

The Concordia Lutheran



"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

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

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**"Remember that
Jesus Christ...
was raised from
the dead."**

—2 Timothy 2:8



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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.*"

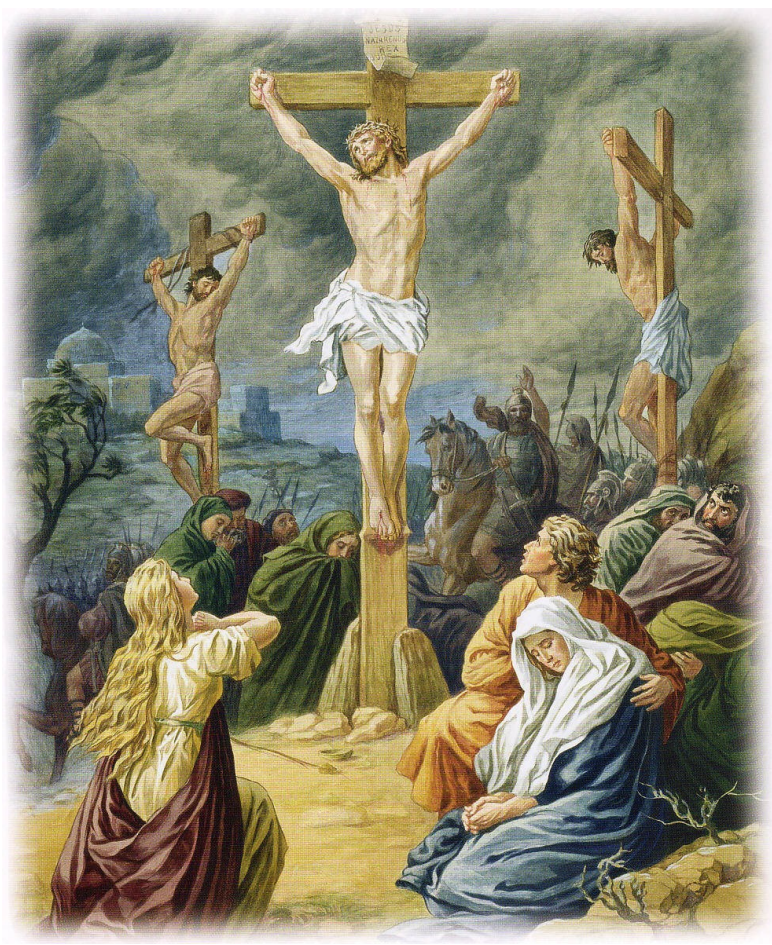
To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

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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“He was numbered
with the transgressors.”

— Isaiah 53:12

These verbally-inspired words of prophecy from the pen of Isaiah are essential to our Christian faith in the *vicarious atonement* of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world. For, although the holy season of Lent is now behind us, we continue humbly to meditate in gratitude for our redemption upon the suffering and death of our Savior as “*the propitiation* [the payment of complete satisfaction of divine justice] *for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the*

whole world” (I John 2:2). Indeed, “[we] know that [we] were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from [our] vain conversation received by tradition from [our] fathers [from our sinful condition inherited and passed down to us from Adam, Romans 5:12], but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Peter 1:18-19).

And how significant is even the grammatical tense of Isaiah’s prophecy — cited in Mark’s Gospel as being fulfilled in Christ’s crucifixion as a criminal (Mark 15:28) — that “*He WAS numbered with the transgressors.*” Isaiah reports it, over seven hundred years in advance, as if the crucifixion on Calvary’s hill had *already* taken place, that it was *already* a historical fact, that Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice in the place and in the stead of sinners had *already* been “*accomplished*” (cf. John 19:30 τ ἐτέλεσται), as it indeed had been completed in the mind of God by “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Revelation 13:8) according to God’s eternal decree of redemption (I Peter 1:19b-20). For it was on the basis of Christ’s perfect satisfaction of divine justice [“*in Christ*”] that God “*reconcil[ed] the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19), and that He predestinated the elect from eternity already to be saved (Ephesians 1:3-7).

During the holy Lenten season, we *witnessed* the suffering and death of the Lamb of God in His *state of humiliation* as it occurred *in time*, as recorded in the Holy Gospels and as compiled from them in the *Passion History* cited in our special Lenten services, in fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy and of other God-inspired prophecies of His great passion (e.g. Psalm 22, etc.).

With our spiritual eyes (and ears) fixed upon that sacred record, we followed Jesus from the judgment hall of Pontius Pilate, where we saw Him brutally scourged and condemned to capital punishment; and we found ourselves on Calvary’s hill just outside the city of Jerusalem — the place called “*Golgotha, the place of a skull*” (Matthew 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17), the place where convicted criminals were publicly executed; and St. Luke tells us, “*there they crucified Him*” (23:33).

That rather cold, matter-of-fact, four-word report of what happened strikes us as strange upon first hearing, considering the gruesome nature of that chosen method of capital punishment. Crucifixion was completely unknown among the Jews until they encountered it among the Medes and Persians in the *Babylonian Captivity*, and the Romans later introduced it as a means of punishing slaves and freemen convicted of particularly heinous crimes. Roman citizens, however, were exempted from it by law since it was so inhumane. While in some cases, victims were

merely tied to their crosses, reliable historians report that the practice of nailing them down hand and foot was not at all unusual among the Romans, in spite of the common denial of the practice by historical critics nowadays who attack the Scripture record in John 20:25 as being “the *only* Gospel account” that mentions “*nails*.” They, of course, completely dismiss the God-inspired prophecy in Psalm 22:16, “*They pierced My hands and My feet*.”

The “*malefactor*” or “*transgressor*” convicted of a capital crime and “*worthy of death*” (Luke 23:15) was first offered a drink of sour wine [a.k.a. “*vinegar*” (Psalm 69:21; Matthew 27:34)] into which had been mixed a bitter anesthetic drug called “*gall*.” This was intended to numb the immediate pain, so that the victim wouldn’t die of shock and thus end the “show” prematurely. In **Jesus’ case**, He refused the gall, the Bible tells us (Matthew 27:34), because He wanted to suffer the full agony that was to come (John 18:11). The timbers of the cross were laid flat upon the ground, and the victim was forced to lie down on them. His arms were then stretched out toward the ends of the crosspiece; and, while several soldiers held him in place, another drove a huge spike through the palm of each hand (or occasionally through the wrist), fastening him to the wood. The same was then done to the feet. Finally, the cross was raised to an upright position; and its base was dropped into a hole in the ground, much like a fencepost or utility pole is set today. When the base of the cross hit the bottom of that hole, the victim’s hands and feet literally tore, as the weight of his body yanked against the nails. There the victim hung in the hot middle-eastern sun —sometimes over the course of several days— his arms often dislocated from their sockets and his body racked with pain, infection, thirst and sunstroke —until he died!

