely, the "*crown of life*" and "*glory*" that will never fade away (Revelation 14:13; 2:10; James 1:12; I Peter 5:4).

Therefore, as we Christians look forward to our Lord's second visible advent, let us continue to anticipate it with joy, and not with fear of judgment. Let us thank our Lord Jesus Christ, who, at His first visible advent "*bare our sins in His own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes [we] were healed*" (I Peter 2:24), and who, on the Last Day, will "*appear the second time without sin unto salvation*" to all them that look for Him (Hebrews 9:28). By faith in His perfect propitiation for our sins, "*and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:2), and the reconciliation which God granted to the whole world for His sake (II Corinthians 5:19), we stand before God forgiven of our many sins and are regarded as righteous and holy in His sight, so that we can confidently pray with the hymn-writer:

Our Hope and Expectation, O Jesus, now appear!
Arise, Desire of nations, o'er this benighted sphere!
With heart and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption, that brings us unto Thee.

(TLH 72, 4)

— D. P. M. (submitted through his pastor)



Christ

“The Lord, Our Righteousness”

“This is His name whereby He shall be called, ‘The Lord, Our Righteousness.’”

—Jeremiah 23:6

The messianic prophecies of the Old Testament provided immense comfort and hope for the penitent sinners of that time who clung in faith to the promises of God’s grace in the coming Savior. Sometimes that comfort was contained in the very names, or titles, given to the Messiah in those prophecies. Consider Isaiah 9:6, where the promised Messiah is named the *“Prince of Peace;”* or Isaiah 7:4, where He is called *“Immanuel,”* which means *“God with us”* (Matthew 1:23). Similarly, in Jeremiah 23:6 we find a most comforting title given to the promised Savior, namely, *“The Lord Our Righteousness.”* For us to have true *righteousness*—holiness, sinlessness—is absolutely crucial if we are to have a favorable relationship with the Lord, of whom it is said in the inspired Scriptures: *“Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with Thee. The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight; Thou hatest all workers of iniquity”* (Psalm 5:4–5). And since the Bible also declares, *“There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:22–23), how can anyone hope to stand in God’s holy sight? On the basis of his own inherent righteousness (of which he has none), no man can stand before Him (Psalm 143:2; Galatians 3:11). Nevertheless, there is hope for us sinful creatures through Him whose name is *“The Lord, Our Righteousness.”*

The only human being ever to be born into this world without having any sin at all is the God-Man, Jesus Christ. According to His *divine nature*, Jesus is righteous in His very essence, because that is what God is. *“Righteous art Thou, O Lord; and upright are Thy judgments”* (Psalm 119:137). *“The Lord is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works”* (Psalm 145:17). But also according to His *human nature*, Jesus was completely righteous even from the time of His conception. Referring to the Child to be born of the virgin Mary, Gabriel said: *“That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be*

called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Not only was Jesus kept pure from every stain of original sin in His mother’s womb, but throughout His earthly life He successfully resisted every temptation of the devil. As a true man, Christ “*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15). Consistently acting, speaking, and thinking in perfect compliance to the whole Law of God every second of His life, Jesus “*did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*” (I Peter 2:22). Very appropriately, therefore, the Apostle John refers to Him as: “*Jesus Christ the righteous*” (I John 2:1). Thus the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, was and is completely *righteous* in Himself —not having any original sin, nor ever committing any actual sins.

