

*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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steadfast in  
Thy Word”

— TLH 261,1

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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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## “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word”

This hymn, #261 in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941), is a prayer to the Triune God: Stanza 1 – to the heavenly Father; Stanza 2 – to the Son of God; Stanza 3 – to the Holy Ghost. The writer of this hymn-prayer was Dr. Martin Luther around the year 1541. However, the hymn was not published until two years later in Joseph Klug’s *Gesangbuch* [Hymnbook] with this title: “A Children’s Hymn, to be Sung against the Two Arch-enemies of Christ and His Holy Church, the Pope and the Turk.” These two enemies are identified in the first verse of the original translation of this hymn, as it appeared in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnbook* (1924-40) as Hymn #274:

Lord, keep us in Thy Word and work;  
restrain the murderous Pope and Turk,  
who fain would tear from off Thy throne  
Christ Jesus, Thy beloved Son.

Though this pointed identification was removed from the translation in favor of the more general wording which we have today, it is undeniable that the efforts of both “Pope and Turk,” namely, of the Papacy and of Islam, to undermine the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and its wonderful result in God’s justification of the world for His sake, are as much a threat to true Christianity today as they were in 1541.

Christian, God-pleasing prayer, such as we have in this hymn before us, is an on-going fruit of saving faith in Christ Jesus and in His vicarious, substitutionary obedience, suffering, and death for “*the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2b). To satisfy God’s demand that all human beings be “*holy*” (Leviticus 19:2b) and “*perfect*” (Matthew 5:48a) as He is holy and perfect, “*God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4-5a). This Son of God, Christ Jesus, kept and obeyed the Law of God perfectly, not for Himself, but for us and for all other guilty sinners. His perfect obedience, including also His sinless suffering and death as the “*one Mediator between God and men*” (I Timothy 2:5), paid the full price to God, satisfying His holiness and justice, moving Him to declare all sinners “*righteous*” (Romans 5:19b)

before Him, “*not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19a). This righteousness and forgiveness of sins for all are priceless gifts from God through the sinless and perfect work of Christ! All true believers receive this righteousness of Christ *by faith* as St. Paul declared in Romans 10: “*Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth*” (v. 4). For the Christian, Christ Jesus is “*the Lord, our righteousness*” (Jeremiah 23:6b). Because of this imputed righteousness from our dear Savior, believers are identified again and again in the Scriptures as “*righteous*” (Genesis 18:23; Psalm 1:5-6; Matthew 25:37 and 46; James 5:16; etc., etc.). By the priceless grace of God in Christ, received by faith, the children of God can and do confess: “*We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*” (Hebrews 4:15-16). It is most certainly true that Christian, God-pleasing prayer, such as we have in Hymn 261, is an on-going fruit of saving faith in Christ Jesus and in His vicarious, substitutionary obedience, suffering, and death for “*the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). On the other hand, the prayers of unbelievers, no matter how sincere they might be, are an “*abomination*” to God, as we are told in Proverbs 28: “*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abomination*” (v. 9); “*for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*” (I Peter 3:12).

The opening stanza of Hymn 261 we prayer to our dear heavenly Father:

Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word.  
 Curb those who fain [eagerly] by craft and sword  
 would wrest the kingdom from Thy Son  
 and set at naught all He hath done.

This prayer is as timely today as it was 473 years ago. We also, every day of our earthly lives, need the Lord’s “*help*” (Psalm 121:2a) in remaining “*faithful unto death*” (Revelation 2:10), faithful to His Word and “*all things*” (Matthew 28:20a) which He has taught us and continues to teach us from His Word of truth and grace. “Lord God, heavenly Father, help us never to waver in confessing to Thee by our words and by our actions the declaration of the psalmist: ‘*Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counselors. ...Through Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path*’ (Psalm 119:24, 104-105).”

Our dear heavenly Father, through the Apostle Paul, keeps on conveying this important instruction to His followers: “*Be careful for nothing* [Don’t worry about anything]; *but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:6-7). No matter what opposition we experience because “*we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth*” (II Corinthians 13:8) of God’s Word, and no matter what threats (verbal and/or physical) come our way because we will not go along with “*a little leaven*” (Galatians 5:9) of false “*doctrine*” (Matthew 16:12b) and practice which does not agree with the teaching of God’s Word, let us not be filled with worry and anxiety, but let us, by God’s “*grace*” alone (I Corinthians 15:10), bring our prayers and requests to Him who “*sitteth in the heavens* [and] *shall laugh*” (Psalm 2:4) at those who oppose Him, those who oppose His Son, the Savior of the world, those who oppose the saving Gospel of Christ, which alone can save souls from the everlasting consequences of sin, and those who oppose His faithful followers. How true and how comforting for God’s children are the words of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15: “*Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (v. 57), victory not only over sin, death, and the grave, but also victory over the devil, over hell, and over all enemies of the teachings of His Word.

Stanza two of this Reformation hymn is a petition to the Son of God:

Lord Jesus Christ, Thy pow’r make known,  
for Thou art Lord of lords alone.  
Defend Thy Christendom that we  
may evermore sing praise to Thee.

The Savior of the world, Christ Himself, testified in Revelation 1: “*I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*” (v. 8). St. Paul, in Ephesians 5, identified the Lord Jesus Christ as “*the Head of the Church*” (v. 23b), the almighty Head over the Communion of Saints, over all the righteous in heaven and all the righteous here on earth. He is most certainly worthy of the name “*King of kings and Lord of lords*” (Revelation 19:16b). The Apostle Paul affirmed, in the closing verses of Ephesians 1, that the heavenly Father resurrected Christ “*from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*” (vv. 20b-23).