It was, of course, no accident that our Lord Jesus was “*crucified*” instead of being stoned (for His alleged “*blasphemy*,” Leviticus 24:16), or hanged, or beheaded. For the Psalmist David, a full thousand years before, had prophesied in Psalm 22, speaking in the Savior’s own voice, “*They pierced my hands and my feet*” —a prophecy perfectly fulfilled in Jesus’ crucifixion as noted above. And the Savior Himself, “*knowing all things that should come upon Him*,” had told His disciples well in advance many of the details of His suffering and death, including the fact that He would be “*crucified*” (Matthew 26:2; Luke 24:7), and He had said to Nicodemus in John chapter 3, “*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life*” (v. 14).

And the **company** Jesus kept there on Calvary’s hill is rectilinear fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy that “*He was numbered with the transgressors*,” our title-text for this article; for Luke tells us that “*there were*

also two...**malefactors** led **with Him** to be put to death” (23:32). “Malefactors” are literally “evil doers”—like you and me; for the Bible tells us that “*there is **none** that doeth good, no **not one***” (Romans 3:12), that “***all** have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (v. 23) and that “***we** were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*” (Ephesians 2:3b). And those “*malefactors [were crucified], one on the right hand, and the other on the left*” of Jesus (Luke 23:33).

Jesus was not executed, however, merely **in the company** of transgressors. He was executed **as a criminal** among criminals, “*numbered with the transgressors,*” as **one of them**, even though He personally was completely innocent, the holy Son of God, who never committed a single sin (John 8:46a; I Peter 2:22). The punishment that Jesus bore was not, as many have claimed, a “miscarriage of justice,” as it *seems* to have been according to Pilate’s own repeated declarations of His innocence: “*I find in Him **no fault at all***” (John 18:39; Matthew 23:4; Luke 23:14; John 19:4, 6). No, and we need to value in gratitude this **critical fact**, that God “*made Him...to be **sin***” [II Corinthians 5:21]. His Father imputed to **Him** sin and guilt and the wages of sin in making Him “*a curse*” [Galatians 3:13] and in demonstrating that curse, both to Jesus and to us, by **forsaking Him** (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34) in the outer darkness, in the ultimate loneliness, in the absolute contempt, and in the torture of the damned — in “*the wages of sin*” (Romans 6:23), in the “*destruction and perdition*” (I Timothy 6:9) of everlasting death.

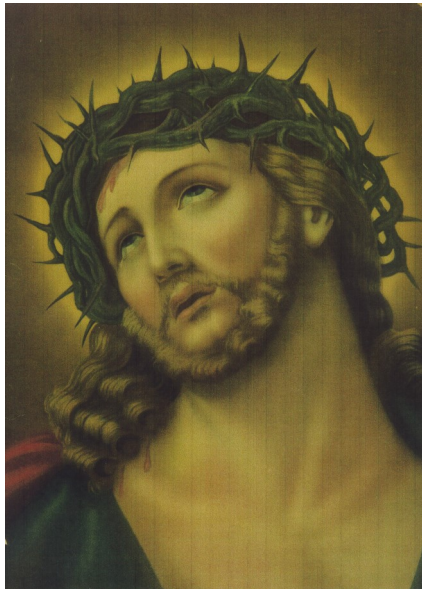
But let us not lose sight of the critical fact that it was **because of US** that Jesus was crucified and bore the agony of the damned. It was **because of US** “*transgressors*” that “*He was numbered with the transgressors.*” **WE** are the ones who deserve to be “nailed” for our sins! The Bible says: “*Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree*” (Galatians 3:13b), the disgraceful capital punishment that we deserve because of our capital transgressions; for “*the wages of sin is **death**,*” Paul writes to the Romans (6:23), **eternal** death, the curse of **God**, **everlasting** shame, contempt, torment and death in the fires of hell! But as our Substitute, as our Stand-in, as our Scapegoat “*under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4b), “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse FOR US*” (Galatians 3:13a). “*He was delivered because of [Gk.] OUR offenses*” (Romans 4:25) — “*Surely He hath borne OUR griefs and carried OUR sorrows...He was wounded for OUR transgressions; He was bruised for OUR iniquities*” (Isaiah 53:4-5a). “*He laid down His life for US*” (I John 3:16), as the Lord “*laid on Him the iniquity of US ALL*” (Isaiah 53:6). Thus “*He was numbered with the transgressors*” — with them, among them, as one of them, for them, in the stead of them — “*that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*” (II Corinthians 5:21b).

*It was for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon that tree!
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
and love beyond degree!*

*Thus might I hide my blushing face
when His dear cross appears;
dissolve my heart in thankfulness
and melt mine eyes to tears!*

(TLH 154, 2 and 4)

— D. T. M.



One of the Blessed Results of Christ's Passive Obedience

“...who His own self bear our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.” — I Peter 2:24



In this portion of the Epistle Lesson for “Good Shepherd Sunday,” *Misericordias Domini*, the second Sunday after Easter, the Apostle Peter points out the fact that, because Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8), lovingly and selflessly sacrificing Himself for our sins on the tree, laying down His very life in suffering and death to save us, He wants us, His redeemed sheep (I Peter 2:25), to heed His voice and to imitate lovingly and obediently the example He has set for us. Let us therefore consider also the verses of context before our title-text, as we examine *our lives of righteousness* as **one of the blessed results of Christ's passive obedience**.

As the Apostle begins this loving exhortation, he first of all shows the motivation which impels the Savior's sheep to follow in the footsteps of “the Shepherd and Bishop of [their] souls” (v. 25). We read in verse 21: “For even hereunto were ye called, because **Christ also suffered for us**, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.” We are not to follow Jesus' example out of compulsion, merely out of duty, or because of the threat of punishment; but the Apostle points instead to Jesus' suffering in our place. Thankfully the holy Lenten season is not so far behind us already that we have perhaps forgotten or lost sight of the sacrifice He made for us in His bitter passion and death upon the cross! In His *passive obedience* (Philippians 2:8), our Savior permitted

Himself to be mocked, spitefully entreated, spitted on, scourged, and slain on the tree of the cross (Luke 18:32-33). Moreover, according to Isaiah's prophecy of His *vicarious atonement* (chapter 53), He permitted Himself to suffer all that woe in our place, as our Substitute. For it is His sacrifice of love, His love for us, that "*constraineth us*," that *forces* us, to live as Christians, bringing forth the fruits of true and saving faith in our lives. "*We love Him*," the Apostle John tells us, "*because He **first loved us***" (I John 4:19). "*Christ also suffered **for us***," Peter reminds us, "*...His own self bear[ing] **our sins** in His own body on the tree*," so that **we** should now "***follow His steps***, ...liv[ing] unto righteousness."