But the title given Him in Jeremiah 23:6 is *not* “The Righteous Lord,” or “The Lord who Epitomizes Righteousness,” or “The Lord who Abounds in Righteousness,” but rather: “*The Lord, Our Righteousness.*” What then explains *that* title? It is explained by the glorious teaching of the Gospel that *Christ’s righteousness is credited to us*, because His redemptive work was accomplished on our behalf and was accepted by God for *our righteousness* (II Corinthians 5:21). The purpose for which the Son of God was born into this world as a true human being was to redeem the whole world as the Substitute for every sinner under the Law of God. “*When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*” (Galatians 4:4–5). Thus in order to redeem all people from their sins, Christ willingly took the place of sinful mankind under the requirements and punishments of God’s holy Law. By His *active obedience*, He kept all of God’s commandments perfectly, not for Himself, but for the entire human race. By His *passive obedience*, He suffered the punishment of hell on the cross, not for His own transgressions (since He had none), but for the sins of the world, which were laid upon Him. “*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. ... And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53:5–6). The result of this universal and vicarious atonement is that God has established peace between Himself and the whole world through the forgiveness of their sins (objective justification). “*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19).

Because Jesus perfectly fulfilled God’s Law in the place of *all people*, His righteousness is imputed to *all*. The entire multitude of mankind was made, is made, and will continue until the end of the earth to be

“made righteous” in the sight of God on account of Christ Jesus’ perfect obedience to the holy Law of the Lord as man’s Substitute. *“As by the offence of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience [the] many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall [the] many be made righteous”* (Romans 5:18–19). Just as the sinless Christ was reckoned by God to be a sinner—having imputed to Him our guilt—so also we sinners are reckoned by God to be righteous—having imputed to us Christ’s righteousness. *“He [God the Father] hath made Him [God the Son, Christ Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* (II Corinthians 5:21).

Sadly, even though this righteousness has been earned for all mankind (*universal atonement*), even though it has been given to and bestowed upon all people in the heart of God (*objective justification*), and even though it is rightly proclaimed in the glorious Gospel (*“the Word of reconciliation,”* II Corinthians 5:19b) as comfort to all those who are troubled in their minds on account of their sins, yet all people by nature regard the Gospel of Christ to be *“foolishness”* (I Corinthians 2:14), reject in unbelief the righteousness of Christ, and, therefore, do not receive His righteousness. And while the vast majority of people persist in that condition until their death and eternal destruction (I Corinthians 1:18; Matthew 7:13–14), thankfully in some, through the very message of God’s grace in Christ Jesus, the Holy Ghost changes the stubborn unbelieving heart into one that rejoices and confides in the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer. It is through that faith alone, without any merit or worthiness in the individual sinner, that a man is declared righteous by the Lord—receiving Christ’s righteousness by faith. *“A man is justified [declared righteous] by faith without the deeds of the Law”* (Romans 3:28). *“Whosoever believeth in [Christ] shall receive remission of sins”* (Acts 10:43).

Though we Christians have been given a New Man, which *“is created in righteousness and true holiness”* (Ephesians 4:24), and have thus been designed for the performance of good works (Ephesians 2:10), yet, apart from the righteousness of Christ, *“all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”* (Isaiah 64:6), because our best works are still always marred by the sin that is continually active in our Old Adam, in our sinful flesh. Consequently, St. Paul describes his own condition in this way: *“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;*

for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am!” (Romans 7:18–24). Far from bringing us God’s declaration of righteousness, our sin-corrupted works could only bring this one verdict: Guilty of transgressions exceeding human calculation and worthy of eternal condemnation in hell. Indeed, because the holy Law of God demands of us absolute perfection (Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:48; James 2:10; Galatians 3:10), we cannot possibly have true righteousness before God based on our own imperfect works and efforts. “*If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin*” (Galatians 3:21–22).