This Jesus is our almighty Helper. He has declared to all of His disciples: *“All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth”* (Matthew 28:18). St. Paul teaches us that in Christ Jesus *“dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”* (Colossians 2:9), that is, according to His human nature He has been given all the divine attributes (which most certainly include His omnipotence, His almighty power) from His divine nature as the everlasting Son of God. Together with the heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost, our Lord Jesus Christ is *“our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. ...The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge”* (Psalm 46:1-3 and 7). This is why we, His *“branches”* (John 15:5a), His *“friends”* (John 15:15), can with Godly *“confidence ...ask”* (I John 5:14a) Him to keep on being our daily *“Defense”* (Psalm 7:10a) against our no-good *“flesh”* (Romans 7:18a), against *“our adversary, the devil, [who] as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”* (I Peter 5:8b), and against the temporary, wicked *“world,”* which is devoted to *“the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life”* (I John 2:16). Our dear Lord Jesus Christ, with His heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit, assures us of His gift of spiritual equipment for successfully fighting against our spiritual enemies when, through the Apostle Paul, He gives us this perfect counsel: *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”* (Ephesians 6:10-17). Here is the sure and certain defense for Christians, whether they lived in 1541 (when Hymn 261 was written) or whether they live, as we do, in 2014.

Having the Lord Jesus Christ as our Defender, our *“Advocate”* (I John 2:1b), our *“good Shepherd, the good Shepherd [who] giveth His life for the sheep”* (John 10:11), and our only *“Way”* (John 14:6a) to heaven, we have many, many, many reasons to sing *“praises”* (Acts 16:25b) to Him, to *“give thanks”* (Psalm 118:1a) to Him, to *“worship”* (Matthew 4:10b) Him, and to *“glorify”* (I Corinthians 6:20b) Him because He *“hath loved us and*

*hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor*” (Ephesians 5:2b), and furthermore, because He *“hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree’”* (Galatians 3:13).

Regardless of how we are treated as the servants of Christ, let us remember the encouragement of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4, *“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice”* (v. 4), even as we are taught in II Timothy 3 that *“evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived”* (v. 13). Whether it was in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century or whether it is in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, God’s *“people”* (I Peter 2:10b) cannot help but rejoice because of the divine assurances in Romans 8: *“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us’”* (vv. 28 and 35-37).

Now on to the third and final verse of Hymn 261, which is a supplication to God, the Holy Ghost:

O Comforter of priceless worth,  
send peace and unity on earth;  
support us in our final strife  
and lead us out of death to life.

The Holy Ghost is given the endearing name of *“Comforter.”* Jesus, in John 14, not only uses this name to identify the Holy Ghost, but He also shows us, His disciples of all time, why this Comforter, the Holy Ghost, is of *“priceless worth,”* when He says: *“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”* (v. 26).

In this third hymn verse, we are praying and singing to the Holy Ghost, our divine Comforter, asking Him to send and keep sending true, God-pleasing peace and true God-pleasing unity on earth. — What is true, God-pleasing peace? It is that peace from God proclaimed objectively in the Gospel to the world of sinners (cf. Luke 2:10-14, esp. v. 14) on account of the vicarious atonement by *“the*

*Prince of Peace*” (Isaiah 9:6b), Christ Jesus, that peace received personally by faith, as the Apostle Paul, in Romans 5, declared: “*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (v. 1). We ask the Holy Ghost, through “*the Gospel of peace*” (Ephesians 6:15b), to bring the peace of God in Christ to broken and contrite hearts here on earth. — What is true, God-pleasing unity? It that unity which the Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 4, spoke of when he urged his fellow believers to endeavor “*to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (v. 3). This is not unity “at-any-cost;” this is not unity in *false* doctrine and practice; this is not unity which is *contrary to* the Word of God (Romans 16:17-18; I Timothy 6:3-5; etc.). But this is *God-pleasing* unity as defined by the Holy Ghost in I Corinthians 1: “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (v. 10) as those who are “*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*” (Ephesians 2:20), “*continue in [Christ’s] Word*” (John 8:31) and “*speak as [His] oracles*” (I Peter 4:11). It is this unity which we implore the Holy Ghost to bring about and preserve, through His Word, more and more here in this world (cf. John 17:20-21).

“O Comforter of priceless worth, support us with Thy precious Gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus; ‘strengthen and preserve us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end’ (Luther: *Third Petition*); and, when we come to the end of our earthly lives, stand by us (Psalm 23:4), leading us by Thy Word of truth and grace out of and through temporal, bodily death to heaven, where we will ‘*be with Christ, which is far better*’ (Philippians 1:23b) than anything here on earth; ‘*for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*’ (Philippians 1:21).”

“*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever. Amen*” (Jude 24-25).

—R. J. L.

## ***The Formula of Concord on Martin Luther***

*“By the special grace and mercy of the Almighty, the doctrine concerning the chief articles of our Christian religion (which under the Papacy had been horribly obscured by human teachings and ordinances) were explained and purified again **from God’s Word** by Dr. Luther, of blessed and holy memory.” (847, 1.)*

*“In these last times, God, out of special grace, has brought the truth of His Word to light again from the darkness of the Papacy through the faithful service of the precious man of God, Dr. Luther.” (851, 5.)*



## „Lutheranism“ — *What's in a Name?*



For those who know and appreciate the faithful Scriptural teachings of Dr. Martin Luther, it can be quite disturbing to see the name of Luther associated with church bodies that blatantly teach contrary to what is clearly set forth in the Bible and the *Lutheran Confessions*. Perhaps the most egregious example of this is found in the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), which also happens to be the largest “Lutheran” church

body in the United States. And while an obvious argument could be made that those who so thoroughly depart from sound Lutheran (Biblical) teachings have no business calling themselves “Lutherans,” there are also those who advance the argument that *no churches* and *no Christians* should be called *Lutheran*. One notable person who asserted that point quite strongly was Luther himself. In 1522 he wrote “*A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to All Christians to Guard against Insurrection and Rebellion*,” in which the Reformer firmly stated: “I ask that men make no reference to my name; let them call themselves Christians, not Lutherans. What is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine. Neither was I crucified for anyone. ...How then should I—poor stinking maggot-fodder that I am—come to have men call the children of Christ by my wretched name? Not so, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians, after Him whose teachings we hold” (*Luther's Works*, American Edition, Vol. 45, pp. 70–71).