This is "*the **will of God**, even [our] sanctification*" (I Thessalonians 4:3), the renewing of our lives unto which we were "*called*" as Christians (v. 21), that we no longer "*continue in sin*" (Romans 6:1) but walk "*as becometh saints*" (Ephesians 5:3), following Jesus' steps *because He suffered for us*. Being now "*dead to sins*" as the result of our Savior's *passive obedience*, our title-text tells us, the will to avoid sin after the example of Jesus is worked in us by God Himself, the Bible reminds us, not by our own meritorious good intentions; for even St. Paul had to confess that, of himself, he could do "*no good thing*." To the contrary, he writes to the Philippians, "*it is **God** which worketh in you, both to **will** and to **do** of His good pleasure*" (2:13).

Jesus' example was, of course, **perfect in every way**; but, because of our flesh, even we Christians cannot follow it without stumbling often and falling flat on our spiritual faces. That is why our Good Shepherd is always standing by to pick us up, to forgive us time and time again, to restore our soul and to comfort us with His rod and staff (Psalm 23). But that is no reason to take His watchful eye for granted and to wander aimlessly about with careless abandon like sheep without a shepherd (cf. I Peter 2:25); for Jesus says: "***My sheep hear My voice**, ...and they **follow Me***" (John 10:27).

But now, what "*example*" did our Good Shepherd leave us "*in His steps*," in His *passive obedience*, to help us avoid and conquer our sins? "*He did **no sin***," writes the Apostle, "*neither was **guile** [that is, **deceit and treachery**] found in His mouth. When He was reviled, [He] reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not*." Now, as the redeemed children of God by virtue of Christ's *passive obedience*, and having been converted to faith in His merits and renewed by His Holy Spirit to "*live unto righteousness*," we Christians, according to the New Man, truly **want** to be "*dead to sins*," to avoid sins like a contagious plague, to steer clear of such abominations before God as **deceit** and **treachery**, sins of both the heart and the lip. And we are to follow the example of our Savior, particularly in His great passion, that we do

not “*revile*” or mock those who mock us because of our faith, and that we do not “*threaten*” those who cause us to suffer for Jesus’ sake. For a **vengeful spirit**, a desire to “get even” with those who harm us —such a heart and spirit is not keeping its eye on the footsteps of the Good Shepherd and following them. Instead, such a heart insists on going its own way, “*astray*,” as we read in verse 25, following the vengeful impulses of the flesh!

Our Good Shepherd has “*called*” us (v. 21), that we, “*being dead to sins, should...follow His steps*,” crucifying the Old Adam in us by daily contrition and repentance, drowning him, yea, slaying him with all sins and evil lusts, as we confess with Luther in our *Small Catechism* (4th Chief Part). That is what is meant by being “*dead to sins*,” and that is what we have to be IF we are to follow in the steps of our Good Shepherd. May He enable every one of us, by His neverfailing mercy (Psalm 118:1) and the always-abundant sufficiency and strength of His precious grace (II Corinthians 12:9), so to “*mortify*,” to kill, our fleshly inclinations to sin (Romans 8:13), so that we are truly “*dead to sins*” as we look to Jesus as our perfect example, yea, “*the Author and Finisher of our faith*” (Hebrews 12:2), “*by whose stripes [we] were healed!*”

But we also see in the “*steps*” of our Good Shepherd —not what we should **not** do, but what we should be busy **doing** as His dear sheep. For our title-text shows us that our own **goal**, as we follow His example, is “*that we...should live unto righteousness*” —that we should be **alive**, living and active, always doing those things that are well-pleasing in His sight. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: “*He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again*” (II Corinthians 5:15).

Let us briefly consider, first of all, the example of our Savior Himself in His *passive obedience*: During His great passion, which is summarized in the words of our title-text and its context, Jesus “*committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously*” (v. 23). He did not seek vengeance against His enemies; He did not strike them all dead with but a word of His mouth, as well He could have; but He “*committed Himself*” to His heavenly Father’s keeping, saying, “*Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit*” (Luke 23:46). For He knew that it was His Father’s will (and, of course, also His own will from eternity) to accomplish the reconciliation of the world unto Himself by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10). And thereby, God would “*judge righteously*,” imputing Christ’s righteousness to sinful men, so that they could stand righteous in His holy sight. By faith in His *vicarious atonement*, we have as our very own the remission of our sins which He paid for with His holy precious blood (*passive obedience*) and the righteousness He

earned for every soul of man (*active obedience*; Romans 5:19b). —On the other hand, those who reject His righteousness, who would rather stand before God in their own righteousness of the Law, they, according to God “*that judgeth righteously*,” will have to bear the just punishment for their iniquities! For they prefer the justice of the Law to the mercy and grace of the Gospel (cf. Galatians 5:4)!

Now how should this example of our Good Shepherd affect **us** as we “*follow His steps*”? We too must commit ourselves “*to Him that judgeth righteously*” in **two ways**: First, by clinging in faith to Jesus, our Savior, that we may be accounted worthy to stand in the judgment of God (Luke 21:36), dressed not in our own sin-stained filthy-rags-righteousness (Isaiah 64:6), but in the blood and righteousness of Jesus, in “*the garments of salvation*” (Isaiah 61:10). For then, committing ourselves to our just and holy God, who punished Jesus for our offenses that we might go free, we have by faith the sure and certain hope of everlasting life in Him who “*bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we...should live unto righteousness*,” healed by His stripes (Cf. also Isaiah 53:5).

And then secondly, as a fruit or result of that childlike faith in our Good Shepherd and His saving blood, we will cheerfully commit ourselves “*to Him that judgeth righteously*” also regarding any harm or persecution or tribulation that may come upon us for Jesus’ sake, so that, instead of reviling, threatening, murmuring and complaining about our lot as Christians, we can patiently endure chastenings, as God deals with us as with “*sons*” (Hebrews 12:7) — His adopted sons and daughters by faith in Jesus (Galatians 3:26) — and regard all such things as what they truly are: The sure testimony of God’s love to us, His children. “*For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth*,” the Bible tells us, “*and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. ...Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet*,” saith the Lord, “*lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed*” (Hebrews 12:6, 12-13). And how are we “*healed*,” both from the ravages and punishment of sin and from the grievous chastisements we bear as God’s children? “*By [His] stripes ye were healed*,” writes the Apostle Peter in our title-text, so that now we can, by His grace, **follow in the footsteps of our Good Shepherd**, making straight paths for our feet in the wilderness of this world, lifting our drooping hands and picking up our weak knees, to walk ever better in the paths of righteousness for His precious Name’s sake, “*alive unto righteousness*.” “*For [we] were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of [our] souls*.” Thus we can pray with all boldness and confidence:

Jesus, Lead Thou on

*till our rest is won;
and, altho' the way be cheerless,
we will follow, calm and fearless.
Guide us by Thy hand
to our fatherland.*

*Jesus, lead Thou on
till our rest is won;
faithful Shepherd, still direct us,
still support, control, protect us,
till we safely stand
in our fatherland.*

(TLH 410, 1 & 4, adapted)

— D. T. M.