The only way we can have true righteousness before God is to have *foreign* righteousness (the righteousness of *another*) **imputed**, or credited, to us. Praise be to our gracious God that Christ Jesus, the Lord, is “*our righteousness.*” His righteousness is imputed to us, and thus *we are declared righteous for His sake.* This glorious teaching of Holy Scripture provides the greatest comfort to us in our anguish over the numerous sins we commit each day in thoughts, words, and deeds, because it assures us that, though we have broken God’s Commandments more times than we can know, Christ is “*The Lord, Our Righteousness.*” All our guilt is covered and canceled by His righteousness. Because we receive His righteousness by faith, and because of the intimate connection between the Lord Jesus and all true believers, His Church in Jeremiah 33:16 is given the exact same title that is ascribed to Christ Himself in Jeremiah 23:6, namely, “*The Lord, Our Righteousness.*”

It was absolutely crucial for the accomplishment of this plan of grace—for the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to us—that our Redeemer be both true God and true man in one undivided and indivisible person. In order for Him to be our substitute under the Law of God, it was necessary that the Messiah be a *true human being* (Galatians 4:4–5; Hebrews 2:14); and in order for His perfect obedience under the requirements and curse of God’s Law to be of sufficient value to cancel the guilt of the entire world of sinners, it was necessary that He be *true*

God (Psalm 49:7–8; Romans 5:18–19; I John 1:7). Thus at Christmas time we have as our special focus of meditation the miracle that made our redemption, justification, and salvation possible, the *without-controversy-great mystery of Godliness* (I Timothy 3:16), the miracle of God becoming man (incarnate) so that we could become the recipients of His imputed righteousness! The prophecy of Jeremiah 23:6 certainly gave much comfort to the Old Testament believers as they looked forward in faith to the birth of the promised Messiah; and this verse still fills us Christians today with the greatest joy in the celebration of the birth of Him who is “*the Lord, our righteousness!*”

Thy cross, not mine, O Christ,
has borne the awful load
of sins that none could bear
but the incarnate God.
To whom save Thee, who canst alone
for sin atone, Lord, shall I flee?

Thy righteousness, O Christ,
alone can cover me;
no righteousness avails
save that which is of Thee.
To whom save Thee, who canst alone
for sin atone, Lord, shall I flee?

(TLH 380, vv. 3, 5)

—P. E. B.





Our Christian Resolve for the New Year

*“...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth
unto those things which are before...” —Philippians 3:13*

As we look back on the year 2013, each of us, according to the New Man within us, will humbly confess to God with Jacob of old: *“I am not worthy of the **least** of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant!”* (Genesis 32:10). For, in spite of our many sins and shortcomings by which we transgressed His holy Law and earned for ourselves His righteous wrath and displeasure, God in His mercy for Jesus’ our Savior’s sake never failed to open His gracious hand to us anew every morning with innumerable blessings both temporal and spiritual. And yet, because of our sinful flesh, even we, who are His adopted children by faith in His Son, returned Him evil for good at every turn: Neglect for His faithfulness, indifference for His grace, and ingratitude for His bountiful goodness! As we review that miserable track record, we penitently thank God, that where our sin abounded, His grace to us much more abounded (Romans 5:20), so that, as we cling alone to Jesus’ perfect merits as our Substitute under the Law, we have the Lord’s own assurance that our sins have been forgiven and that all our filthiness is covered by our Savior’s righteousness.

Moreover, as we look ahead to the new year before us, *“the love of Christ [constrains] us”* (II Corinthians 5:14a) with the help of His Holy

Spirit to want to amend our sinful life and, out of gratitude for His grace, to live ever better “*unto Him which died for [us] and rose again*” (v. 15). This sincere desire on our part is NOT, however, what worldly people commonly refer to as a “New Year’s resolution;” for the best-intentioned resolutions of unbelievers to “straighten out their lives,” “get their act together,” and “get right with God” are doomed to failure from the outset! Why?? Because “*they that are in the flesh cannot please God,*” the Bible tells us (Romans 8:8), and “*without faith it is impossible to please Him*” (Hebrews 11:6). Not only is their immediate future here in this world headed for disappointment, regret, and even despair, but their real, long-term future after this present life is over will be one of everlasting shame, contempt and punishment in hell!