So then why do we call ourselves “Lutherans”? Why does every single congregation in our Conference (as well as the Conference itself) have the word “Lutheran” in its name? What does it even *mean* to be truly “Lutheran”? It certainly does *not* mean that we worship Luther, or make him our “Pope,” or place his writings on a par with the Bible; nor do we praise and defend everything that Luther ever said or did. On the contrary, we readily acknowledge that he was a fallible, sinful human being (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 5:12). But by calling ourselves “Lutherans,” we testify that we follow the example of Luther in holding firmly to the teachings of Holy Scripture and rejecting the doctrines of men (cf. Matthew 15:9)—including all teachings based upon tradition

or rationalism. Furthermore, by calling ourselves “Lutherans,” we also confess that we believe and teach without reservation the doctrines that Luther and the other faithful men who aligned themselves with him set down in writing and included in the *Lutheran Confessions*, namely, the *Small and Large Catechisms of Luther*, the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology [Defense] of the Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, and the *Formula of Concord*.

Now if we believe that the doctrines set forth in those *Lutheran Confessions* are a correct exposition of what the Bible teaches in the matters which they treat, then we must not seek to disassociate ourselves from them (and from the correct teachings of Scripture by extension) by shunning the title “Lutheran.” Later in the same year as the above-cited quotation from Luther (1522), while still maintaining that he did *not* want his followers calling themselves “Lutherans,” he also rebuked those who sought *privately* to align themselves with him but, in order to avoid persecution, *publicly* disavowed the name of Luther. In his “*Receiving Both Kinds in the Sacrament*,” Luther writes:

There are some among them [those whom Satan has now begun to persecute] who think that when they are attacked they can escape the danger by saying, “I do not hold with Luther or with anyone else but only with the holy Gospel and the holy church, or with the Roman church.” For saying so they think they will be left in peace. Yet in their hearts they regard my teaching as the teaching of the Gospel and stand by it. In reality this kind of statement does not help them, and it is in effect a denial of Christ. Therefore, I beg such people to be very careful. (*Luther’s Works*, American Edition, Vol. 36, p. 265).

He goes on to say: “If you are convinced that Luther’s teaching is in accord with the Gospel and that the Pope’s is not, then you should not discard Luther so completely, lest with him you discard also his teaching, which you nevertheless recognize as Christ’s teaching.” Luther then accentuates his point by referring to how the Apostle Paul told Timothy: “*Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner*” (II Timothy 1:8), saying:

If it had been enough here for Timothy to confess the Gospel, Paul would not have commanded him not to be ashamed also of Paul—not of Paul as a person but of Paul as a prisoner for the sake of the Gospel. Now if Timothy had said, “I do not hold with Paul or with Peter, but

with Christ,” when he knew that Peter and Paul were teaching Christ, then he would actually thereby have denied Christ Himself. (*Luther’s Works*, American Edition, *op. cit.*, p. 266).

Similarly, since we acknowledge that Luther was a faithful teacher of God’s Word, we are not ashamed to align ourselves with him by calling ourselves “Lutherans.”

It would certainly be wrong and sinful if we were to call ourselves “Lutherans” either because we were following Luther instead of Christ, or if we were using that title to make unbrotherly divisions within a group of like-minded Christians. We would then need to be admonished and corrected with the reproof given by St. Paul to the Corinthians, saying: “*Every one of you saith, ‘I am of Paul;’ and ‘I of Apollos;’ and ‘I of Cephas;’ and ‘I of Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*” (I Corinthians 1:12–13). “*For while one saith, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?*” (I Corinthians 3:4–5). Thus it is important that we clearly explain what we mean and what we do *not* mean when we call ourselves “Lutherans.” Dr. C. F. W. Walther reports that Georg, Margrave of Brandenburg, at the time of the Reformation, responded to an accusation (which was meant to be an insult) that he was “Lutheran” by stating:

I have not been baptized on Luther. He is not my God and Savior. I do not believe in him, nor will I be saved by him. And in that sense, therefore, I am not a Lutheran. But if I am asked, if with heart and mouth I confess the doctrine that God has given once more through His salutary instrument, Dr. Luther, then I have no second thoughts or shame over calling myself Lutheran; and in this sense I am and will remain a Lutheran my whole life (“*Der Lutheraner*,” Vol. 1, No. 4, October 19, 1844, page 15, translated by Joel Baseley).

That kind of clear distinction is good for *us* to make when we are asked about why *we* use the name Lutheran in a description of *our* Christian faith.

Now some would say that, when talking to others about our religious beliefs, it is wiser to avoid mentioning Luther or the *Lutheran Confessions* but to restrict ourselves to statements such as: “I’m a Christian,

and I believe what the Bible teaches.” Such an expression is certainly good and true; however, it is not really saying *enough* about what we believe, since Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Pentecostals, Methodists, non-denominational Evangelicals, etc. (even the anti-Trinitarian Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses) also call themselves “Christians” and also say that they believe what the Bible teaches. We would definitely not want people to confuse what *we* believe with what those *other* groups teach and profess; nor would we want them to think that we all basically share the *same* faith. Thus we call ourselves “Lutherans” so that we distinguish ourselves from other so-called “Christian” groups, which teach a great many things contrary to the Scriptures. Likewise, we use creedal statements, such as those found in the *Lutheran Confessions* and not simply state, “The Bible is our creed,” so that we distinguish ourselves from the many other groups who *say* that they believe and follow the Bible, though they really do not. Other titles that could apply to us in certain respects, such as “Protestant,” “Evangelical,” or “Reformed,” might sufficiently disassociate us from the Romanists and the Eastern Orthodox, but would not testify to any differences between us and the rest of outward Christendom.

