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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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“The
Son of God
was manifested.”

—1 John 3:8





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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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Our Hopes for the New Year

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose....”

—Romans 8:28-30

For most people, “Happy New Year!” is a mere wish, a kind and friendly expression of hope that no calamity, no misfortune, no grave illness or sadness will befall one’s neighbor or loved one during the year ahead. Whether things will indeed **turn out** that way is an entirely different matter, as even the most optimistic well-wisher will readily admit. For it is simply not in his power to **deliver** on that wish! And, if asked what **will** determine a person’s happiness, success, health, and good life in the new year, the typical worldlying will shrug his shoulders or throw up his hands in want of a solid, reliable answer. “Life’s a crapshoot,” you hear people say. “You take what you get.” Another might venture the optimistic cliché: “Look on the **bright** side! Things could be a lot **worse!**” By and large, people regard life as a sort of **gamble**; and they plainly say so when they use such *negative* expressions as: “It’s just not in the stars!” “He was dealt a bad hand.” Or *positively*, “Just lucky, I guess!” or “The odds seem to be in my favor!”

Then, of course, there are those who **imagine** that they are actually *in control* of their *own* destiny — like the man whom Jesus called a “*fool*” in Luke 12, verse 20. They think that they will make their own “happy new year” through good investments, hard work, and “clean living;” and so they plan out their future on the basis of the “leading economic indicators,” actuarial tables, the amount of physical gold they have in their safes, and the performance of their investment portfolios! To **them**, reverses in life come as a complete shock, and any unforeseen change in their “game plan” throws their whole existence into chaos and despair! And they find to their dismay that they never really were “in control”!

People in both categories are in for a mighty “rocky” new year, simply because they have no way of knowing **for sure** what life will bring. They have **no assurance**, no **real hope**, nothing to give them true **peace of mind**, as the new year approaches... just **one big question mark** to haunt them from day to day!

We **Christians**, on the other hand, can be upbeat and confident as we enter upon the year 2016! Why? Oh, because we have **peace** of mind

and conscience, real **assurance** of happiness, and **freedom** from worry and anxiety! For the Apostle Paul shows us in our title-text that we Christians rest OUR hopes for the New Year upon our **gracious God** because of what He has **already done** for us and because of what He promises **yet to do** for us.

Paul begins with a statement of assurance and of certainty which has been gravely twisted and misapplied by the children of this world. He says: “*We know that all things work together for good.*” People paraphrase this passage every day —people who don’t have the slightest idea where it’s from or what it’s about, who have no interest in religion or the Bible or God for that matter— and they try to **comfort** one another by saying: “It’ll all turn out for the best, you’ll see.” Sadly, their comfort is as hollow as a dried-up gourd! For the blessed assurance here in our title-text, dear to the heart of every true Christian, is **limited** —not as to its scope, but as to its beneficiaries, as the words themselves clearly show. “*We know, we [Christians] know,*” says Paul, “*that all things work together for good to them that love God,*” NOT to them that hate Him, despise Him, think they can do just as well without Him, and feel quite frankly that they don’t need Him! Unbelievers can take no comfort from this passage whatsoever, for its assurance doesn’t apply to **them at all**! The Psalmist Asaph writes, for example, that even the *seemingly prosperous* among the wicked in this world have nothing to look forward to but “*slippery places, ...destruction, [and]... terrors!*” (Psalm 73:18-19). For **them**, it’ll all turn out for the WORST if they continue in their unbelief!

No, beloved brethren, the Lord’s Apostle very specifically **limits** the beneficiaries of this assurance to “*them that love God,*” to them, as we shall see, who rest their hope in confident faith upon what **God has already done for them** and who “*love [Him]*” because He loved them first (I John 4:19), namely, to His believing children, all true Christians.

Now, what has God **already done for us** which identifies **US** as the beneficiaries of this assurance for the new year ahead and throughout our lives? Paul summarizes all of it briefly in just a few words when He says that we Christians are “*the called according to His purpose.*” God’s **primary will** and “*purpose*” for sinful mankind is that “*all men be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4), for “*the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Peter 3:9). God’s earnest call goes out to **all men** in the Gospel of salvation. Sadly, however, many **refuse** His gra-

cious call, **spurn** His grace, and **reject** salvation, the Bible tells us, “*always* [persistently] *resist[ing] the Holy Ghost*,” and thus are lost by their own fault. Such people keep from themselves the blessings of salvation, as well as the assurance in our title-text that “*all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.*”

And now, the Apostle lists in chronological detail **what** the Lord has **already done for us** to make us the heirs of everlasting life and beneficiaries of the assurance upon which our hopes for the new year rest: He “*foreknew*” us, Paul says. God looked ahead from eternity, from “*before the foundation of the world*” (Ephesians 1:4), and **chose us to come to faith** (Acts 13:48b). He “*predestinated*” us “*to be conformed to the image of His Son*,” to “*put on Christ*” (Galatians 3:27), and thus to be “*brethren*” together with Christ, our Elder Brother, in the “*household of God*” (Ephesians 2:19) — NOT because He saw anything good in **us**, NOT because He foresaw **our faith** and knew that we wouldn’t resist His Holy Spirit the way others would —no, He did all this “*not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*” (II Timothy 1:9).