The Consistent Practice of Close Communion —An Exercise in Christian Love

*“He that eateth and drinketh unworthily
eateth and drinketh damnation to himself,
not discerning the Lord’s body.”*

— I Corinthians 11:29

In accordance with God’s Word and sound Lutheran practice, we observe “*close*” (sometimes also called “*closed*”) **Communion**, that is, we admit to the Lord’s Table only those who are members of our “communion” or fellowship. This is not the practice of ecclesiastical snobbery or of arbitrary exclusivity, but it expresses what the Bible itself teaches about the nature, purpose, and proper use of the Lord’s Supper.

The one sacrifice or offering of Christ’s body and blood on the tree of the cross was intended for *all mankind* as payment-in-full for their sins (Isaiah 53:4-12; II Corinthians 5:15; I John 2:2); and in view of His perfect, all-sufficient *vicarious atonement*, God reconciled *the world* unto Himself, not charging men’s sins against them but forgiving even the *ungodly* (Romans 4:5) and declaring them righteous in His sight (II Corinthians 5:19). All who cling in faith to this accomplished fact *have for their very own* the forgiveness and righteousness which Christ purchased and won for them and the peace with God without which no

one can enter heaven (Romans 5:1; I Timothy 6:12; etc.).

However, the Holy Sacrament of the **Lord's Supper** is NOT intended for *all* as is evident from the fact that Jesus "*gave it to the **disciples***" (Matthew 26:26), not to everyone. Moreover, St. Paul expressly states that *unworthy* communicants partake of the Lord's body and blood to their *damnation* instead of to their blessing (I Corinthians 11:27-29). Therefore, for their own welfare, we do *not* admit to the Lord's Table those who are known to be ungodly and impenitent, those who have given offense and have not removed it, those who are unable to examine themselves (such as young children and adults who have not been sufficiently instructed, unconscious persons, and those who by virtue of infirmity cannot truly examine themselves and discern the Lord's body), and those of a different faith, since participation in the Lord's Supper is a testimony of unity in faith and confession (I Corinthians 10:17; Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 1:10; Romans 16:17).

Close (or "*closed*") *Communion*, as noted above, is not, as many claim in self-imposed ignorance, the practice of ecclesiastical *snobbery* or of arbitrary *exclusivity*. On the contrary, it is **an exercise of Christian love** to administer this feast of love only to those who have carefully examined themselves (I Corinthians 11:28) as to whether they sincerely repent of their sins, confide in Jesus Christ as their Redeemer, believe in the *real presence* of His body and blood in the Sacrament according to His Word, desire and sincerely intend as evidence of their repentance and faith to amend their sinful lives, motivated and enabled to do so by the precious Gospel of salvation by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, and as to whether they are of one faith and confession (in "*the unity of the spirit*," Ephesians 4:3) with their fellow communicants at the Lord's Table.

Since we are unable to look into another's heart to see whether he believes, we can judge only by one's **profession** (assuming it to be sincere, Matthew 12:34b) and by one's **fruits** (as to whether they comport with his profession, Matthew 3:8). Therefore it is incumbent upon Christian pastors, as "*stewards of the mysteries of God*" (I Corinthians 4:1) diligently to ascertain whether, according to their confession and profession of faith and by their manifest works, they are truly "worthy and well prepared" (Luther) to receive the Sacrament. This diligence does not require *auricular confession* ["in the ear" of the pastor], as the Church of Rome mandates it, nor does it require on the pastor's part an intrusive investigation into the lives of his sheep (I Peter 4:15d). But it does require the God-ordained relationship between the pastor and his sheep, to the intent that they "*know them which labor among [them], and are over [them] in the Lord, and admonish [them], and...esteem*

them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among [themselves]" (I Thessalonians 5:12-13). It requires that members of a local flock *"obey them that have the rule over [them] and submit [themselves]; for they watch for [their] souls as they that must give account"* (Hebrews 13:17).

Moreover, God requires that the pastors themselves exercise due diligence with respect to their divinely-instituted office to *"take heed unto...all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made [them] overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28), to *"admonish"* their members (I Thessalonians 5:12), *"by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers"* among them, and in general to *"watch for [their] souls, as they that must give account"* (Hebrews 13:17; cf. I Peter 5:2-4). This is the **loving oversight** which Christ Himself committed to His undershepherds; and their accountability to Him is not an option. But unfaithful pastors, who are derelict in these duties, fall under God's curse for their inattentiveness to Christ's sheep and are to that extent responsible for their loss (Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:7-9; 34:2-10).

To administer the Lord's Supper *indiscriminately*, namely, to anyone and everyone who expresses the desire to have it without due regard for the nature, purpose, and proper use of the Sacrament according to Scripture is **IRRESPONSIBLE** with respect to the watchfulness (Hebrews 13:17) required of pastors by the Chief Shepherd, **RECKLESS** concerning the safety of the souls of the communicants (I Corinthians 11:27), **WANTON** in utter disregard for the warning issued by the Lord's Apostle to unworthy communicants (I Corinthians 11:29), and therefore callously **UNLOVING** to them who should be able to trust Christian pastors, *"as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"* (I Peter 4:10), not to do anything to harm them. Christ Himself did not give the gift of His true body and blood to unbelievers; He gave it to His *"disciples"* (Matthew 26:26); He did not give it to those whom He knew to be ungodly and impenitent, to those who were not reconciled to one another, to those who did not love one another, to those who were not one with one another, to those who were not agreed in the doctrines of His Word; for He had specifically instructed them on *all these points* beforehand (John 17:9; Matthew 5:24; John 13:34; 17:11; 8:31-32; etc.) AND well knew their hearts.