But the name “Lutheran” *does* mark an important distinction in the Protestant landscape. *Non-Lutheran* Protestants—which can basically be broken down into the two categories of Arminian Reformed and Calvinistic Reformed—typically distort, on the basis of human reason, the pure doctrines of God’s Word in their teachings (particularly in the areas of Christology and the Sacraments). For example, unlike the Reformed, true Lutherans accept what the Bible teaches about the true, *real* body and blood of Christ being present in, with, and under the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper (Matthew 26:26–28; I Corinthians 10:16; 11:27); and, unlike the Reformed, true Lutherans accept what the Bible teaches about the benefits of Baptism as a “*washing of regeneration*” (Titus 3:5), as a means through which the forgiveness of sins is offered, given, and sealed (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and thus as a means through which sinners are saved (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21). Distinguishing themselves from the other religious groups that arose in the wake of the Reformation, those who have followed the Scriptural example and teachings of Luther have, down through the years, used the name “Lutheran” as a testimony to their faithful adherence to the Bible, since Luther was a faithful teacher of the Scriptures, and since the *Lutheran Confessions* rightly set forth the doctrines of God’s Word in the matters which they treat.

However, there have been many false teachers and false churches and church bodies that have also used the name “Lutheran.” Shortly after Luther’s death, there were those who called themselves “Lutherans” but taught contrary to what Luther rightly taught on the basis of Holy Scripture (F. Bente, Historical Introductions, §131, *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 103). For example, Philip Melancthon, who many people believed would continue to defend and promote the true doctrine as taught by Luther, began advancing a false teaching known as *synergism*—the teaching that man must work together with the Holy Ghost in order to bring about his conversion (either by active cooperation with the Spirit, or by lesser resistance)—contrary to such passages as I Corinthians 2:14; 12:3; Ephesians 2:1–9, as well as the excellent statement of Luther in his Small Catechism: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith” (*The Third Article, What Does This Mean?*). Indeed, not all who call themselves “Lutherans” believe and teach what Luther believed and taught.

Just because a church or denomination calls itself something, does not mean that its self-designation is accurate or factual. For example, the *Roman Catholic Church* is not *catholic* or “universal” in the true sense of the word, for that would mean that it is the very *Una Sancta*—the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints (the whole number of true believers in Christ). Likewise, the *Eastern Orthodox Church* is not *orthodox* in the true sense of the word, for that would mean that it teaches correctly in every point of Christian doctrine (“*ortho-*” = pure; “*dox*” = doctrine). Similarly, just because a church calls itself *Lutheran* does not mean that it follows in the footsteps of Luther and the faithful Lutheran confessors of old. No, within “Lutheranism” nowadays, the basic Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) is not consistently taught or followed, since so many teachings and practices that the Scriptures clearly condemn are promoted or at least allowed to continue without correction. The ELCA as a group does not even take the Bible literally in matters such as the creation of all things in six 24-hour days and the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In the LCMS (Missouri Synod), there is no consistency of doctrine and practice; thus the Scriptures are not rightly used “*for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” (II Timothy 3:16), nor do these “Lutherans” “*shun profane and vain babblings*” (II Timothy 2:16) in their midst. The WELS (Wisconsin

Synod) —as well as the COLC and ELS— do not “*hold fast the form of sound words*” (II Timothy 1:13) but distort the clear teachings of Holy Scripture in the doctrine of the Church and its Ministry on the basis of human investigation and creative interpretations. Manifestly, therefore, it should be understood that randomly trolling in the sea of “Lutheranism” in the hopes of finding a church body that is faithful to God’s Word is not a wise course of action.

Thankfully, those who desire to find a true-teaching local Christian congregation need not haphazardly stumble through a list of all the different church bodies and denominations that have nice sounding, even “Lutheran,” names. The Lord has given us the Scriptures to use in determining what visible churches are true and which ones are false. So if a local church or a church body teaches and/or practices contrary to what is taught in the Bible and refuses to hear and to heed correction (cf. *Brief Statement*, §29), that is a *heterodox* (“*hetero-*” = other than [pure]; “*dox*” = doctrine) congregation or church body and one to be avoided (no matter whether or not it has “Lutheran” in its name). “*Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them*” (Romans 16:17). Emphasizing the importance of testing with Holy Scripture all those who claim to be teachers of God’s Word, the Apostle John writes: “*Believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world*” (I John 4:1). By the grace of God alone, we in the *Concordia Lutheran Conference* are able to pass that test; and all our members are encouraged to verify what they are taught with what is clearly written in the Bible, as did the Bereans with respect to the teachings of Paul (Acts 17:11). Furthermore, we invite those outside our Conference who are curious about what we teach to contact any of our pastors to give them opportunity to testify and to demonstrate both *what* we believe and *why* we believe it on the basis of Holy Scripture (I Peter 3:15).

Even though using the name “Lutheran” *does* distinguish us from many different false-teaching groups, it does *not* distinguish us from other false teaching churches that also use “Lutheran” in their names, as we have pointed out above. Thus, we further specify that we are *CLC* Lutherans, or Lutherans of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*. And, thankfully, that title *does* give a clear testimony concerning what is taught in *our* congregations and in our seminary, what is printed in our official organ, and what is publicly available in our confessional

documents (See [www.concordialutheranconf.com](http://www.concordialutheranconf.com)). May God the Holy Ghost continue to preserve us in the full truth and purity of His precious Word in both doctrine and practice! And may we never be ashamed to declare our doctrinal agreement with Luther or any other faithful preacher of the Gospel (II Timothy 1:8)!

—P. E. B.

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## Luther's Lament

Even before Luther's death, false "Lutherans" were perverting the true teachings of the Lutheran church. How might Martin Luther react to the perversions in Lutheranism today? We suspect with the same type of indignation that we see below. Excerpt taken from Luther's *Preface to the Smalcald Articles*.