“*Moreover*,” Paul says, “*whom He did predestinate, them He also called*” —called to faith by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel; “*and whom He called, them He also justified*” —made them by faith the personal recipients of the forgiveness which He declared for all the world in Christ (II Corinthians 5:19); “*and whom He justified, them He also glorified.*” As the “*heirs of salvation*,” we are **already now**, as “*partaker[s] of Christ’s sufferings*” by faith in Him, destined to be partakers with Him “*when His glory shall be revealed*,” Peter tells us in his first epistle (4:13); we already **now** have a “*crown*” to which we must “*hold fast*,” lest we lose it (Revelation 2:10; 3:11); we already **now** have the “*hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:27), the **expectation** of having in its indescribable fulness that glory which is **even now** ours as the adopted children of our heavenly Father by faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior, having been “*prepared for [us]*,” Jesus says, “*from the foundation of the world*” (Matthew 25:34). No wonder Paul writes in the 18th verse of this same chapter that “*the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.*”

All this our gracious God and Lord has **already done for us in testimony** of His great **love** for us, as the basis for our **trust** in Him, as the

foundation upon which to rest our **hopes** for the New Year and for our entire future as His dear children! All this **confirms to us**, makes us “**KNOW**, that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”—“**ALL things**,” whether they appear to be good or bad in this present time, joyous or grievous, happy or sad—“**ALL things**” will be turned into **good** for us because of what our loving Father has **already done for us** and for our salvation!

“*What shall we then say to these things?*” What is the inescapable conclusion to which we must come, also in regard to those things which He promises **yet to do for us**? “*If God be for us,*” [and that fact is **obvious** from what the Apostle has already shown us here in Romans 8], “*who can be against us??*” (v. 31). With our almighty God and Lord fighting **for us**, in whom He has a special “vested interest,” what enemy, temporal or spiritual, would be so foolish as to *imagine* a victory over us as even a possibility?? Yea,

*Though devils **all the world** should fill,
all eager to **devour us**,
we tremble **not**, we fear **no ill**,
they shall **not** overpower us!*

For not only does the Lord Himself fight **for us**, but He makes **us** able to fight as well, to **resist the devil** steadfast in the faith, to **refuse** the enticements of worldly friends and acquaintances, to **do battle** with and daily **defeat** our own sinful flesh, to **turn a deaf ear** to false prophets and ear-tickling teachers of religion—all of this made possible for those who “*take unto [themselves] the whole armor of God*” (Ephesians 6:13) by faithful continuance in His Word. “*I will not fail thee nor forsake thee,*” He promises you, dear fellow-Christian (Joshua 1:5); and on that promise you can most assuredly rely as you march forward to meet the enemy as a soldier of the Savior’s cross, confident of victory!

But the Lord does not only promise to **defend** us against our **enemies** in the new year ahead and all through our life here in this world; He also promises to **provide** us with **everything we need**, blessings both temporal and spiritual, as the gifts of His precious grace. “*He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us **all things**?*” (v. 32). After having “invested” in us His only-begotten Son as the ransom-price for our redemption, don’t

think for one minute that the Lord would spare any *further cost* to secure that investment for eternity!! That simply wouldn't make any sense at all, Paul tells us! —No, our gracious God will “*freely*” for Jesus' sake “*give us all things*” **in addition to** what He has **already** given us, namely, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation; faith to accept and receive those treasures; and a renewed life of righteousness as the fruit and evidence of that saving faith.

What a promise to set our minds **at ease**, as we look ahead to the new year! For even with life's temporal uncertainties, we Christians have no cause whatever to whine and wring our hands in anxious care and worry, saying with those who have no heavenly Father: “*What shall we eat?*” or “*What shall we drink?*” or “*Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*” (*For after all these things do the Gentiles seek!*)... *But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,*” Jesus tells us, “*and all these things* [these “extras,” these minor “fringe benefits”] *shall be added unto you*” (Matthew 6:31-33). So, “*cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you*” (I Peter 5:7), careth **so much** that He “*spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all!*” (Romans 8:32).

“*Happy New Year!*” is no idle wish from one Christian to another. Rather, it is the expression of **firm conviction** that our gracious God and Lord will continue to shower down upon us in this coming year an **abundance** of blessings both temporal and spiritual, as He has in the past, and as He has promised to do in the future; that “*all things [will] work together for [our] good*” in accordance with His all-wise and gracious will for us; that He will mightily **defend us** from all our enemies of body and soul; and that He will generously and freely **provide us** with all that we need for our temporal and spiritual welfare here in this present life, until the glory unspeakable for which we have been *fore-known, predestinated, called, and justified* by His surpassing grace and favor is **ours** in its **fullness** in our heavenly home above!

As we thus **rest our hopes for the new year upon our gracious God and Lord** and confide in His sure promises, may each and every one of us have, in the fullest sense of the word, a truly **Happy and Blessed New Year**, for Jesus', our Savior's, sake!

— D. T. M.

Christ as the Savior — *Revealed* Information

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Law.”

—Deuteronomy 29:29

Certain things can be learned about God from His creation—the world and the universe around us. *“The invisible things of [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they [those “who suppress the truth,” v. 18] are without excuse”* (Romans 1:19–20). Man’s conscience also testifies to the existence of God—that the divine Judge expects certain moral behavior of His creatures; that He knows what all humans do; and that He will surely punish those that anger Him. The various religious observances of the heathen invented to honor or placate their false gods bear out these points (Acts 17:22–23; I Corinthians 10:20; Galatians 4:8). But apart from the *revealed knowledge of God found only in the Scriptures*, man remains completely ignorant about *who* the TRUE God is (namely, the Triune God), as well as the ONLY WAY TO SALVATION (namely, by faith in the vicarious atonement of Christ and the resulting justification of the world in and through Him).