For us Christians, however, even short-term resolves have their proper place, PROVIDED they express our earnest intention, with the aid of God’s Holy Spirit, to bring forth “*fruits meet for repentance*” in our lives as fruit and evidence of our faith to the glory of God’s grace. For such short-term resolutions stem from our first and foremost concern—concern for our **eternal** welfare. And, in the title-text of our article, the Apostle Paul addresses that long-term concern and the resolve that flows from it, not only at the turn of the year, but every day of our lives, namely, our resolve as Christians to strive onward to our *heavenly* goal. We carry out that Godpleasing resolve or “resolution,” Paul says, by “*forgetting those things which are behind*” and by “*reaching forth unto those things which are before.*”

The Scriptures, both in these (cf. especially v. 14) and other God-inspired remarks of St. Paul (cf. I Corinthians 9:24-27) and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (12:1-3; 12-13), liken our lives as Christians to a marathon race, an endurance race, which we must finish in order to obtain the prize (cf. Matthew 24:13). Moreover, we recognize that **our sins** of the past and even of the present, the sins which so easily beset us (Hebrews 12:1b), have **held us back** like weighted shoes in our race for the heavenly prize that awaits us. Our sins of commission, whereby we have *done* that which in His holy Law our God *forbids*, and our sins of omission, whereby we have *neglected to do* those things which He *requires* of us—ALL these manifold transgressions are the product of our **old sinful flesh** which clings to us like an albatross and “*wars against*” our New Man of faith (I Peter 2:11), seeking to bring him down! Thus Paul says of himself in Romans chapter 7: “*The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. ... O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!?*”

Furthermore, our progress in sanctification of life, our steady headway in “*the race that is set before us*” (Hebrews 12:1), has been severely hurt and hampered by **lack of spiritual growth**. Just as a marathon runner nourishes his body with proper food and then exercises it regularly to tone it up for the rigors of competition, so we Christians are to take care to nourish and exercise our **souls** for our *spiritual* race and for our ongoing battle against the devil, the world, and our flesh, all of whom in wicked consort seek constantly to trip us up along the way and to rob us of our prize! With Paul we freely admit that our spiritual conditioning is *far from perfect*, that we are far from being ideally fit-for-survival in this life-and-death struggle! For we have not permitted the Lord’s Word to *dwell in us* as *richly* as we should have (Colossians 3:16a), having often relegated it to some secondary place on our list of life’s priorities; and we have not *grown* as we could have *in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior*, as the Apostle Peter exhorts us to do (II Peter 3:18). And so our Christian life and conduct show weaknesses and gaps and scars which prevent us from *walking in the Spirit* as we should (Galatians 5:16), from *bringing forth abundantly the fruit* that we should (John 15:5, etc.), and from letting our light of faith *shine before men* as we should (Matthew 5:16), as a tribute and beacon to the glory of our gracious God.

“*Not as though I...were already **perfect**,*” says Paul in verse 12 just before our title-text. There is almost nothing as dangerous in athletic competition as over-confidence, or, as in the case of our *Christian* race, self-confidence and pride. And yet our flesh loves to vaunt itself and ascribe to itself strength of faith, unshakable steadfastness, superior knowledge, yea, even imagined perfection! And so we desperately need to hear the warning voice of our spiritual “Coach,” the Lord Himself, through His Apostle Paul, saying: “*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he **fall!***” (I Corinthians 10:12). And Paul writes to the Galatians, chapter six, stating what should be obvious: “*If a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*”

Now all these things that in the past have hindered our growth in sanctification, have held us back like weighted shoes in our Christian race “*for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (v. 14)—our many sins and shortcomings first of all, then our lack of spiritual growth, and finally our fleshly over-confidence in our personal steadfastness— ALL these things we are to “*forget*,” Paul says in our title-text. Just how can we do that? How can we truly “*forget those things*”