*What shall I say? How shall I complain? I am still living, writing, preaching, and lecturing daily; [and] yet there are found such spiteful men, not only among the adversaries, but also false brethren that profess to be on our side, as dare to cite my writings and doctrine directly against myself, and let me look on and listen, although they know well that I teach otherwise, and as wish to adorn their venom with my labor, and under my name to [deceive and] mislead the poor people. [Good God!] Alas! what first will happen when I am dead ?*

*Indeed, I ought to reply to everything while I am still living. But, again, how can I alone stop all the mouths of the devil? especially of those (as they all are poisoned) who will not hear or notice what we write, but solely exercise themselves with all diligence how they may most shamefully pervert and corrupt our word in every letter. These I let the devil answer, or at last God's wrath, as they deserve.*

*(Concordia Triglotta, p. 455)*

## *Stewardship of Time and Energy on the Part of Christian Catechumens*

*“Walk circumspectly...redeeming the time”* (Ephesians 5:15a, 16a)

A Christian is informed by God’s Word regarding his status before God in reference to all he *is* and all he *has*. All he *is* as a Christian he owes to God, so that he freely confesses from the heart, *“By the grace of God I am what I am”* (I Corinthians 15:10a). Moreover, all he *has* he owes to God; for all good gifts and blessings are bestowed upon a Christian from the storehouse of God’s grace. A true believer in Christ cheerfully acknowledges that *“every good gift...is from above, and cometh down from the Father”* (James 1:17a). Every genuine follower of Christ knows the answer to this question posed in Holy Writ: *“What hast thou that thou didst not receive?”* (I Corinthians 4:7).

Because a Christian owes everything to God’s gracious bestowal of all spiritual and temporal benefits, he is only a steward of such gifts. What is a steward? A steward is anyone who takes care of another’s property and is held accountable for such stewardship. The chief qualification for being a good steward is the basic requirement of *faithfulness* (I Corinthians 4:2). Stewards must administer what is entrusted to them according to the owner’s will. They answer to their master. A *Christian* steward must ask himself on a constant basis such probing questions as these: *“How conscientiously am I managing what my divine Master has given me?”* *“Am I doing all I can, by His grace, to use what I have been given to His glory?”* *“How dedicated have I been to doing things the way my Master wants?”* *“Have I been trustworthy in how I use the resources God has given me?”*

These self-diagnosing questions cannot be answered honestly and candidly unless the steward compares his stewardship to the norm that God, the Owner, has revealed in His Word. God’s Word has all the steward needs to judge his stewardship as to faithfulness: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (II Timothy 3:16-17).

St. Paul, in these verses from Ephesians 5, informs stewards about God’s grace and gifts, which is our particular focus in our present article:

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (vv. 15-17). Ephesians 4 begins with an exhortation for Christians to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith [they] are called” (v. 1b). Called by the grace of Christ’s Gospel, converted by the same through that good news of Christ’s righteousness imputed to sinners and His blood-ransom payment for all sin and guilt, Christians are to live as those who have been graciously redeemed from hell to eternal life in heaven. Their *walk* is how they think, speak and act; their life *in* this world but no longer of this world (Ephesians 4:17-5:12; cf. John 17:15). At the time of their Baptism, after they were made children of God by “the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3:5), this *walk* was referenced in a very specific manner as they renounced Satan with all his works and ways and vowed to serve the only true God, the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, exclusively! This *walk* is also taught of God by a Christian father, whose stewardship of his children in their Christian education in the *home* is clearly delineated: “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). The pastor of a Christian congregation is to do all he can, by God’s grace alone, to support this Christian education by his *pastoral* instruction, using God’s Word as prescribed by the Master (I Peter 5:2; II Timothy 4:2). The pastor, entrusted with the spiritual care of Christ’s sheep and lambs (John 21:15-17), is held accountable for this stewardship: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17). Although the text before us (Ephesians 5:15-17) speaks to *all* Christians, young and old, our present topic applies it specifically to “Christian Catechumens” and speaks to *their* stewardship of their *time* and *energy*. While it is certainly true that God holds fathers accountable for bringing up their children in the Lord’s nurture and admonition, and pastors for feeding Christ’s lambs, each individual catechetical student is also directly responsible to God for his stewardship of time and energy devoted to his studies in and out of class (John 5:39; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Luke 11:28; etc.).

Catechism student: Do you walk “*circumspectly*”? What does that mean? Do you think, speak and act *ever watchful* to do what God, your Master, Lord and Savior, wants you to do? Do you take primary responsibility for your own conduct and for what you do with your life? Do you remember that God sees what you think, say and do? Certainly

a child of God, according to the New Man of faith within him, desires to do that, even though his sinful flesh still influences him in the opposite direction (Romans 7:15-23; Galatians 5:17).

The text tells us not to walk “*as fools*.” A fool thinks and acts contrary to God’s will, ignoring it, denying it, disobeying it. The fool is really an unbeliever who opposes God’s will “*because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God*” (Romans 8:7-8). A Christian catechumen is to walk, not according to his sinful flesh, as a fool does, but according to his regenerate nature: “*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. ... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*” (Romans 8:9a, 14). To be “*wise*” means to walk according to God’s will, in the context of our article using the best means to the desired end of learning God’s Word. Such effort by a Christian catechumen glorifies Him, the Master, by faithful stewardship of His gifts, specifically, of one’s time and energy devoted to study in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!

With God-wrought initiative and industry, as He works within the Christian catechumen “*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13), the student wisely walks as one “*redeeming the time*.” To *redeem* means “to buy back.” What “*time*” are we buying back by walking in wisdom? In the Greek New Testament there are two words translated as *time* in our King James translation. The one is *chronos*, the linear “tick-tock” of seconds, minutes, days, months and years. This is the time measured by a chronometer (clock or watch), and it is said to “march inexorably on.” But here in our text, another word is used, namely, *kairos*. This word refers to special *seasons* that occur during chronological time, periods marked by memorable events that often have a lasting effect on a person. These *times* are opportunities to do what our Lord and Master wills by making the most of them.