When we admit to the Lord's Table only *worthy* communicants — not "worthy" in the sense of deserving or meriting anything, but as coming in a fitting and suitable manner, having *examined* themselves (I Corinthians 11:28) as to their God-wrought repentance, faith, and discernment of the Lord's body (the *Real Presence*), as to their willingness, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, as the fruit of true repentance and faith, to amend their sinful lives, and as to their unity with us in doctrine and

practice — we invite them to partake of what is often called “the *visible* Gospel” or “the *tangible* Gospel” of comfort and of the assurance of the remission of sins offered, given and sealed to all communicants in the words: “*Given and shed for you for the remission of sins,*” blessings received not merely by eating and drinking but by faith. This is as **loving** a gesture to fellow believers as we can make, as the Lord Jesus lovingly laid down His life and gave His body and blood into death out of love to poor sinners “*that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16).

It is **NOT loving**, however, to invite people to eat and to drink the body and blood of Christ to their “*damnation*” or “*condemnation*” [the same word in the Greek, (I Corinthians 11:29)]. This is done **deliberately** when communicants are invited to the Lord’s Table who are *known to be* ungodly and impenitent, who have given offense and have not removed it, who by virtue of insufficient instruction, unconsciousness, or infirmity are not able to examine themselves according to St. Paul’s injunction (including those who reject the *Real Presence* and therefore do not “*discern the Lord’s body*” in the Sacrament, I Corinthians 11:29), and those who are of a different faith, inasmuch as joint communion is a testimony of unity in faith and confession (I Corinthians 10:17; cf. Acts 2:42). When a pastor **knows** such things “up-front” and yet admits a person to the Lord’s Supper, he does **spiritual harm** to a communicant who is unworthy and unprepared, even though the communicant himself may be unaware of his “unworthiness.”

The same can be done through **carelessness, inattentiveness to duty**, or just plain **laziness** (cf. Isaiah 56:10) on the part of pastors whose accountability for souls (Hebrews 13:17) they take lightly. While they do not **deliberately** give the Lord’s Supper to a person to his damnation, they make it all too convenient for the unworthy and unprepared communicant, even out of ignorance, to “*eat and drink damnation to himself*” (I Corinthians 11:29). In such cases, the **spiritual harm** could well have been avoided, had the pastors been diligent and faithful as “*stewards of the mysteries of God*” (I Corinthians 4:1-2).

Such lack of concern for the spiritual welfare of communicants is evident when pastors commune **visitors** to their services whom they do not know and whom they have not personally encountered. Surely, if he knew in advance that a visitor intending to commune were a Presbyterian, who denied the *real presence* of the Savior’s body and blood in the Sacrament, the pastor would not commune him; for such a visitor would not be “*discerning the Lord’s body*” in the Sacrament, nor would he at all understand the nature, benefits, power and salutary use of the Lord’s Supper.

Likewise, if the pastor knew that a visitor intended to partake of the Sacrament who was a Roman Catholic, who regarded it as “a real though unbloody sacrifice of the body of Christ for the sins of the living and the dead” (the definition of the Roman *Mass*), who denied the presence of bread and wine in the Sacrament, who thought it a meritorious good work to “go to Mass,” and who believed that Christ’s “*one offering*” (Hebrews 10:10 and 14) on the tree of the cross was insufficient to pay for the sins of mankind but that it had to be repeated again and again in the Mass to atone for sin, surely the pastor would not commune such a person.

Rather, in BOTH cases, the pastor should *lovingly explain* to such visitors *why* he cannot in good conscience accept them at the Lord’s Table, and *why*, by denying them the Sacrament, he is exercising *love* toward them (cf. Leviticus 19:17) by not permitting them to receive it to their damnation. While indeed *some* (and in all probability *many*) might miss the entire point of *love*, as well as obedience to the Lord’s Word, as motivating the pastor’s refusal to commune them, their ignorance of doctrine in the matter should not be allowed to pressure the pastor, out of a *false sense of love* in “political correctness,” to violate the **truly Scriptural practice of *Close Communion***.

More difficult for even many “Lutherans” to accept nowadays is the refusal to commune visitors who profess faith in Christ and even in the *real presence*, who may indeed be members of some “Lutheran” congregation and synodical fellowship, but who are not of **the same faith and confession** (I Corinthians 10:17; Acts 2:42; Amos 3:3; I Corinthians 1:10; Romans 16:17, etc.). Sadly, back in 1872, when the matter of *close Communion* was being discussed in connection with *altar fellowship* (joint Communion) among Lutheran synods in America, Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth of the General Council expressed what later would become known as “The Galesburg Rule,” namely, that “Lutheran altars are for Lutheran communicants only.” While it was an *effort* at establishing “close Communion” as the accepted Lutheran practice, Krauth’s statement was too simple and too vague in using the term “Lutheran” for the sake of brevity. There were so many *exceptions* that “the rule” was no real rule at all; and “Lutheran” did not really signify “*orthodox* in faith and confession, in doctrine and in practice.” Today the name “Lutheran” encompasses so many *different* standards of doctrine and practice in so many widely differing fellowships that Luther himself would not recognize it! The so-called “Galesburg Rule” TO-DAY is basically meaningless; and *close Communion* in Lutheran churches, while often *PROFESSED* as being their practice, is rarely adhered to *with consistency*, as surveys of thousands of Lutheran pastors clearly show. Such cases as “pastoral emergencies,” for example,

are often cited as “exceptions” to the rule, as if reception of the Lord’s Supper is necessary for the salvation of a dying person.

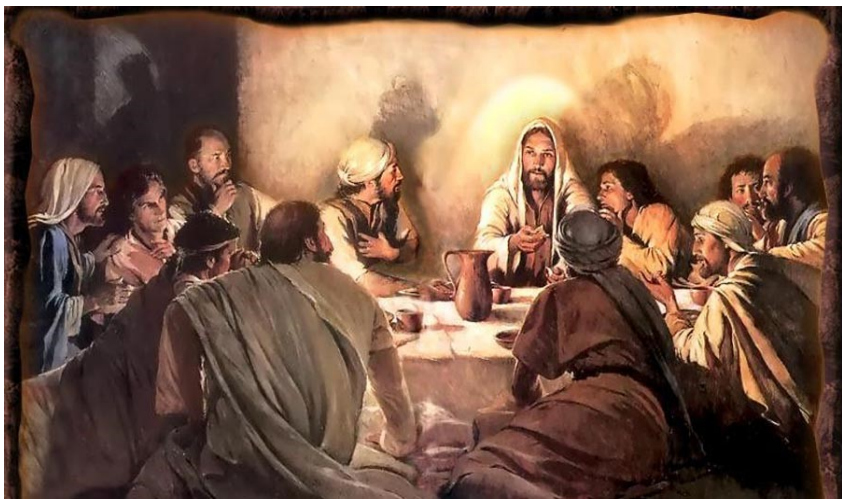
Thus far we have discussed *close Communion* as an **exercise of love** particularly toward the **communicant himself**. But it is also an exercise of **love toward the Lord our God**, toward His precious Word, toward the sanctity of the Savior’s Sacrament as He instituted it, and toward “*the doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3). For **indifference** in doctrine and practice, in this instance with reference to the Lord’s Supper, demonstrates just the opposite. “*The first and great commandment*” (Matthew 22:38), “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*” (v. 37) requires that we disengage our minds from any and all rationalism regarding the Holy Supper (Cf. Zwingli at Marburg). It requires that we honor Jesus’ own words as expressing precisely what they say, namely, “*This IS My body which is given for you...This is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for you.*”