Now those things that God has specifically chosen to reveal to us in the Bible, in His own verbally-inspired Word, are obviously important for us to know. *“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope”* (Romans 15:4). And yet the Bible does not answer every question about the Lord, His will, His works and ways, that might come into a person’s mind. A great many people have wasted a tremendous amount of time (often to the spiritual detriment of themselves and others) speculating about questions relating to God that are simply *not* answered in Scripture. Rather than doing *that*, the Lord bids us instead to focus upon what He *has* revealed to us. *“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which **are revealed** belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Law”* (Deuteronomy 29:29). Everything that God has determined to be important for us and for our children to know for our Christian faith and

life has been clearly revealed to us. And those things that He has chosen to keep *hidden* from us belong to *Him* and must remain outside our grasp. Acknowledging this point, we hold firmly to the principle of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), as championed by Luther; and we denounce all religious teachings that go beyond what the Lord has revealed in the Bible (Deuteronomy 12:32).

For as obvious as that point may be to us who treasure what the Lord has revealed to us in the Bible (Psalm 119:103–104, 127–128), the largest denomination in outward Christendom (the Roman Catholic Church) does *not* hold to it, but openly derides the principle of *Sola Scriptura*. In defense of their many teachings that have no basis in the Scriptures (many of which blatantly contradict the written Word of God), the Romanists appeal to the authority of what they refer to as *oral tradition*—the teachings they ascribe to Christ and the Apostles that were *not* recorded in the Bible, but which they still claim to know. They insist that *equal* respect and obedience must be given *both* to the Scriptures and to their “unwritten traditions.” In the fourth session of the *Council of Trent*, from their “Decree Concerning The Canonical Scriptures,” the Romanists assert: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded to be preached by His Apostles to every creature, as the fountain of all, both saving truth and moral discipline; and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand; [the Synod] following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence, all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament—seeing that one God is the author of both—as also the said traditions, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ’s own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession. ...But if any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts...and knowingly and deliberately contemn the traditions aforesaid; let him be anathema [cursed].” (Quoted from Philip Schaf, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993 reprint, pp. 80 and 82)

It is, of course, true that Jesus and His Apostles did and said things that are not recorded in Scripture—in fact, “*many*” other things. “*Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are*

not written in this book” (John 20:30). “*There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*” (John 21:25). While acknowledging that, it is also important that the following two points be clearly understood: 1) What Jesus did or said that is not recorded in the Bible *cannot contradict* anything that *is* recorded in the Bible (John 5:39; 17:17); 2) What Jesus did or said that is not recorded in Bible *is not necessary* for us to know either for our Christian faith or for our life of sanctification (Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16).

This, then, leads us back to what the Lord God tells us to focus upon and limit ourselves to in religious matters, namely, “*those things which are revealed*” (Deuteronomy 29:29). And what *has* been clearly revealed in the Scriptures about Jesus? Concerning His *person*, the Bible teaches that Jesus is both *true God* (the second person of the Holy Trinity) and also *true man* (born of the Virgin Mary). The Lord has revealed this to us in such passages as: “*Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*” (Isaiah 9:6; see also Matthew 1:18–23; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14). The eternal Son of God became a true human being in order to redeem the sinful world and thereby to save the souls of men from everlasting condemnation in hell. The details of that important *work* have also been clearly revealed, for the Bible teaches that Christ Jesus, having been made under (that is, subject to) the Law for us (Galatians 4:4–5), kept all of God’s holy commandments perfectly, never sinning (Hebrews 4:15; I Peter 2:22), and thus, as the Substitute for sinners, earned righteousness for every soul of man (Romans 5:19). The Bible also clearly teaches that, as man’s Substitute, Christ died on the accursed tree of the cross after having endured the pains of hell (Matthew 27:46), the punishment for the sins of the world (Matthew 27:46, 50; Galatians 3:13; I Peter 2:24). He then triumphantly rose from the dead, showing that His work of redemption was successful (Romans 4:25), that it was accepted by His Father as payment in full for the reconciliation of the world. Thus, by His perfect life and by His innocent suffering and death as the Substitute for sinful mankind, Christ became “*the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2); and “*in Christ,*” that is, because of His vicarious atonement, God “*reconciled] the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19) since He had imputed them to Christ (II Corinthians 5:21), granting full and free forgiveness of sins

to all (John 1:29) and declaring the ungodly to be righteous in His sight (Romans 4:5; 5:18–19).

That blessed truth, the glorious news of grace and salvation, has been *revealed* by God to men in the Gospel, “*the Word of reconciliation*” (II Corinthians 5:19b). These are the “*good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people*” (Luke 2:10). And, although “*they have not all obeyed the Gospel*” (Romans 10:16), “*have they not heard?*” Paul asks. “*Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world*” (v. 18). Why? Because God “*will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4), the saving knowledge and apprehension of the Gospel. Now during His earthly ministry, Jesus manifested Himself as the Son of God and Redeemer of the world by His preaching and miracles (John 5:36; 8:24–25). And still to this day, He continues to reveal Himself as the only Savior of sinners through the written and preached Gospel. Thankfully, the kind of language with which the Gospel reveals Christ is not dark and mysterious; it is not a complex riddle or cipher. On the contrary, it is a clear guiding light (Psalm 119:105) able to bring spiritual enlightenment even to the simple (Psalm 119:130) and to impart saving wisdom to children (II Timothy 3:15).

Without the record of Scripture, we would never know of the grace and mercy of God toward sinful men because of Christ Jesus’ work of redemption. As was mentioned earlier, though certain things about God and His moral Law are known to man by nature, yet the Gospel of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ is known only through the revelation that the Lord God has given through His chosen prophets, evangelists and apostles, those “*holy men of God*” whom He moved to write the Bible by His own inspiration (II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16; I Corinthians 2:13) in order to make men “*wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15).

St. Paul declares: “*We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.’ ...Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which*

things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Corinthians 2:7–10, 12-13).