Applying this to catechetical studies reveals how faithful an individual student has been, how wise his walk has been. Consider class time. As a catechumen, do you arrive prepared to hear, learn, actively participate, ask questions for your understanding, offer comments which edify your teacher and fellow students? Do you arrive physically ready to work? Have you the mindset that you are there to *work* and to *learn*, which requires a mind not tired or distracted and, a body not fatigued and listless? Are you an *active* student? Are you *zealous* to grow in grace and

knowledge (II Peter 3:18)? Or do you come expecting the teacher to provide *all* the effort and energy to get something accomplished? Do you expect the teacher to do *all* the work to keep you awake, focused, and participating? Are you *eager* to be taught and also to learn, or are you in class merely as a passive listener"? And, if your *class* effort is lackluster, what about your *home* effort?

Faithful pastors admonish and exhort parents (fathers especially, as those chiefly responsible – Ephesians 6:4) not only to monitor the *daily* work at home but to *prepare* their children before the pastor's instruction by actually *doing the teaching* of the basics at home (Deuteronomy 6:7). As a student, do you wait for your parents to "order" you to study? Do you place your study of God's Word behind lesser things? Consider this stewardship instruction and promise: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33). How much do you make of "*the time*" that you have at your disposal? Do you "*redeem*" the special opportunities you have each day to focus due attention on your study of the *One Thing Needful*? Or do you, like Martha, become distracted and even encumbered with other things? "*Jesus answered and said unto her, 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her'*" (Luke 10:41-42).

It is not only sad and shameful, but a sin before God, for a Christian steward simply to waste the opportunities presented to him to do his Master's will (James 4:17). But our text tells us that more is involved here: "*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil*" (vv. 15-16). The days — the basic units of chronological time — "*are evil*," devoted to sin and Satan, subject to foolishness, and contrary to God's will. The so-called "space-time continuum," created by God, in which we live in as sinful creatures, has been under bondage to evil since the fall of mankind (Romans 8:20-21)! This bondage to corruption must not be what controls Christians: "*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law but under grace*" (Romans 6:12-14).

Do you allow "*the evil*" (Romans 7:19) which, like a tyrant, rules the

days of all unbelievers on earth, to interfere with your stewardship? How so? By allowing your rebellious flesh to deter, distract and frustrate your new man as he seeks to grow in the study of God's Word! The flesh loves to avoid responsibility and procrastinates. "Hey, let's spend some time 'chilling' — a little X-Box, a little TV, a little surfing the web!" "Dude, you need time to recover from school! Homework can wait; so can your Confirmation class assignment! You need to decompress!" And so on and so on. "So much to do, and no time to do it; so ... skip it!"

Neglect and procrastination beget trouble when they "hatch" (James 1:14-15). Then your flesh resents the "guilt trip" parents and pastors bring to the table. This scenario grows more burdensome over time, and soon "the 800-pound gorilla in the room" cannot be ignored. Consequences come down on you. Your flesh gets even more incensed. "Man, this Catechism stuff is ruining all my fun! I'm a prisoner in solitary confinement! It's just not fair!" Excuse me!! "Who and what should be motivating me?" you should be asking yourself. As a Christian you already know the answer: "*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor. ...Wherefore be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is*" (Ephesians 5:1-2, 17). Having been made "*wise unto salvation*" (II Timothy 3:15b), you should be ashamed for allowing fleshly thoughts and attitudes to interfere with your stewardship of the "*manifold grace of God*" (I Peter 4:10)! You have been given "*time*" to "*redeem*" —wonderful opportunities every "*evil day*" (Ephesians 6:13b) to make the most of them to God's glory and your own great spiritual and temporal benefit (I Corinthians 10:31)!

The power and motive for faithful stewardship is solely the grace of Christ, the dear Savior, who gave His all for us poor, miserable, guilty and undeserving sinners! "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich*" (II Corinthians 8:9; cf. I Timothy 2:5-6). A faithful steward of God's gifts, moved by the Son of God's sacrificial and saving love, asks: "*What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?*" (Psalm 116:12). What is the answer given in Holy Writ? "*I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people*" (Psalm 116:13-14).

When you were baptized, you vowed to be a good steward in serving

the True God exclusively. Pay that vow unto the Lord daily! Repent of your past failures and, by God's empowering grace, say: *"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20). *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Philippians 4:13). May God ever bless us in *"redeeming the time,"* especially as we *"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior"* by the faithful study of His Word.

— E. J. W.



*"Be ye not unwise but understanding  
what the will of the Lord is."*

Ephesians 5:17

## **Luther on Learning and the Catechism**

*Alas! as it is, the common people regard the Gospel altogether too lightly, and we accomplish nothing extraordinary even though we use all diligence. What, then, will be achieved if we shall be negligent and lazy as we were under the Papacy?*

*To this there is added the shameful vice and secret infection of security and satiety, that is, that many regard the Catechism as a poor, mean teaching, which they can read through at one time, and then immediately know it, throw the book into a corner, and be ashamed, as it were, to read in it again .*

*I am also a doctor and preacher, yea, as learned and experienced as all those may be who have such presumption and security; yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism, and every morning, and whenever I have time, I read and say, word for word, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, etc. And I must still read and study daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and am glad so to remain.*

(Excerpts from Luther's Preface to the *Large Catechism*)

## **An Update from the Committee on Missions**

**Christianity is the absolutely perfect religion** for two reasons:

**1. It offers and gives the perfect salvation.** The Christian religion does not ask sinful human beings to make peace with God through their own “works” (Ephesians 2:9a) and their own efforts, but it teaches sinful human beings to receive by “faith” (v. 8b) the perfect, already-accomplished “*peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1b), the “*one Mediator between God and men, ... who gave Himself a ransom for all*” (I Timothy 2:5b). Therefore, all believers in Christ, those who confide in His active and passive obedience, have perfect “*peace*” (Luke 2:14) with God through the only “*Savior*” (v. 11) for “*all people*” (v. 10), and are “*holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight*” (Colossians 1:22b), not because of anything which they have done, but solely and only because of what God has done for them through Christ, who fulfilled and carried out all of God’s demands in their place (and in the place of the whole world of sinners), “*made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4b-a). The Apostle John wrote with certainty in the third chapter of his Gospel these words of absolute truth: “*He that believeth on Him [the Son of God] is not condemned [for his inherited and actual sins], but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*” (v. 18).