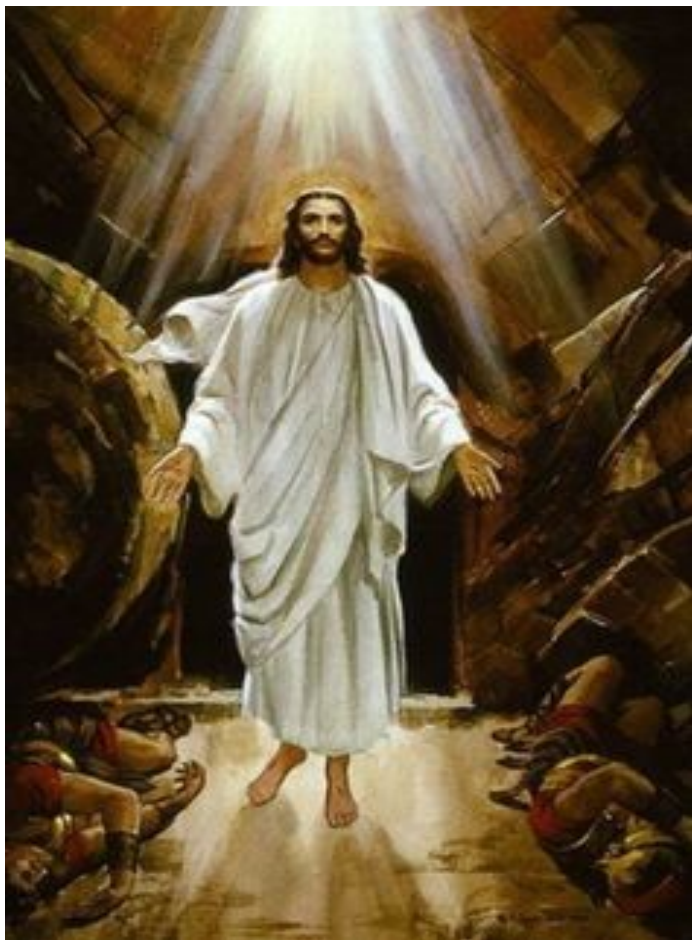
Love toward God requires that we observe Christ’s Supper as HE instituted it and not according to our own choosing (“*THIS do...*” Luke 22:19). It requires that, out of gratitude for our redemption, we do it “*in remembrance of [Him]*” (I Corinthians 11:24), “[*proclaiming*] the Lord’s death til He come” (v. 26) and recognizing that His Supper is NOT a perpetual sacrifice to be offered again and again “for the sins of the living and the dead” (R. C.) but that “*by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified*” (Hebrews 10:14), fully satisfying God’s justice for the reconciliation of the world (II Corinthians 5:19). **Love toward God** requires that, all speaking the same thing, with no divisions among us, “[*be[ing]*] perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Corinthians 1:10) and “[*continu[ing]*] steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship,” we observe “*the [τῆ]breaking of bread*” (Acts 2:42) together **in unity** as “*one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread*” (I Corinthians 10:17).

May God graciously grant, by the effectual working of His Holy Spirit through the Means of His Grace, that we continue to value, treasure and consistently practice the Scriptural observance of “close” or “closed” Communion in our congregations — **out of love** to those who desire to partake of the Sacrament, **out of love** to those who observe our practice as a pure trumpet sound in the battle to maintain true orthodoxy (I Corinthians 14:8), and especially **out of love** to Him who “*first loved us*” (I John 4:19) and gave Himself for us an offering and a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5:2) as “*the propitiation for our sins*” (I John 2:2; Romans 3:24-25) and instituted His Holy Supper “*in*

remembrance of [Him]” (Luke 22:19), so that we gratefully proclaim His death (I Corinthians 11:26) and what His *vicarious atonement* wrought for us and for all mankind (II Corinthians 5:19).

— D. T. M.





The Fact of Christ's Resurrection Is Essential to Our Christian Faith

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” — I Corinthians 15:14

The fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is fundamental to our Christian faith because it deals with the foundation of the Person and Work of the Savior, doctrines necessary to be believed for salvation. Holy Scripture specifically mentions that believing in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is included in saving faith. Speaking of the imputed

righteousness of Christ, the Apostle Paul tells us that the imputation of righteousness to Abraham, by faith alone, was written not for his sake alone *“but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe in Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead”* (Romans 4:24). Later this same apostle again connects saving faith to the fact of the bodily resurrection of Christ declaring: *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”* (Romans 10:9). Therefore, anyone denying the resurrection of Christ (or the doctrine of the general resurrection of the dead) is rightly judged an unbeliever (cf. I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 2:18-19).

Why the fact of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is essential to saving faith is clearly seen in how the fact relates to the Person and Work of the Savior.

Consider His Person. He is, from eternity, the second person of the Holy Trinity, eternal God with the Father and the Holy Ghost (Matthew 17:5; Romans 9:5; I John 5:20; John 1:1-2). As the Only-Begotten of the Father, the Son of God possesses all the divine attributes (including omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence; Matthew 28:20; John 21:17; Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 13:8). In the fulness of time, the eternal Son of God became true man when He took into His divine person a true human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary (Galatians 4:4-5; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; John 1:14). At the very moment of conception, all the divine attributes were also communicated to or shared with His human nature (Colossians 2:9), although during His state of humiliation He did not always and fully use them (Philippians 2:5-8). As the God-Man, Christ, the Anointed One, was able to do all that was necessary to redeem mankind in His threefold office as our Prophet, Priest and King.