Although the Gospel of Christ, revealed in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, is "*the power of God unto salvation*" (Romans 1:16), efficacious in and of itself as the means of grace to overcome spiritual blindness and to enlighten the benighted soul to the "*knowledge of the truth*," the unregenerate person, according to his own natural powers, regards the Gospel as complete and utter foolishness. "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (I Corinthians 2:14). But God in His unfathomable wisdom chose as His means for conversion, regeneration and spiritual enlightenment "*the foolish things of the world*" —the means of Grace, the "*foolishness of preaching*" the Gospel— "*to confound the wise*," and the "*weak*" and "*base*" and "*despised*" things, and "*things which are not*" —things which are worthless in the eyes of men— "*to bring to naught things that are*" —the things that man's wisdom deems important— "*that no flesh should glory in His presence*," so that no one can claim credit for his own conversion according to his natural powers of intellect and "free will," on the basis of natural worldly wisdom (I Corinthians 1:27-29). Rather, it is the Holy Spirit, working through the "*foolish*," "*weak*," "*base*," "*despised*" and "*non-existent*" Gospel, who dispels spiritual ignorance, overcomes man's natural resistance, and converts the soul without any cooperation on the part of the sinner; for "*no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*" (I Corinthians 12:3). Conversion to saving faith in Christ Jesus is a miracle of God's own creation whereby He enlightens the benighted heart with the beams of His grace, in and through the Gospel, and to no extent apart from the Gospel, not only offering the sinner the blessings of His grace but working in his heart the faith whereby he accepts Christ as his Savior and all the blessings of redemption, justification and salvation. Paul writes in II Corinthians 4 verse 6: "*God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness [at creation, Genesis 1:3], hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*"

Consequently, when a sinner comes to saving faith in Jesus as his personal Savior and Redeemer, it is God who, by means of the Gospel, has revealed Christ as such in the heart and soul of that individual and has wrought in him justifying faith, confidence of the heart in the mercy of God to poor sinners for Christ's sake. After Peter confessed his faith in

Jesus as “*the Christ, the Son of the living God,*” the Lord told him: “*Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven*” (Matthew 16:16–17). Of his own natural powers, Peter would not have known Jesus as his Savior; but God had revealed that saving knowledge unto him by the Gospel — Christ revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and Christ revealed by His own testimony (Hebrews 1:1-2) — and had caused him to confess His Savior’s name.

“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and [i.e. even, including] Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). Yes, in order for us to have for ourselves the forgiveness of sins that Christ merited for all mankind and to be heirs of eternal life, God works a mighty miracle of His grace in our hearts by means of the Gospel. He reveals Christ Jesus to us as our only Savior by the Word of the Gospel, and causes that knowledge to be effective in us unto salvation, as we by faith trust and believe, rejoice and take personal comfort in Him. *“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power [the Gospel, Romans 1:16]”* (Ephesians 1:18–19). *“God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)”* (Ephesians 2:4–5). And this marvelous work of enlightenment and spiritual quickening (conversion, regeneration) is accomplished by means of the very Gospel that natural man despises as foolishness. *“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (II Thessalonians 2:13–14). *“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”* (Romans 10:17). *“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”* (Romans 1:16). *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. ...And this is the Word which by the Gospel [lit., as Gospel] is preached unto you”* (I Peter 1:23, 25).

By the Gospel, the Holy Ghost graciously “calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith” (Luther’s explanation of the Third Article of the *Apostles’ Creed*). So then we who are Christians — acknowledging our unworthiness and inability to come to God by our

own reason or strength or even to cooperate in our own conversion—should be so very thankful that in, by and through the Gospel God has revealed to us the way of salvation through Christ Jesus’ work of redemption as the all-sufficient ransom-price that satisfied God’s justice. He has revealed it to us in the clear words of the Gospel, enlightening us with His gifts, so that we trust, believe, rejoice, and take comfort in Him *“that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen”* (Revelation 1:5b-6). And may our gracious God and Lord continue to preserve in our hearts that saving faith through the revelation of His undeserved love and mercy in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!

— P. E. B.



“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 Timothy 3:15

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem”

Mark 10:33-34

Looking Forward to Jesus’ Great Passion



During the holy Epiphany season, which ended this year on January 17th with the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, we specially marked the “*manifestation*” of the Lord Jesus as the “*Light of the world,*” the long-promised Savior. We beheld in spirit, through eyes of faith riveted upon the witness of His Word, “*His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*” (John 1:14). We recognized Him in the testimony of “*Moses and the prophets*” (Luke 16:29), all of whom wrote of this Messiah by inspiration of the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:43). We heard with our own ears, in the reading and proclamation of His Gospel, the voice of God the Father Himself declaring: “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased! Hear ye him!*” (Matthew 17:5; cf. II Peter 1:17-18).

Yes, we have been “trailing along behind” Jesus and His disciples during His *ministry of manifestation*, following Him in the Gospel lessons read each Sunday morning, becoming with those disciples “*eyewitnesses of His majesty*” (II Peter 1:16) as He demonstrated by means of His **preaching** and His **miracles** — “*by many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3) — that He “***IS the Christ, the Son of God***” (John 20:31), the long-promised **Messiah**, “*God manifest in the flesh*” (I Timothy 3:16). The claims of scoffers notwithstanding, we **know** what we have **seen** and **heard**! And we can confidently declare with Peter on the basis of all this ironclad evidence, as we cling to Jesus as our **Refuge**, our **Fortress**, and our **Rock**: “***Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!***” (Matthew 16:16).

But the glory of Jesus’ Epiphany is **dimmed**, yea, **over-shadowed**, by a pall of anguish and abuse, of spiritual torment and physical torture, of bitter suffering and cruel death, as we follow Jesus “*afar off*” (Matthew 26:58) into the holy season of Lent. For suddenly we are plunged with

Jesus' disciples from the lofty "highs" of **joy** and **exultation** into a valley of **disappointment**, **disbelief**, and **sadness**, as this bright *Morning Star* enters upon His **Great Passion**, as He willingly lays down His life for the sins of the world! In our title-text, Jesus invites us, as it were, to accompany Him and His disciples on His last journey to Jerusalem to witness the sacrifice by which He accomplished our redemption and to appreciate the price whereby He purchased reconciliation with God for every soul of man.

We read two chapters earlier in Mark's Gospel account (**Mark 8:31ff.**) that the year before He began His great passion, indeed just before His glorious transfiguration but immediately after Peter's bold confession of Him, Jesus "**began to teach [His disciples]**" about His impending suffering and death. Up to that time, Jesus had been concentrating His efforts, as we just briefly reviewed above, upon **proving** Himself to be the Son of God manifest in the flesh. The emphasis of His message in both word and deed, in His preaching and in His miracles, was on His **person**, that is, on who He **IS**. And it had taken His disciples over a year of **constant exposure** to Jesus' teaching to become convinced of that all-important fact, without which the sacrifice to come would have been meaningless, useless, and a symbol of failure: The suffering and death of a martyr to a lost cause! At least now, by God's grace, "*by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*" (Romans 10:17), they were convinced that Jesus was indeed "*the **Christ**, the Son of the living **God**,*" as Peter testified of him; and they had "high hopes" for Him as the *Messiah*, who they thought (as did most of the Jews in their perverted notion of His mission) would drive out the Romans, restore the kingdom to Israel, and re-establish the throne of David in Jerusalem (Cf. Acts 1:6)!

But, as Jesus "*began to teach them*" (Mark 8:31), His message didn't seem to fit their preconceived agenda. For "*He began to teach them that the Son of Man must **suffer** many things, and be **rejected** of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes, and be **killed**, and after three days **rise again***" (v. 31). What a **bombshell** this was for them! It didn't sound **at all** like the victorious reign they had imagined! Surely Jesus had some **choice** about going through all that —didn't He?? Was there no **alternative**??

No, Jesus said: "*The Son of Man **MUST** suffer.*" He had willingly taken this obligation upon Himself before the foundation of the world already. For it was essential to God's *eternal decree of redemption*,

His “decision,” as it were, to save fallen mankind by the vicarious suffering and death of His only-begotten Son, a “plan” in which Jesus, as true God with the Father and the Holy Ghost, fully concurred! In order to satisfy God’s **perfect justice**, Jesus not only HAD TO humble Himself to be “*made under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4) to fulfill **its demands** of righteousness and holiness with which sinners could never comply, but He also HAD TO take upon Himself **the guilt** of every sinner and bear in His own innocent soul and body **the punishment** of the pains of hell which every sinner rightly deserved as “*the wages of sin*” (Romans 6:23). —Not only had this been **prophesied** of Him down through the whole Old Testament by “*all the prophets*” of God (Acts 10:43); but the sacrifice He was to render as the Substitute of sinners was **necessary** if man’s sins were to be paid for in full (Isaiah 53; cf. I John 2:2)!

The leaders of the people, who should have known better from the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, (and many of them did), would “*reject*” Jesus, deny Him as the *Messiah*, the Redeemer of Israel; and they would “*kill*” Him! This prospect was completely unthinkable to the disciples at this point in time and for many months to come, as they nurtured in their weak and trembling hearts a “denial syndrome” so overpowering that they forgot all about the **last item** on Jesus’ “checklist,” as it were, namely, that “*after three days*” He would “**rise again,**” “*...delivered for [Gk. because of] our offenses and raised again for [Gk. because of] our justification*” (Romans 4:25).

“*And He spake that saying openly*” (Mark 8:32), no longer in parables, in symbols, in veiled pictures, but **clearly** and **plainly** with no “sugar-coating” on it. “*And Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him.*” — Like many Christians, whom Peter would later on, in his second epistle, call “*unlearned and unstable*” because of their lack of understanding and their stubborn resistance to any growth in grace and knowledge, Peter had the “nerve” to **argue** with Jesus, to **contradict** Him, yea, even to “**rebuke**” Him! — Peter “meant well,” we might initially assume, because he didn’t want his dear Jesus to be humiliated and tortured and slain. But Peter was far off the track! In fact, his quick mouth was a potential source of **offense** to the others! And so, “*when [Jesus] had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, ‘Get thee behind Me, Satan! For thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men!’*” (v. 33). In other words, Jesus told Peter that the **devil** was using him as **his** mouthpiece, taking advantage of Peter’s weakness and worldly-mindedness to lay a **stumbling block** in the path of his **own Savior**, to dissuade Him from the task that lay

before Him (Matthew 16:22), to try to make Jesus give up the whole idea of laying down His life for the sins of the world! **That** was **the devil's** agenda!!

But Jesus would not be sidetracked from the work that lay before Him, as gruesome and as horrible and as awesome-a-sacrifice as His “great passion” was to be! And **thank God** that he **didn't** “throw in the towel” and take Peter's suggestion of surrender! For you and I and all mankind would still be in our sins, under the curse of the Law, unreconciled enemies of God, and destined for hell!

Now, about a year later, as Jesus and His disciples were heading to Jerusalem for the last time and the hour of Jesus ultimate sacrifice was approaching, the Savior **reminded them** in the words of our title-text (**Mark 10:33-34**) of His previous instruction, saying: “*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him and deliver Him to the Gentiles. And they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again.*” This time there was no argument from Peter. However, **Luke** records a strange phenomenon that we do well yet to consider as we this Lenten season look forward to Jesus' passion and follow along with Him and the disciples to Jerusalem.

Luke writes: “*And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken*” (Luke 18:34). Although they had learned most of the wonderful Messianic prophecies from their youth up (as have most of US — Cf. II Timothy 3:15), and had heard them clearly applied to JESUS in His very own words; and, although they had confessed Him to be “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16; John 6:69), it was as if they suddenly **WENT BLIND** to the **real significance** of all the prophecies; and they **failed to see** Jesus, their Redeemer, revealed in the words of Holy Scripture, as well as in His previous words to them in Mark 8!

Although the disciples' blindness and dullness had not yet **destroyed** their faith, it had **weakened them severely**, so that “*they understood none of these things.*” They were literally teetering on the very brink of disaster, so that, even as Jesus was being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, “*all the disciples,*” the Bible tells us, “**forsook Him and fled**” (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50). In their weakness they could not bear to see their beloved Master so mistreated, abused, and tortured,

even though Jesus had tried to prepare them and to strengthen them well ahead of time. In their blindness, they blocked out from their understanding, so that they could not see it in their mind's eye, what Jesus was so **clearly describing** here in our title-text, speaking about **Himself**. Not only had the disciples failed to see Jesus as their suffering Redeemer and Savior in the prophecies of the **Old Testament**; they even looked away with revulsion from **Jesus' own prophecy** of the **very same things!** For a scourged, mocked, crucified *Substitute-for-sinners* (as Isaiah had so clearly described Him in his 53rd chapter, and as David had written of Him in Psalm 22) was **inconsistent** in their blind thinking with the glorious *earthly Messiah* they had envisioned, their Savior from the Romans, their Meal-ticket through life, and the ready Healer of their bodies —even more valuable than a Physician of their souls!

And that blindness *stuck with them* even AFTER Jesus' mighty **resurrection from the dead**, when He called them "*fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*" (Luke 24:25) —yea, to the very day of His **ascension into heaven** forty days later when they supposed He would at that time "*restore again the kingdom to Israel*" (Acts 1:6) as some kind of temporal Messiah! Not until the Holy Spirit powerfully removed the stubborn spiritual cataracts from their eyes on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), did they truly understand the "plan of salvation" and its **necessary cost** to their Redeemer as "*the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:2)! For it was "*in Christ,*" that is, for the sake of His vicarious satisfaction of divine justice, that "*God reconcil [ed] the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*" (II Corinthians 5:19), the trespasses that He imputed to His sinless only-begotten Son in the place of sinful men (v. 21)!

We too, in all honesty and humility, must confess ourselves as well to be "*fools*" and often so "*slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.*" For, due to the weakness of our old sinful flesh, we frequently find ourselves groping about in spiritual nearsightedness to understand things concerning our salvation, looking often in all the wrong places to find the sayings that seem to be hidden from our eyes, and, at the same time, reluctant to study, to search, to grow, and to abound in the priceless wisdom of God's Word! Like so many who are spiritually blind to divine truths, we often imagine ourselves in our foolishness to be *fully sighted* in spiritual matters, *adequately knowledgeable* concerning the doctrines of Holy Scripture, and *keen* in our *spiritual insight* — so much so that we don't **NEED** to grow! We often delude ourselves

into thinking that we can be our own authority, our own guide, our own teacher. Yes, sinful pride is **Satan's tool**, whereby he creates and nurtures just such attitudes in the heart of many a Christian! And the really SAD thing about the blindness he creates is that it is so DECEPTIVE! "Wherefore," writes Paul to the Corinthians (and also to us), "let him that *thinketh* he standeth, **take heed, lest he fall!**" (I Corinthians 10:12). The nearsighted person who rejects diagnosis and refuses to wear glasses thinks that he can see just fine! Not until he falls on his face does he recognize just how **BLIND** he has been! And for some, that knowledge comes too late or not at all; for Satan has already devoured them, and they are lost eternally!

Mark well how *even the slightest degree* of spiritual blindness can endanger our faith if left to grow like spreading cataracts to close out the precious light of God's pure Word!! Let us, therefore, enabled by God's Holy Spirit through His powerful Word, vigorously fight against any inclination on our own part to be *complacent* and *indifferent* about our growth in grace and Christian knowledge, lest by such despidal of the Means of Grace we, too, fall prey to even greater blindness, lose sight of our Redeemer altogether in the glorious prophecies of His Word, and have it one day written of **us**, as Luke wrote of the apostles: "**They** understood none of these things, ...neither knew **they** the things which were spoken."

And so, as the Savior comes to us this Lenten season and invites us: "*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem*" —to witness once again in the pages of His Holy Word what great things He has done for us and for our salvation— instead of despising the age-old *Passion History*, the summary of the Gospel accounts of His great sufferings, as something "we know already" (having heard it from our youth); instead of passing off special Lenten meditations, sermons, and services as so much "rehash" of "old material;" let us learn from our title-text to **relish** the Savior's instruction and to **pray** as we hear and study and learn and grow in His grace: "*Open Thou [our] eyes!*" (Psalm 119:18); "*Lord, increase our faith!*" (Luke 17:5).

Lord, in loving contemplation
fix our hearts and eyes on Thee
till we taste Thy full salvation
and Thine unveiled glory see!

(TLH 155, 5)

— D. T. M.

A Timely Reminder of Our Need for Pastors

“If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”

—I Timothy 3:1

The need in our beloved Conference for future pastors, though it was temporarily relieved in June of 2014 when we graduated two candidates from our seminary and they were immediately called to fill vacancies in our congregations, is as great today — perhaps even greater — than ever before. Again we find ourselves with no students even beginning our five-year curriculum; and again we have no available candidates should one (or more) of our current pastors be called home to heaven — or become disabled and no longer able to function as undershepherds of Christ in His churches. Two of our own local congregation have pastors who currently are over 75 years of age; and we dare not forget that adequate theological training requires about five years of study and preparation. Moreover, our sister congregations in Nigeria have in recent years suffered sudden and unexpected losses of faithful pastors and are experiencing great trials in covering their immediate need for shepherds by sharing pastors between several flocks. And, while our state-side seminary has not been training pastors for *Nigeria* — particularly because of our inability to train students who would need to be fluent in the Kalabari language — by the grace of God, our Nigerian brethren currently have students in their own seminary program. At present, however, we have none. We are therefore looking and praying for sanctified Christian brethren who “*desire the office of a bishop,*” eager and willing to become prepared for the calling that the Apostle Paul calls “*a good work.*” In an emergency situation, there may well be pressure to certify as “fit and well-prepared” a man whose training has not been thorough or who has not completed his preparation (cf. II Timothy 2:15). But that would not be profitable for our flocks.

What is it about “*the office of a bishop,*” the office of a Christian pastor, preacher and overseer, that is “*a good work*”? In the holy Lenten season now upon us, God’s plan of salvation stands before us in the Word of His Gospel, “*the Word of Reconciliation,*” which He has intended to be preached in all the world to every creature (Mark 16:15). The “*office of a bishop*” is not “*a good work*” because of any personally meritorious value that redounds to its incumbents because of their service, nei-

ther is it because of any goodness, merit or worthiness which resides in the incumbents themselves. Rather it is because of the great privilege accorded to called preachers, pastors and overseers to be “*ambassadors for Christ*” (II Corinthians 5:20), to be His mouthpieces (Luke 10:16), and to be “*ministers [servants] of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God*” (I Corinthians 4:1) in the care of all His churches.

The office is also a “*good work*” because of the good that it accomplishes through the hearing of the Word: “*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*” (Romans 10:17). As we stand on the threshold of Lent, for example, we see the importance, the great privilege, the “*good work*” of proclaiming to Christ’s sheep and also to those who as yet are “*strangers from the covenants of promise*” (Ephesians 2:12) the *good news*, yea, the *indispensable* news of the Gospel concerning Christ’s redemptive work as the efficient cause of God’s gracious justification or forgiveness of the entire world of sinners —then and now — how that “*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,*” as we read in II Corinthians 5:19. To this gracious disposition He was moved *for Christ’s sake*, that is, because of Christ’s perfect satisfaction of divine justice as the Substitute and Scapegoat for the ungodly (Romans 4:5; 5:8-9). Accordingly, “[*God*] will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,” writes the Apostle Paul to Timothy (I Timothy 2:4), expressing the Lord’s *primary will* that He earnestly desires the salvation of *every sinner* and wants “*the world,*” for whom He gave His only-begotten Son to be its Redeemer (John 3:16), to be brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ, “*that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). These and other clear and certain texts of Holy Scripture stand in direct opposition to Calvin’s false teachings of a limited atonement, of particular grace, and of a double predestination; “*for the Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Peter 3:9).

As we well know, however, “*the knowledge of the truth*” of God’s *objective justification* of the world for Christ’s sake does not belong to man’s *natural knowledge of God*, neither is it committed to men “out-of-the-air” by the “immediate” revelation of the Spirit; nor yet is the saving faith whereby a poor sinner lays hold on God’s gracious forgiveness for Christ’s sake bestowed upon him without means. For St. Paul, writing to the Romans, asks the following rhetorical questions to which the answers are obvious in the text itself: “*How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of*

whom they have not **heard**? And how shall they hear without a **preacher**? And how shall they preach, except they be **sent**?” (Romans 10:14-15) ...and the Apostle’s divinely-inspired conclusion in verse 17: “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” “The Gospel of Christ [is] the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16), the very means by which the Holy Spirit of God creates, nourishes and preserves saving faith in the hearts of men.

Therefore “*the Word of Reconciliation*,” the “good news” of God’s reconciliation of the world unto Himself, the precious Gospel of God’s saving grace in Christ Jesus, has been “*committed unto us*,” Paul says in II Corinthians 5:20, so that we can **proclaim** it “*in all the world, ...unto all nations*” (Matthew 24:14). “*It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*” (I Corinthians 1:21). And the “marching orders” given by Paul to the young pastor, Timothy, as he sallied forth “*as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*” (II Timothy 2:3) to “*do the work of an evangelist*” and to “*make full proof of [his] ministry*” (4:5), expressed the pleasure of the Lord that the chief duty of a Christian pastor is to “**preach the Word**; *be instant in season, out of season; reprove; rebuke; exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:2ff.).

Moreover, the public preaching or proclamation of the Word is not limited to the pulpit on Sunday mornings and on special occasions and festivals of the church year, but it occupies the attention of a faithful pastor or spiritual shepherd on a *full-time* basis as he *feeds* the church of God, the local flock of the Savior (John 21:15ff.; Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2), as he *teaches* (I Timothy 3:2), as he *admonishes* (I Thessalonians 5:12), as he *oversees* the flock and *watches* for their souls (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17), as he functions as the *steward of God’s mysteries* in the public administration of the Office of the Keys (I Corinthians 4:1ff.). Thus the office of the “public ministry,” the Pastoral Office (*das Pfarramt*), is not merely a human arrangement, devised without God’s particular ordinance and institution but simply for the sake of good order in the Church (I Corinthians 14:40), as the Wisconsin Synod, the Church of the Lutheran Confession, and others teach contrary to Scripture (cf. Titus 1:5; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; I Thessalonians 5:12-13; etc.). On the contrary, “[It] is no human institution, but an office which has been instituted by God Himself” (C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, Part II, Thesis II).

“*Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful*” (I Corinthians 4:2). The Scriptures lay down very specific qualifications for the Pastoral Office in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 —among which we search in vain for “professional” training in conflict resolu-

tion, substance abuse rehabilitation, social work, marriage and family counseling, corporate management, and other purely secular courses which have little if anything to do—even collaterally—with the office instituted by God. The *faithfulness* required of a pastor (bishop, elder) is faithfulness to the *Word of God* (Jeremiah 23:28; Titus 1:9; etc.); faithfulness to “*the doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3; 4:13; etc.), both in its teaching and in its application; faithfulness in the performance of all the duties incumbent upon him for the sake of the sheep and lambs committed to his charge (I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; etc.); faithfulness to the call of God’s Holy Spirit, which makes him answerable not only to the local congregation that called him but to God Himself (Hebrews 13:17; Ezekiel 33:7-9; etc.), in whose holy office he serves as an incumbent at the Lord’s pleasure (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 5:4).

Unfaithful pastors confound Law and Gospel in their preaching, teaching, and practice; they preach the truth of God’s Word *as theory* but do not apply it *in practice*; they refuse to indoctrinate their members by means of thorough instruction and are satisfied with giving prospective members an “orientation course” prior to their reception; they regard inconsistent practice (either on *their own* part, or on the part of *their people*, or on the part of *their synod* or church body) merely as “imperfect sanctification” which must be tolerated; they may “*mark*” error and persistent errorists, but they refuse to “*avoid them*” (Romans 16:17). Such also are pastors whose standard of spiritual truth is not “*the foundation of the apostles and prophets*” (Ephesians 2:19) but their own “professional judgment,” private interpretation, subjective rationale, and personal experience. These are not *faithful stewards* of God’s mysteries, but, as He Himself characterizes them, worthless watchmen or “watchdogs” that are blind, ignorant, dumb, asleep on the job, lazy, greedy, lacking in understanding, and looking out only for themselves (Isaiah 56:10-11; Romans 16:18)!! Sadly, we see far too many such “dogs” or “curs” in the ministry today; and their sheep either ignorantly enjoy the silence and lack of concerned “barking,” or they have become so accustomed to lack of instruction and spiritual oversight that they sit secure in their ignorance and think that their “*dumb dogs*” are really on the job! In either case, they are being neglected.

The Savior bids us: “*Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest*” (Matthew 9:38). And the Lord, as we well know from His Word, answers every proper Christian prayer, though in His own way and in His own good time. Nevertheless, He

does not promise to provide us with pastors “out-of-the-blue.” He expects qualified, gifted, faithful and Gospel-motivated men to “*desire the office of a bishop*” and to *volunteer* themselves for labor in His vineyard (Isaiah 6:8). And He expects us who are pastors to *train* such faithful men, committing to them what we have learned, so that they will be able to teach others also (II Timothy 2:2). He expects those men to *study* to show themselves “*approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*” (II Timothy 2:15). And He expects our people to show to *prospective* pastors, by the love and respect they render to *their own* pastors, that they value the workmen “*which labor among [them], and are over [them] in the Lord, and admonish [them]*” (I Thessalonians 5:12-13), and that they gladly hear and learn God’s Word from their mouths as from the lips of Jesus Himself (Luke 10:16). Such an example of eagerness to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Savior (II Peter 3:18), of high esteem for the ministry (II Thessalonians 5:13), and of love for Christ’s ambassadors (II Corinthians 5:20) should greatly encourage young men among us with the prospect of having one day, at the call of the Holy Ghost, a flock of like-minded sheep who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6).

We therefore we beseech “*the Lord of the harvest*” to move the hearts of men throughout our Conference with the earnest desire for “*the office of a bishop*” and, to that end, to become trained in our fine seminary program for labor in His vineyard and for service in the pastoral ministry, so that the blessing of “*hearing the words of the Lord*” (Amos 8:11) may thus be provided for us, for our children, and for their children after them, through which His name may continue to be hallowed among us in the faithful preaching, teaching, and practice of His pure Word to the salvation of our souls and the souls of many others also. Therefore we pray with the hymnwriter:

O bless Thy Word alway,
our souls forever feeding;
and may we never lack
a faithful shepherd’s leading.
Send workers forth, O Lord,
the sheaves to gather in,
that not a soul be lost
which Thou art come to win!

(TLH 485, 4 & 6 adapted)

—D. T. M.

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(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Idama, Nigeria

The Rev. Innocent Karibo, Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abalama, Nigeria

The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Balaiyi Thompson and Bateinm Bestman, Pastors

Thompson Compound Abalama

Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

The Rev. Timothy Biobebe Aaron, Pastor

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

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



Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
4090 S. Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 *GoodShepherdLutheranChurchTucson.com*

Worship Service 9:30 a.m. Telephone (520) 721-7618
Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

The Rev. DANIEL P. MENSING, Pastor
550 North Harrison Road, Apt. 11107, Tucson, AZ 85748 Pastor: (520) 448-8694

E-mail: goodshepherdlutherantucson@gmail.com

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
Central Avenue at 171st Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 *PeaceEvLutheran.com*

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:30 a.m. Telephone: (708) 532-4288
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor
17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 Pastor: (708) 532-9035

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH Telephone: (541) 258-2941
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 Pastor: (541) 258-2941

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178 *StLukes-CLC.com*

Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m. Telephone: (206) 723-1078
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor
9658 – 54th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118 Pastor: (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 On the Web at:
22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 *StMarksEvLutheran.com*

Adult Bible Class 3:00 p.m. Telephone: (708) 757-6859
Worship Service 4:00 p.m.

The Rev. DAVID J. MENSING, Pastor
22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 Pastor: (708) 655-7549

E-mail: d_mensing@hotmail.com

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 *TrinityEvLutheran.com*

Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m. Telephone: (708) 386-6773
Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor
233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 Pastor: (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@gmail.com



“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him and deliver Him to the Gentiles. And they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again.”

—Mark 10:33-34