**2. Secondly, Christianity is the absolutely perfect religion because its perfect source and foundation is not the word of fallible human beings but God’s own written, infallible Word of “truth”** (John 17:17b), which is perfect and beyond criticism. Christianity is firmly “*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone*” (Ephesians 2:20).

What does the above introduction have to do with “An Update from the Committee on Missions”? It is inseparably connected to this update. Our Conference, through its General Fund, provides subsidy (financial aid) to three congregations in our fellowship so that their pastors can work full-time in preaching, teaching, and defending *the absolutely perfect religion of Christianity in its Scripturally-revealed truth and purity* for the spiritual profit and edification of their own flocks, as well as for sharing this only-saving religion (true Christianity) with those outside

of their flocks, especially with those who are still in spiritual “darkness” (I Thessalonians 5:4, 5b), for their spiritual profit and edification. We will now give you a brief and current update of these three subsidized sister congregations, as well as a brief and current update from our non-subsidized sister congregations in Nigeria.

### **Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tucson, Arizona**

As *The Concordia Lutheran* reported in its July-August 2014 issue, the members of Good Shepherd, with all thanks to their gracious God, welcomed their new pastor, the Rev. Daniel P. Mensing, on July 27, “celebrating his ordination into the Holy Ministry and his installation as the shepherd and overseer of the flock” (page 119). As the Apostle Paul counseled in Romans 12, “*Rejoice with them that do rejoice*” (v. 15a), so we rejoice with Good Shepherd Congregation over our God’s loving-kindness and tender mercies in giving them a faithful ambassador “*for Christ*” (II Corinthians 5:20a), who will “*preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season; [who will] reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:2). Two significant and interesting aspects of Pastor Mensing’s work at Good Shepherd are the following:

As a new pastor, embarking for the first time upon the catechetical instruction of his own members, Pastor Mensing will have two students in his first Confirmation Class. May God, the Holy Spirit, continue to richly bless the “*incorruptible*” seed of His Word (I Peter 1:23) in the hearts and lives of these students and all future catechumens at Good Shepherd!

In the Sunday Morning Bible Class, Pastor Mensing will be teaching the doctrines of Scripture as set forth so well in Luther’s *Large Catechism*. May the attendees in this class be built up (Acts 20:32b) more and more, ever remembering the Savior’s instruction and assurance in John 8: “*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (vv. 31-32).

The mailing address for Pastor Mensing, his wife Megan, and their son Rowan, is 550 N. Harrison Road, Apartment 11107, Tucson, AZ 85748. His telephone number and e-mail address are provided in the directory of our congregations at the end of this issue.

The 2014 Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference unanimously approved a monthly subsidy for Good Shepherd of \$1,000.00, covering the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year (June 2014 to May 2015), so that

its pastor does not have to seek secular employment in order to support his family, but can devote himself full-time to the work of his office in serving his flock according to the clear, divine mandate of I Corinthians 9:14, “*So hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.*”

### **Orthodox Lutheran Church of Ekaterinburg, Ekaterinburg, Russia**

With many thanks to our gracious God for the continuing, stable health of their pastor, the Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, the members of the Orthodox Lutheran Church of Ekaterinburg have been gathering regularly this year for the Sunday Morning Bible Class and Worship Service, as well as for their Midweek Bible Class.

These Russian brethren are still meeting in rented quarters, the cost of which our Conference is defraying at the rate of \$200.00 a month. They tried to save our Conference this cost by meeting in the home or apartment of one of their members, but a recently-enacted Russian law prohibits churches from holding their *public* worship services and *public* classes in a private home or apartment.

Although the members of this congregation, because of their “*deep poverty*” (cf. the condition of the Macedonian Christians, II Corinthians 8:1-2), are unable to provide their pastor’s “*living*” or salary as they should do according to God’s ordinance (I Corinthians 9:14), they are now helping to pay the monthly rent of their pastor’s apartment, thus sharing of their substance toward his support. This is evidence of their spiritual growth and their gratitude for the precious Word of God which he brings to them in his teaching and preaching. The Apostle Paul taught such support of pastors by the members of their flocks in Galatians 6, where we find this Godly instruction: “*Let him that is taught in the Lord communicate unto [share with] him that teacheth in all good things*” (v. 6). May the Lord continue to work in them “*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” in this regard (Philippians 2:13).

It is the goal of Pastor Schurganoff to finish, within the next year, the Rosetta Stone course for the English language. This course is intended to help the non-English speaking person to understand, to speak, to read and to write in English. His success with this course will be a tremendous aid in our communication with him.

The tract on the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture, taken from an article

in *The Concordia Lutheran* and translated from English into Russian, has been much appreciated and used by our Russian brethren. Furthermore, as Pastor Schurganoff reports, the members have also shared this tract with “their friends and relatives.” He encourages us to consider doing such translation work from English into Russian for future tracts which they can then use for their own spiritual growth and for distribution in mission work.

Beside the \$200.00 monthly *facilities rental subsidy* authorized by our Conference at this year’s convention, the convention also provided a monthly subsidy of \$1,000.00 for *the pastor’s salary* for fiscal year 2014-2015 so that he can work full-time in the pastoral office (I Corinthians 9:14) and so that he can gradually reduce his \$3,800.00 medical debt, which in the Russian economy is an immense figure.

#### **St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sauk Village, Illinois**

As *The Concordia Lutheran* reported in its May-June 2014 issue: “On Sunday, June 15, 2014, the members of St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sauk Village, Illinois, gathered together in the sanctuary of God’s House for the ordination and installation of their new pastor, the Rev. David J. Mensing.” As we said earlier concerning Good Shepherd, Tucson, so we also, with the Apostle Paul in Romans 12, declare concerning St. Mark’s: “*Rejoice with them that do rejoice*” (v. 15a). We do rejoice with the members of St. Mark’s that our gracious God, in His lovingkindness and His tender mercies, has given them a faithful shepherd to “*feed [their] flock*” (I Peter 5:2) with the perfect nourishment of God’s Word, “*taking the oversight thereof*” (I Peter 5:2b) as the watchman and caretaker of their souls; and we beseech the Lord of the Church to bless abundantly all his faithful labors.