Why was it necessary for our Savior to be both true God and true man in one undivided and indivisible person? First of all, it was necessary for Him to be true man to take the place of the human race under God's Law (Galatians 4:4-5). Secondly, He had to be true man so that He could suffer and die under the penalty of the Law, the punishment which the fallen human race deserved (Hebrews 2:14-15; Romans 6:23a). Why was it also necessary for Him to be true God? First of all, He had to fulfill the Law with the righteousness sufficient to satisfy the demands of God's justice for *all men* (Romans 5:19). Secondly, His suffering and death had to be sufficient to redeem *all men* from the guilt and penalty of sin (Psalm 49:7-8; Mark 10:45). Finally, He had to be true God in order to *defeat both death and the devil* (II Timothy 1:10; I Corinthians 15:55-57; I John 3:8b; Hebrews 2:14-15)! Christ accomplished all His work as the God-Man, for which we must be humbly and profoundly grateful,

“giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. ... For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight” (Colossians 1:12-17, 19-22).

How then does the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter morning relate to His **person**? Holy Scripture declares that the resurrection confirms His true identity as the incarnate Son of God, *“Jesus Christ our Lord, which was ...declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).*

How does Christ’s bodily resurrection also relate to His **three-fold office** as our Prophet, Priest and King? Consider Him, first of all, as our **Prophet**: As our Prophet, He revealed Himself by word and deed — by His preaching and by His miracles — as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. His resurrection, which is also the testimony of His Word (*“declared to be...,”* Romans 1:4) was His greatest miracle and the greatest miracle of all time; and it was foretold by Him many times, both indirectly and directly (John 2:19-22; Matthew 12:39-40; 16:21; 17:9; 20:19; 26:32; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34, 14:28; Luke 18:33; 24:7). The fact that He made good on His promise proves that He is our divine Prophet, the True Prophet of God, to whom we should *“hearken”* (Deuteronomy 18:15)!

Consider Him also as our **Priest**: His resurrection proved that God the Father was fully satisfied by His perfect keeping of the Law for mankind (*active obedience*) and His atoning suffering and death for their transgressions (*passive obedience*). The Father accepted both His work and His sacrifice for the redemption of the entire world! Since He died, *“the Just for the unjust”* (I Peter 3:18), bearing the world’s sin and guilt *“in His own body on the tree”* (I Peter 2:24), His resurrection proved He fully paid the debt! His bodily resurrection proves the *vicarious atone-*

ment (Isaiah 53; II Corinthians 5:15a, 21) and the *objective justification* (v. 19). He atoned or made full satisfaction for the guilt of all men by giving that perfect ransom of blood for the whole world (I John 2:1-2; Hebrews 10:14). On the basis of this work (*"in Christ"*), God the Father has declared the entire ungodly world, from Adam to the last soul ever born, reconciled unto Himself and righteous in His sight (II Corinthians 5:19)! Salvation has been obtained for all in Christ, *"who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for [because of] our justification"* (Romans 4:25). God the Father accepted the ransom of His Son on Calvary as payment in full for all sinners, once and for all, not as a *symbolic* sacrifice as earthly high priests offer, *"but this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God"* (Hebrews 10:12). The Apostle Paul speaks to the relationship between Christ paying for our sin (as proved by His resurrection) and the denial of the doctrine of the resurrection (in general) and of Christ's resurrection (in particular) in I Corinthians 15: *"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept"* (vv. 16-20). Follow St. Paul's Scriptural logic given to him by the Holy Ghost through verbal inspiration, and you will clearly see the point. The key line for our purposes is *"If Christ be **not** raised."* Two immediate consequences inevitably follow, namely, *"your faith is in vain,"* that is, useless, to no profit at all, and *"ye are yet in your sins"* because Christ would have failed to atone for them! Sin left unpaid would have kept Him dead! There would be no vicarious satisfaction, no universal redemption, no objective justification, no reconciliation of the whole world! We would have no hope beyond this life! Thanks be to God that Christ **IS** risen from the dead!

His resurrection on the third day also manifests the victory which He obtained over death and the devil for the sake of the entire fallen human race! It proves that He overcame death for sinners! In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read: *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (2:14-15). His resurrection proves that He gained this victory, *"whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it"* (Acts 2:24).

The resurrection of Christ also relates to His office as our divine **King**. His resurrection is the guarantee that He will also raise up our bodies on

the Last Day to enable us to live and reign with Him in life everlasting! Our King lives, and so shall we! Our King, the risen Christ, our Victor over death, has *“become the firstfruits of them that slept”* (I Corinthians 15:20), those who died in saving faith. The fact of the resurrection of Christ assures us that all believers in Christ, although having suffered temporal death, shall not suffer eternal death but enjoy eternal life! *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). The Savior assures us: *“I am the resurrection, and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall **never die** [shall not die **eternally**]”* (John 11:25-26a). The Savior declares to His own: *“Because I live, ye shall live also”* (John 14:19). He comforts us with His victory: *“Fear not; I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen! and have the keys of hell and of death”* (Revelation 1:17c-18). We give all praise to God for this Gospel certainty: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [i.e. living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time”* (I Peter 1:3-5).

This also is our God-wrought confidence, that the very **bodies** of those *“which are fallen asleep in Christ”* (I Corinthians 15:18; I Thessalonians 4:15-16), though decayed, will not have been *“consumed”* for all eternity but will rise again on the Last Day (Job 19:25-27) to live with Christ in a glorious, everlasting life, *“knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus and shall present us with you”* (II Corinthians 4:14). We know that the souls of all true believers in Christ will return with Him on the Last Day to be reunited with their raised and glorified bodies. *“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [come before] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words”* (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Therefore, to deny the fact of the bodily resurrection of Christ is to deny

His saving work, to say that He failed to accomplish the very purpose of His incarnation, life and death; for *“this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”* (I Timothy 1:15). Without Christ’s resurrection we have no Savior, no salvation, no hope for the next life, no hope for those already dead, no hope at all! We would be the most miserable of all men if we believed on “Christ the failure”! We would not have anything to live for! Our Christian life would have no purpose, no power, no motivation at all. For our **new life** is directly connected to the success of Christ’s saving work, as our Baptism shows: *“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection”* (Romans 6:4-5). We would not know the empowering love of Christ, *“for the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him which died for them, and rose again”* (II Corinthians 5:14-15).

Satan knows that the fact of Christ’s bodily resurrection is essential to our Christian faith and has been attacking the doctrine unceasingly. He has done so not only by raising up those who deny the resurrection of the body (Sadducees, Modernists) but also by moving men to try to cover up the historical fact when it happened, using bribery and false witness (cf. Matthew 28:11-15). Already in the time of the early apostolic age, Satan used false teachers to attack the doctrine. The Apostle Paul makes reference to them in these words to Timothy: *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already and overthrow the faith of some”* (II Timothy 2:15-18). Those two errorists spread false doctrine like gangrene and overthrew the faith of some of the early Christians. Their deadly error was to say that the resurrection was already past – over and done with! How they explained this is not indicated. But in this example we see how Satan uses all sorts of variations to deceive souls. Satan does not care what lie a person believes as long as that lie is deadly and supplants the truth, the saving truth of God’s Word! How we are to combat Satan’s lies is obvious and the Apostle pointed that out to Timothy: By using *“the Word of Truth”* (II Timothy 2:15). This is our weapon of offense, the spiritual sword, *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”* (Ephesians 6:17); for *“[God’s] Word is Truth”* (John 17:17).