which are **behind**”? Only because God in heaven, for Jesus’ sake, has Himself already **forgiven them** and has “cast [them] into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19). Yes, the Lord has put all our sins behind **His** back (Isaiah 38:17), having both **forgiven** and **forgotten them**; for He assures us through the Prophet Jeremiah: “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (31:34; cf. Hebrews 8:12). And the Apostle Paul, as the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, urges **us** to do likewise, leaving us his own example; for he writes in our title-text: “Brethren, I count not myself to have **apprehended** [that is, **laid hold** on the prize], but this one thing I do: Forgetting those things which are behind...” May God by His Holy Spirit, because of His perfect forgiveness of all our sins of the past, enable us to put them now behind us by SINCERE **REPENTANCE**, surely not just sweeping them “under the rug,” as if they had been “no big deal” in the first place, but throwing them off (Romans 13:12) as useless “dead weight” which we abhor and want to be rid of, so that we can continue our Christian race unhindered (cf. Hebrews 12:1)!

But now St. Paul points out that merely “forgetting” the sins of the past is not sufficient for the attainment of the prize. We ought ever to be “**reaching forth** unto those things which are **before**,” he tells us. “I follow after,” he writes, “if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus” (v. 12). That word “apprehend” means simply to “grab hold of” something. As we run our Christian race, so that we may one day *lay our hands on* the prize of our **salvation** (for which purpose the Lord Jesus *laid His precious hands on us* and snatched us from the very jaws of Satan and from everlasting death), we are to “follow after,” that is, we are compelled by His great love, in true faith, to follow in Jesus’ steps on the road to heaven. Now, as we noted before, we can never achieve perfection in this endeavor, even though the Lord requires it of us, saying, “Be ye therefore perfect!” But that is certainly no excuse for falling short of the mark! On the contrary, we are to “follow after” as does a little child who tags along behind his father through drifts of snow. His little feet on his short legs cannot possibly match his father’s stride, and he often stumbles and falls; but, if he is not to be left behind, he must continue to strive on and on, after being set back on his feet by his dear daddy, to fit his little boots into the footprints ahead of him. “For even hereunto were ye called,” writes Peter in his first Epistle, “because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps” (2:21).

And that “following after” is no easy task. It takes fervent, zealous effort on the Christian’s part, by God’s enabling grace alone, to take up our crosses, whatever they may be, and to follow our Lord Jesus, to achieve real progress, real steps forward in sanctification. As we, therefore, “*reach forth*,” stretch forward as a runner does when nearing the finish line in a race, we dare never forget who it is that enables us so to run; for the Bible tells us: “*It is GOD which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13). Let us, therefore, make it our constant prayer that the Lord grant us a rich measure of His grace to continue our race without faltering, “*reaching forth unto those things which are before*,” those promised blessings which still lie ahead for us as Christians, not becoming “*weary in well-doing*,” (Galatians 6:9a) but rather “*abounding more and more in all knowledge and in all judgment*” (Philippians 1:9) based on His precious Word alone, and abounding also in love and good works toward our Lord, His precious Church, and one another; “*for in due season*,” writes the Apostle, “*we shall reap, if we faint not*” (Galatians 6:9b).

“*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*,” Paul tells us. We must sprint onward, unrelenting, toward the finish-line that is even now before our very eyes; for the prize is already held out to us, having been purchased and won for us by our dear Savior, our Redeemer, our Champion, our Hero, and our faithful Coach. Earthly runners press on to obtain a “*corruptible crown*,” Paul writes to the Corinthians (I, 9:25), a mere wreath or garland of olive leaves (the customary reward in those days); and that victor’s wreath soon dried up and crumbled away, leaving only memories of the prize. But **OUR prize**, laid up for us in the heavens, is incorruptible, “*a crown of glory that fadeth not away*” (I Peter 5:4). —And even though we must “*follow after*,” “*press toward the mark*,” and “*reach forth unto those things which are before*” with conscious effort and zealous work, nevertheless (unlike earthly prizes which are earned in competition), that “*crown of life*” is a reward of God’s PURE GRACE in Christ Jesus, which we merely “*apprehend*” or lay hold on **by faith** in our Savior. Boasting and pride are excluded when we “*finally overcome and obtain the victory*” (Luther, *Sixth Petition*); for our victory is really the victory of **Jesus**, “*who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” And the Lord Jesus Himself, speaking through the Apostle John in the Book of the Revelation, adds concerning our own sharing of His glory as “*the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus:*” “*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My*

throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne” (Revelation 3:21).

Oh, what a **prize**, what a **goal**, beloved of the Lord! There can be no higher reward! This is the glorious future that awaits us by God’s wondrous grace in Christ Jesus—not a future of uncertainty and doubt, not a future of failure and despair (such as the children of this world have to face each and every day of their lives in spite of their “New Year’s resolutions”)! And as we now get a “fresh start,” as it were, in our **race** as Christians, spurred on by the exhortations of God’s Holy Word, let us remember our resolve, our Christian “resolution” for the New Year of 2014, namely, by His grace to **strive onward to our heavenly goal**, by “*forgetting those things which are **behind**,*” and by “*reaching forth unto those things which are **before**.*” Yea, “*let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us; and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto **Jesus**, the Author and Finisher of our faith!” (Hebrews 12:1-2).*

Thus the Lord, our gracious God, grants to each and every one of us the happy, yea, the unspeakably joyful anticipation of His **abiding blessings**, “*not by works of righteousness which **WE** have done, but according to **His mercy**” (Titus 3:5) which endureth forever in and through His Son, so that, **by confidence in His merits alone**, we may “*apprehend*” or lay hold on the precious “*prize*” of **salvation by grace**, both in the New Year and in all eternity, for His blessed Name’s sake!*

— D. T. M.

Sorry...

...that our November—December issue appeared so late this year. All of our articles are written by the pastors of our Conference, and occasionally local circumstances arise which prevent them from devoting time to matters of lesser priority than the work given to them by the Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28). Happily such conflicts do not occur frequently, and we appreciate our readers’ understanding and patience in bearing with an occasional glitch in our publishing schedule.

—Ed.



And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

—Luke 2:8-11

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

E-Mail: njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk



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www.concordialutheranconf.com

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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

E-mail: david.redlin@q.com

On the Web at:

GoodShepherdLutheran.info

Telephone (520) 721-7618

Pastor: (520) 721-7618

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171st Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

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

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

On the Web at:

PeaceEvLutheran.com

Telephone: (708) 532-4288

Pastor: (708) 532-9035

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:00 a.m.

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

Telephone: (541) 258-2941

Pastor: (541) 258-2941

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178

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

E-mail: revworley@comcast.net

On the Web at:

StLukes-CLC.com

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

Pastor: (206) 723-7418

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

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 60452-4913

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

On the Web at:

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Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Pastor: (708) 532-9035

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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

E-mail: robertjlietz@yahoo.com

On the Web at:

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Telephone: (708) 386-6773

Pastor: (708) 386-4145

Righteousness

The only way we can have true righteousness before God is to have *foreign* righteousness (the righteousness of *another*) **imputed**, or credited, to us. Praise be to our gracious God that Christ Jesus, the Lord, is “*our righteousness*.” His righteousness is imputed to us, and thus *we are declared righteous for His sake*. This glorious teaching of Holy Scripture provides the greatest comfort to us in our anguish over the numerous sins we commit each day in thoughts, words, and deeds, because it assures us that, though we have broken God’s Commandments more times than we can know, Christ is “*The Lord, Our Righteousness*.” All our guilt is covered and canceled by His righteousness. Because we receive His righteousness **by faith**, and because of the intimate connection between the Lord Jesus and all true believers, His Church in Jeremiah 33:16 is given the exact same title that is ascribed to Christ Himself in Jeremiah 23:6, namely, “*The Lord, Our Righteousness*.”

(Excerpt from *Christ— The Lord, Our Righteousness* article, p. 154)