Though St. Mark’s is a small congregation, Pastor Mensing has a “full plate” with a schedule that is comparable to those of pastors who serve larger flocks. St. Mark’s maintains its Sunday *afternoon* schedule with its Sunday Bible Class at 3:00 p.m. and its Worship Service at 4:00 p.m. Pastor Mensing also has an Adult Instruction Class with two students, which meets on Sundays at 6:00 p.m., with the exception of the third Sunday of each month. On that third Sunday, the monthly Voters’ Meeting is scheduled, preceded by a fellowship potluck supper immediately following the worship service. On Friday mornings, Pastor Mensing has Confirmation Instruction. He also teaches a midweek Bible Class on Wednesday evenings. May the regular and consistent preaching and teaching of God’s

Word at St. Mark's be blessed with the fruit promised by our merciful God, as Isaiah records His words in the 55th chapter of his prophecy, saying: "*As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven and returneth not thither but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please; and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*" (vv. 10-11).

The Mensing family moved into the parsonage in Sauk Village on August 2 but had to vacate the premises shortly thereafter due to some water piping problems. Temporarily (for about 10 days) they moved back to the parsonage at Peace, Oak Forest, while Pastor Mensing and able brethren made necessary repairs and installed needed upgrades. The water problem has now been taken care of, and the family is now settled back into St. Mark's parsonage.

The 2014 Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference approved a monthly subsidy of \$800.00 for St. Mark's to augment the salary provided by the congregation, so that Pastor Mensing is able to devote himself fully to his pastoral work with this precious flock, according to the divine principle set forth in I Corinthians 9:14 (referred to earlier in this update).

Pastor Mensing sent this message to the undersigned: "Attendance at Worship and Classes is good, and interest in God's Word is high, thanks be to God. By His grace and with His help I am enjoying the pastoral work, especially since the members are so eager to learn and so supportive of one another! The congregation thanks the members of the Conference for all their prayers and their exemplary, brotherly burden-bearing. These things are truly suitable for the children of God, for those who have been freely given priceless, everlasting blessings!"

### **Our Dear Brethren in Nigeria**

The Nigerian brethren are happy to report that four of their seminary students have recently graduated and have each accepted a Divine Call to serve full-time in the pastoral office. Here are the details:

- St. Clement's Lutheran Church, Elem-Sangama, called Timothy Biobele Aaron to be its pastor. He accepted the congregation's call and is now the full-time pastor of St. Clement's, which had a pastoral vacancy since the death of Pastor Kaladokubo in July of 2012.
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Idama, called Innocent Karibo to

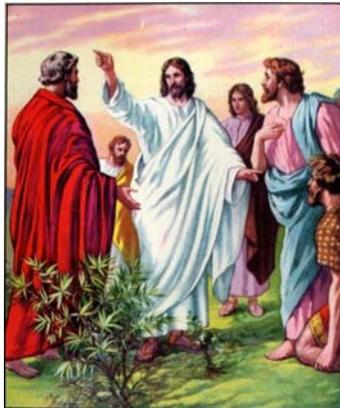
be its pastor. He accepted this call and is now the full-time pastor of Holy Trinity, which had a pastoral vacancy since the death of Pastor Dodo in January of 2009.

■ Salem Lutheran Church, Abalama, called both Balaiyi Christopher Thompson and Bateinm Bestman to be its full-time pastors, and they each accepted their respective call to serve with Salem's present pastor, Rev. Elison B. Agborubere.

Concerning the *Ebola* virus, the Lord has graciously protected our Nigerian brethren so that none of them have contracted it. Pastor Fyneyface, in an October 2nd e-mail, wrote: "We are still observing the preventive principles in order not to have it."

In our prayers to "*Jesus, the Son of God*" (Hebrews 4:14b), "*let us... come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*" (v. 16) for our three dear subsidized congregations, as well as for our dear brethren in Nigeria, ever remembering that "*if God so loved us [in and through the perfect, substitutionary work of Christ Jesus, our Substitute and Mediator before God], we ought also to love one another*" (I John 4:11), "*not...in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth*" (3:18), in every possible way, especially with our "*fervent prayer[s]*" (James 5:16) and with our "*willing*" (II Corinthians 8:12a) gifts, not given "*grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver*" (II Corinthians 9:7b).

— R. J. L.



*"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."* Mark 16:15

## 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

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### **CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

### **ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

**The Rev. Onesimus Ekele, Pastor**

### **HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Idama, Nigeria

**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

**The Rev. Allenson Karibi Asawo, Pastor**

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Kula, Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL**

Abonnema, Nigeria

**The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and**

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

**E-Mail:** njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk



## 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 171<sup>st</sup> 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

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.

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

# True Lutherans

What does it even *mean* to be truly “Lutheran”? It certainly does *not* mean that we worship Luther, or make him our “Pope,” or place his writings on a par with the Bible; nor do we praise and defend everything that Luther ever said or did.

By calling ourselves “Lutherans,” we testify that we follow the example of Luther in holding firmly to the teachings of Holy Scripture and rejecting the doctrines of men (cf. Matthew 15:9) —including all teachings based upon tradition or rationalism. Furthermore, by calling ourselves “Lutherans,” we also confess that we believe and teach without reservation the doctrines that Luther and the other faithful men who aligned themselves with him set down in writing and included in the *Lutheran Confessions*, namely, the *Small and Large Catechisms of Luther*, the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology [Defense] of the Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, and the *Formula of Concord*.

Excerpt from “Lutheranism” — *What’s in a Name?* Pg 74