Our Savior Himself set the perfect example for us in dealing with those who deny the doctrine of the general resurrection of the body when He refuted the Sadducees and successfully avoided the hypothetical spiritual trap they had set for Him: *“Then came to Him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked Him, saying, ‘Master, Moses wrote unto us, ‘If any man’s brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.’ There were therefore seven brethren; and the first took a wife and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her, and in like manner the seven also. And they left no children and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she? For seven had her to wife.’ And Jesus answering said unto them, ‘The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him.’ Then certain of the scribes answering said, ‘Master, Thou hast well said.’ And after that they durst not ask Him any question at all”* (Luke 20:27-40). Our Savior stopped the mouths of those gainsayers with but one Bible reference (Exodus 3:6)! One stroke of *“the Sword of the Spirit”* (Ephesians 6:17) was all He needed to refute them! We have the very same weapon, God’s Word! We are to use it with full confidence and not *“trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead”* (II Corinthians 1:9c, 10:3-5).

Holy Scripture makes it perfectly clear that the fact of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is **essential to our faith and eternal salvation**, as St. Paul declares: *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

**Lo! His redeeming work is done,
 Fought the fight, the battle won.**

Lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er;
Lo, He sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal!
Christ has burst the gates of hell!
Death in vain forbids His rise;
Christ has opened Paradise.

Lives again our glorious King!
Where, O Death, is now thy sting?
Once He died our souls to save!
Where thy victory, O Grave?

(TLH 193, 2-4)

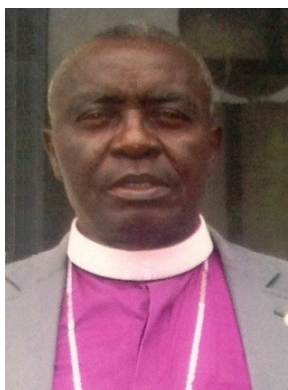
— E. J. W.

In memoriam...

✠ Pastor Elison Bibi Agborubere ✠

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

Our almighty God, in His all-wise providence and at the time appointed by Him according to His grace in Christ Jesus, has summoned out of this vale of tears to Himself in heaven the soul of another of our dear brother pastors in Nigeria. **The Rev. Elison Bibi Agborubere** was one of the beloved pastors of **Salem Lutheran Church** in Abalama, Rivers State, Nigeria; and his presence will be sorely missed.



Pastor Agborubere, by God’s grace alone His humble and faithful servant, was born on July 27, 1950, in Abalama-Asalga to Mr. and Mrs. Bibi Agborubere, both of whom preceded him in death. He originally prepared for a secular career at All Saints College in Lagos. But in 1995 he began his preparation for the Lutheran ministry at Abonnema in the theological training program of the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations in Nigeria*. Upon the successful completion of his theological studies in 2003, he was called to be the pastor of Salem Lutheran Church in Abalama, where he was ordained and installed on December 27, 2003, and served as its shepherd and Christ’s ambassador for more than twelve years until his death.

Pastor Agborubere had been suffering from high blood pressure, diabetes and malaria, and was receiving treatment at a clinic at Port Harcourt since a particularly serious attack in January of this year. In early April, he suddenly slipped into a coma and died peacefully in the early morning hours of April 5th. The Lord in His mercy did not permit Brother Agborubere to be tried beyond his ability in humble, childlike faith to endure those chastisements; but, true to His promise, He made a way to escape them (I Corinthians 10:13), as He does for all His dear children. Having left behind *“the sufferings of this present time”* (Romans 8:18), our dear brother was received into the glorious peace and rest of heaven, where in God’s presence he now experiences only *“fulness of joy [and] pleasures”* at [His] right hand forevermore (Psalm 16:11).

Pastor Agborubere is survived by his beloved wife, Ayafe, and six grown children. The care of the congregation is now in the hands of the two remaining co-shepherds of the flock, Pastor Balaiyi Thompson and Pastor Bateinm Bestman; and we wish them God's continued blessings upon their work to His glory. We confidently commit the Agborubere family and the sheep and lambs of Salem Lutheran Church, as well as all the dear sorrowing brethren in the F. L. C. N., to the tender, loving care of our Savior, whose comfort in the Gospel is confirmed to all of us in the inspired words of the Apostle Paul and enables us to comfort one another: *"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God; for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ"* (II Corinthians 1:3-5).

According to our latest information from Nigeria, funeral arrangements are still pending. Pastor Agborubere's presence will be greatly missed by his family, his brother pastors, the sheep and lambs of his flock, and by the wider fellowship of the F. L. C. N. and of our Conference; and we share with all of them their tears in this bereavement (Romans 12:15). At the same time, we rejoice in Pastor Agborubere's salvation by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, and look forward to our own blessed departure to be with Christ, with our dear brother, and with all true believers in that *"far better"* home in heaven (Philippians 1:23).

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth! Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." —Revelation 14:13

—**Pastor David T. Mensing**
Concordia Lutheran Conference President
and Chairman of the Committee on Missions



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

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

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. Balaiyi Thompson and The Rev. 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

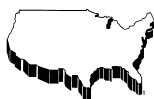
The Rev. Nimi B. Fyneyface and

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: njohnfyneyface@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.

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

Telephone (520) 721-7618

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.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Telephone: (708) 532-4288

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

Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355

Telephone: (541) 258-2941

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

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

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.

Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

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.

Worship Service 4:00 p.m.

Telephone: (708) 757-6859

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.

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

Telephone: (708) 386-6773

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

Pastor: (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@gmail.com

**The Sixty-Fifth
Annual Convention
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference
June 24th, 25th and 26th, 2016**

at
St Luke's Lutheran Church
Seattle, Washington
The Rev. Edward J. Worley, Pastor

with the
Plenary Pastoral Conference
on June 21st and 22nd
and the
Board of Directors Meeting on June 23rd

Convention Motto and Essay:
**The Holy Scriptures —
All-Sufficient for Our Christian Life**

**The Friday Keynote Sermon is on II Timothy 3:16-17
by President David T. Mensing**

**The Sunday Convention Sermon is on Romans 12:1-2
by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel**