

*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.

---

Vol. LXII

May—June 2018

Nos. 5-6

---

+

“We All  
Believe in  
One True  
God”

—Luther, 1525

---

*The Concordia Lutheran*



"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.  
"My Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path;" Psalm 119:105.  
Vol. LXII    May-June 2018    Nos. 5-6

Official Organ of the  
*Concordia Lutheran Conference*

This publication appears in a bi-monthly issue at a subscription price of \$10.00 per year.

*The Concordia Lutheran* Editor

The Rev. David T. Mensing  
17151 South Central Avenue  
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

**Book and Tract Editor**

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel  
483 Tangent Street  
Lebanon, OR 97355

**Lay Member:**

Mr. Jason A. Mabe  
6249 El Morro Lane  
Oak Forest, IL 60452

Address subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: **Scriptural Publications, 17151 S. Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913.** A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

Officers of the  
*Concordia Lutheran Conference*

**PRESIDENT:**

The Rev. Edward J. Worley  
9658-54th Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98118

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

The Rev. David T. Mensing  
17151 South Central Avenue  
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

**SECRETARY:**

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel  
483 Tangent Street  
Lebanon, OR 97355

**TREASURER:**

Mr. Robert G. Bloedel  
10017 – 61st Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98178

**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.

[www.concordialutheranconf.com](http://www.concordialutheranconf.com)

## *How the Holy Spirit of God Reproves the World*

*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”*

—John 16:8-11



Most, if not all of us have heard the expression, “God moves in mysterious ways.” This expression is loosely based on certain Bible passages such as Isaiah 55:9, “My ways [are] higher than your ways,” and Romans 11:33, “His ways [are] past finding out.” While it’s very true that the ways in which God created and continues to preserve to preserve all things by His divine providence and how He always works things out for good for those who love Him are incredibly mysterious and beyond our understanding, the manner in which He provided salvation for mankind is clearly revealed by the Apostles and Prophets in God’s holy Word. We know that our redemption was accomplished by the all-sufficient sacrifice of the Father’s only begotten Son and that we sinners are justified and have peace with God through faith alone in this complete redemption without any of our own works. Continuing in this faith is the one and only way that the Lord has ordained for our salvation; a faith which gives all honor and glory to God and which brings nothing before His judgment seat but the perfect merits of Jesus Christ, the only mediator and advocate between God and men. Thankfully, He has revealed this way of salvation to us through the holy Scriptures and has caused us to know and to confide in His Son, who is “*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*” (John 14:6).

On the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord taught His disciples that soon He would need to withdraw His visible presence from them and consoled them with the news of “*another Comforter*” (John 14:16) to continue to guide them. After His glorious resurrection, having fin-

ished the redemptive work He was sent to accomplish, Jesus would ascend back to His Father, continuing His priestly work of intercession for us sinful men. Because the Lord's visible absence would cause His disciples to be sorrowful, Jesus promised that He would send the Comforter, that is, the Holy Ghost to encourage and spiritually support them. But Jesus' promise of the Holy Paraclete, is because this promise applies not only to the disciples of Jesus' day, but also to us, who by God's grace continue to know the truth through His holy precious Word. First of all, through the preaching of the Law, which reveals the true nature of sin and God's genuine wrath and displeasure against the sinner the Holy Ghost continues to convict the unbelieving world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment. And what's more, through the proclamation of the holy Gospel, which reveals God's grace and mercy to poor sinners in providing them with salvation from sin, the Holy Ghost continues to sanctify contrite sinners and guide them into the way of truth.

In the first place, although Jesus calls Him the Comforter, He says that when the Holy Spirit will come, "*He will reprove [that is, convict] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*" (v. 8). When the Lord sent His disciples out with His Great Commission, He gave them instructions to preach repentance and remission of sins. Not remission of sins *alone*, but repentance and remission of sins, that is, the preaching of the Law to show people their sins and the wrath of God, *followed by* the preaching of the Gospel to those who have thus become sorry for their sins and see their need for a Savior. Through this ministry of the Word, the Holy Ghost is always active, working first of all to convict by His Law impenitent sinners, to the end that they would be brought to true contrition and sorrow over their sins and thus be ready to hear the proclamation of the Gospel.

The Spirit convicts the world, Jesus says, with respect to sin "*because they believe not on Me*" (v. 9). Here we see the true connection between sin and unbelief. We should note that, though not excusing all other forms of sin, the Lord here does not mention any sin other than unbelief, and so, we draw the conclusion that unbelief itself is really the chief sin, the capital sin on account of which the world is convicted. The sin of unbelief is so great, because by it people turn away their hearing from the revealed truth of God's holy Law which requires perfection of every human being, and they ridicule the saving knowledge of the Gospel as being absolute foolishness, so that nothing remains for the unbelieving world except God's divine judgment. Though Christ did fully atone for the sins of the world by His holy life and with His

innocent suffering and death, and by this vicarious atonement Christ secured forgiveness of sins for all people of all time, the forgiveness of sins which God graciously *proclaims* to sinful men in the Gospel, that forgiveness is “*the gift of God,*” intended to be received “*through faith*” (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is by faith alone that an individual obtains the forgiveness of sins and is declared righteous before God, as Scripture clearly states, “*We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law*” (Romans 3:28). So, since it is through faith that an individual sinner is forgiven of his sins (Acts 3:19), since it is through faith that an individual sinner is delivered from the consequences of his sins (Romans 8:1), and since it is through faith that an individual sinner receives the absolution from God, who graciously puts our sins behind His back and remembers them no more for Christ’s sake (Isaiah 38:17; Hebrews 8:12); what can be the result of unbelief other than the imputation of sin and damnation under the Lord’s just wrath and righteous indignation (Mark 16:16; John 3:36)? By his unbelief, a person rejects the gift of justification and does not personally receive its benefit. “*For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*” (Hebrews 4:2). By His conviction of the unbelieving world through the preaching of the Law, the Holy Ghost continues to carry out what the Lord Jesus Himself said in John 8:24, “*If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins,*” earnestly desiring that people everywhere hear this dire warning and see their need for the Savior’s promised salvation.

In addition to this, Jesus says that the Holy Ghost works to convict the world with respect to righteousness, “*because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more*” (v. 10). In its unbelief and spiritual ignorance, the world tries to set up its own righteousness, which it attempts to establish by its own works and merit (Romans 10:3). But the Law reveals that, because of sin, no man, however upright he may seem to be in his own eyes (Matthew 19:20), can attain to *true* righteousness by his own actions (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23). The only one who ever kept God’s Law perfectly for righteous is the Lord Jesus Christ. He did not accomplish this for Himself, but for those who could not do it, namely, for the world of sinners. And as He says in our title-text, the Lord goes to His heavenly Father in order to plead *that* perfect righteousness on our behalf. To say that the world is convicted in regard to righteousness because Jesus is ascended into heaven is to say that all *true* righteousness, the righteousness imputed to all mankind because of His vicarious obedience (Romans 5:19), is the substance of Christ’s powerful intercession at the Father’s throne of grace.

Sadly, the world wants nothing to do with Christ or *His* righteousness, preferring its own imagined righteousness instead. Concerning the unbelieving Jews of his day and their zeal for works-righteousness, St. Paul writes to the Romans, “*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth*” (Romans 10:3-4). The Holy Ghost teaches through Paul in his epistles that the only righteousness that avails before God is the righteousness of faith in Him who justifies the ungodly, namely, Christ's perfect righteousness imputed, or counted, to us by faith alone without works (Romans 4:5-8). Concerning this righteousness he writes, “*The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, ‘Say not in thine heart, ‘Who shall ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, ‘Who shall descend into the deep?’ (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? ‘The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart,’ that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 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 10:6-9). The mission of the Spirit is to convict the unbelieving world of their lack of *true* righteousness, and to show them the only way to *obtain* it, namely, by God's grace, for Christ's sake, through faith.

The Spirit also continues to convict the world concerning judgment, “*because the prince of this world is judged*” (v. 11). Here, the contrast between the Church and the unbelieving world is emphasized again. The Holy Christian Church is connected with Christ as its Head (Ephesians 5:23). In the same way, the wicked world is connected with the devil as its spiritual father (John 8:44). Stating that the prince of this world is judged, Jesus is referring to the fact that, because of His suffering, death, and resurrection on Easter morning, the devil's judgment has already been effected (I John 3:8b). Christ's redemption sealed the devil's fate. The final judgment that awaits the devil and all his angels on the Last Day is as certain as though it had already been given. Each and every day is a day in which Satan moves closer and closer to his final defeat (Revelation 20:10). As his unbelieving children, those of the wicked world who are subject to his control will ultimately share in the judgment that has already been passed on the devil, that is, they stand convicted, guilty, and damned forever. The Spirit works through the preaching of the Law to show the world that they stand convicted of their sins, guilty of lacking *true* righteousness be-

cause of unbelief, and will suffer the sentence of everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Again, this conviction of the Holy Ghost is meant ultimately to break the hearts of the unbelieving (Jeremiah 23:29), so that they see their absolute need for the salvation which Christ secured for the whole world (John 1:29), which God “*in Christ*” declared for all mankind as His unilateral gift (II Corinthians 5:19), and which is freely bestowed upon them in the Gospel (Titus 2:11).

Now, the Lord did not send His disciples out with the mission to preach solely repentance without any message of hope for those whose hearts are broken by the Spirit’s conviction. He commissioned His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins. Not repentance *alone*, but repentance and remission of sins, that is, the consoling message of the Gospel that, though by nature we are sinners, guilty of sin, lacking righteousness, and worthy of nothing but condemnation, the Lord has sent Christ to be our Savior and to provide us with free salvation from sin and death by His vicarious atonement. Through this ministry of this Gospel, the Holy Ghost is also active, earnestly working to turn the hearts of men to the Lord by granting them true faith in Christ, so that they personally *receive* the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of eternal life which He purchased, merited and won for them.

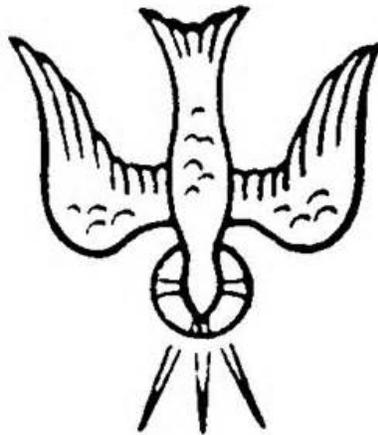
Jesus says in our text, “*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth*” (vv. 12-13). Here we see the work of the Holy Ghost, for which He is given the name, “*the Comforter*.” There was still a lot more that Jesus wanted to reveal to His disciples. But, at the time, the disciples still were “*slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken*” (Luke 24:25). They still had a very weak spiritual understanding. Even on Easter Sunday, they still didn’t fully comprehend everything that Christ had just accomplished by His suffering, death, and resurrection. Just like us, they needed to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of [their] Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (II Peter 3:18). Although the Lord had opened their understanding after His resurrection so that they could understand the Scriptures concerning His vicarious atonement, the disciples still needed further instruction in order to understand what which they had just been taught by their Master. It wouldn’t be until the day of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in fulfillment of Jesus’ words in our text, that the disciples would truly understand everything that the Lord had ever told them especially regarding His redemptive work (John 14:26).

Jesus said that the Comforter would guide them into all truth. How? St. John records Jesus Himself saying in John 8:31-32, “*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*” (John 8:31-32). The Holy Ghost caused the disciples to remember the words which the Lord had spoken to them, thereby increasing their faith and knowledge and enabling them to “*declare...all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27). Through His continued work through His Word (II Timothy 3:15-17), the Holy Ghost does the same thing for us today. Through the Gospel, the Comforter works to increase our faith and love, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, we might continue to have hope and to be and remain members of the invisible Church, the Communion of Saints (Romans 15:4). But, while He has worked in us true *saving* faith by which we trust and believe in the person and work of our Savior for our spiritual deliverance (Acts 26:18), we may be weak in our spiritual understanding of the *other* doctrines of Scripture. We may not have the depth of knowledge that other Christians may have. And there may be things that, in our merely *basic* knowledge of the Scriptures, we find “*hard to be understood*” (II Peter 3:16). But, the Lord says that the function of the Spirit is to guide us into “*all truth.*” He does this through the regular and consistent use of His Word. The Spirit, in the Word, reveals and makes plain to us, even “*the deep things of God*” (I Corinthians 2:10-13). By His holy commandments, He teaches us how properly to fear, love, and trust in our good and gracious God above all things, and how to love our neighbor as ourselves. And He shows us what things are displeasing to God and what we should avoid as children of our heavenly Father. In short, it is not through any separate revelation or new message than what the Savior taught during His ministry that the Spirit continues to sanctify us poor sinners and guide us into the way of truth, but through the same Word which has been spoken ever since the beginning, the Word of God’s Law in its exacting demands and its fierceness of retribution, and the Gospel of our salvation in and through our Savior.

May we always, as true disciples of the Lord Jesus, continue in His Word faithfully (John 8:31-32), so that we daily grow in grace and in spiritual knowledge, taking every opportunity to read and study our Bibles in our homes and in public worship, praying that through the continued preaching of the Law, the Spirit accomplishes His divine purpose in breaking the hearts of the unbelieving world, convicting them of sin, righteousness, and of judgment, so that they see the severity of their lost condition, repent and believe the Gospel for their ultimate salvation;

praying that His Law be preached among us for the crushing of our Old Adam of sin, to work daily contrition for our sins, and to show us which works are pleasing in His sight as the fruit and evidence of our faith in Jesus our Redeemer; and praying that we never take for granted the wonderful gift of faith which God has given us, so that we remain in His holy Christian Church, where our sins are daily and richly forgiven through the precious blood of our Savior. May we also do all in our power to support the ministry of the Word and Sacrament in our midst with our prayers, personal and financial support, so that the Word of the Lord may continue to have free course among us, and that the Holy Comforter may always be present and working among us for our spiritual edification and preservation. *“Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to [His] Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.”* (Romans 16:25-27).

—D. P. M.



# “We All Believe in One True God.”



*Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.*

—Psalm 115:3-4

On Sunday, May 27th, we celebrated *The Feast of the Holy Trinity* in joint recognition and confession of our common faith that “the only true God is the **Triune God**, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three distinct persons in one divine being or essence” (*Catechism Q/A 26*, C.P.H., 1943 Ed.). In these latter days of sore distress and strife in this world, not only “*distress [among the] nations with perplexity*” (Luke 21:25) in terms of political unrest, “*wars and rumors of wars*” (Matthew 24:6), but also distress in society fomented by “*false Christs and false prophets*,” in the guise of religion trying to deceive “*if it were possible... the very elect*” (Matthew 24:24) by their false doctrine and practice (Cf. Romans 16:18), the basic concept of “**God**” is under attack and very particularly the idea that there is **only ONE true God**.

As Americans we enjoy, as essential to our civil liberty, an unfettered *pluralism* in our society, according to which we are free openly to disagree with one another, free to engage in spirited controversy with our neighbors about issues of concern, free to hold divergent opinions in matters of politics, sports, philosophy and religion, free openly to disagree with our government and its policies, provided that we do not engage in treason and rebellion but limit ourselves to lawful opposition and redress of grievances. And we are free to be **critical** of one another's viewpoints and sincerely-held positions, provided that we respect their “right” to have and to express their opinions as citizens of a free society. This does **not** mean, however, that we must *agree* with them, that we must *validate* them, that we must *compromise* our own positions in order to accommodate theirs; nor are we obligated to **respect** their position if we find it to be untenable, unreasonable (even in our own estimation), or immoral (according to our own standards based on Scripture). We are even “free” (thanks be to God!) to “*come out from among them and be...separate*” from those who would entangle

us in “unequal yokes” of compromise and accommodation with wickedness, false doctrine and false practice in matters of faith and life (II Corinthians 6:14ff.).

Nowadays, however, our **exercise of freedom** is judged to be “*politically incorrect*” by self-professed “political liberals” who have, on the one hand, **re-defined** their “liberty” as “license-to-do-as-they please” (even contrary to law and order), and, at the very same time, have **restricted** the “liberty” of others so that they must think, speak, and act only as they do. And they **condemn** and **excoriate** what they identify as “*politically incorrect*” ideas, thoughts, words and deeds and call them “hateful.” What does this have to do with the topic of our article??

One of the most common deceptions perpetrated upon the so-called “intellectually enlightened” and “politically correct” world of this century concerns itself with the concept of “**God.**” While many (and perhaps even *most*) people like to regard themselves as “Godly” and “Godfearing” individuals — roughly equivalent to “moral” and “upstanding” members of society — very few are clear in their own minds who (or what) “God” is. Some regard God as an impersonal “goodness” in people; some as “the Force” for goodness in the world; some (like the Masons, for example) call God the “Grand Architect of the Universe,” even though most now deny the divine creation of all things (especially in six twenty-four hour days), preferring atheistic evolution over billions of years. Some think of God simply as “the Man Upstairs,” an uninvolved patriarchal being who is “up there” somewhere, merely observing what is happening in the world as it coasts along on its own without any divine preservation or intervention, while some actually conceive of Him as controlling to some extent what is going on — hopefully “for the good of mankind.” They *point* “up there” after hitting a grand slam home run in a baseball game; they *look* “up there” when applying for good luck in some endeavor; and they sheepishly *glance* “up there” when they’ve done something that they consider to be “wrong.” But fewer and fewer regard God anymore as a real *personal being*, unless, of course, they want someone to blame for violence, warfare, poverty and “bad things that happen to good people.” To their way of thinking God is ultimately responsible, and they blasphemously “*reply against God*” (Romans 9:19-20) for permitting evil in the world and for not intervening to stop it.

But very few anymore, even among professing *Christians*, confess, as we do on the basis of Scripture, “that we worship **one God in Trinity**

and **Trinity in Unity**, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance,” and that “we believe and confess...our Lord Jesus Christ... perfect God and perfect man,” our Redeemer and Savior, “who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day; He ascended into heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” This is **NOT** the so-called “faith of our fathers,” expressed on our coinage and on our currency as “In **God** we trust,” but “this **IS** the *catholic* [i.e. *universal Christian*] faith, which, except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved” (*Athanasian Creed*).

To be sure, we are laboring under false illusions if we think that our Scriptural position concerning God will continue to be tolerated in “the land of the free,” especially if we confess, as we do in our *Catechism* (St. Louis, C.P.H., 1943), in Question and Answer 26: “The **only TRUE** God is the **Triune God**, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three distinct Persons in one divine Being or Essence,” especially if we declare with St. Paul the simple statement, “*given by inspiration of God*” (II Timothy 3:16), that “**There is none other God but one**” (I Corinthians 8:4). Indeed, if we “*confess before men*” (Matthew 10:32), openly, unashamedly, unequivocally and boldly: “*All the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens*” (Psalm 96:5), and “*An idol is nothing in the world*” (I Corinthians 8:4), then certainly we can expect to be castigated as “hateful,” “bigoted,” and “intolerant” even by many who profess themselves to be Christians.

So-called “political correctness” today insists that we accept one of two (or perhaps even BOTH) false principles: **1)** The “universalistic” idea that all gods have **equal validity** and are to be respected as **legitimate deities** — when the passages cited above (in addition to many others) declare **the very opposite**, or **2)** The preposterous opinion that, despite their different origins, different essences, different identities, different principles, and different scriptures, in addition to the fact that most of them regard the others as false and pernicious, all “gods” are essentially ONE and the SAME god with **different NAMES** — when the Bible clearly **names** the only true and living God **very specifically** and **exclusively**: “*And Moses said unto God, ‘Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, ‘The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you;’ and they shall say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say unto them?’ And God said unto Moses, ‘I AM THAT I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ‘I AM hath sent me unto you’*” (Exodus 3:13-14). The name “**I AM**”

God uses of Himself; in the third person (in grammar), when we speak of Him, the Name is “*HE IS*” — “*Jaweh*” or “*Jehovah*” in Hebrew, translated into the Indo-European languages as “*The Lord*,” not just any old “lord,” not merely “*a Lord*,” but the only “*Lord*” that truly IS. Thus God says of Himself in Isaiah 42:8, “*I am THE LORD; that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.*” “*THE LORD, our God, is ONE Lord*” (Deuteronomy 6:4), “*Thou shalt not take the name of THE LORD, thy God, in vain*” (Exodus 20:7).

And the true God never identifies Himself by *other* names, such as Allah, Buddha, Krishna, Vishnu and other avatars in Hinduism; nor does He identify Himself as a *non-trinitarian* deity. Compare, for example, the “*Jehovah*” of modern *Judaism* which excludes Jesus Christ, “*the Son*” of God, and the “*Jehovah*” of the *Russellites*, who hold that Jesus Christ was merely Jehovah’s first creation (“*He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father, which hath sent Him,*” John 5:23); as well as the “*God*” of *Mormonism*, Adam; the “*Grand Architect of the universe*” of *Freemasonry*; and the incorporeal “*divine Principle*” ruling over all as “*eternal Spirit and infinite mind*” of the so-called *Christian Scientists*. Then, of course, there is the “*God*” of *deists* in general, who represent him on our coinage and currency as the “*God*” in whom all Americans nominally “*trust*”— but NOT necessarily the *Triune God* whom we confess according to Holy Scripture.

“*All the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens*” (Psalm 96:5), and “*an idol is nothing in the world*” (I Corinthians 8:4). “*They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat*” (Psalm 115:5-7). This description of the Psalmist “*in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,*” speaks not only of idols of “*silver and gold, the work of men’s hands,*” according to the near context, but in the wider context also of ALL false gods, “*the gods of the nations,*” which are *nothings* in the world (I Corinthians 8:4). As non-existent entities, they are not worthy of anyone’s adoration, they are unable to hear and to answer anyone’s prayers, they are incapable of coming to anyone’s aid, and their “*way...leadeth to destruction*” (Matthew 7:13). “*They that make them,*” those who *craft* them of “*silver and gold*” (Psalm 115:4), of wood and stone, as well as those who *invent* them and their religions as figments of their own imaginations, “*are like unto them*” — *nothings* — “*so is everyone that trusteth in them*” (v. 8).

Their false teachers — from pagans to anti-trinitarian cultists and sectarians — lead precious souls to **hell**, teaching “*damnable heresies, even denying **the Lord** that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*” (II Peter 2:1). They deny **the ONLY TRUE GOD**, the **Triune God**. —They deny *the Father*, who in eternity decreed His only-begotten Son to be the ransom for sinful mankind and foreordained Him to render the *vicarious atonement* that would purchase man’s redemption (I Peter 1:20; Isaiah 53; Acts 2:23a; etc.). —They deny *the Son*, who in time took upon Himself a true human nature and, as man’s Substitute (Galatians 4:4-5; II Corinthians 5:21), kept God’s Law perfectly (Romans 5:18-19) and suffered the penalty of man’s guilt (I Peter 3:18), thus fulfilling in time that which God accepted in eternity (Revelation 13:8) as the propitiation of His justice (I John 2:2), so that, without compromising His perfect justice, He could unilaterally reconcile the world of the ungodly unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (II Corinthians 5:19). —And they deny *the Holy Ghost*, who earnestly desires to bring all men to saving faith in God’s mercy and grace in Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:4; John 14:6) through the means of the Gospel (Romans 10:17; I Peter 1:23), so that they might appropriate and receive for themselves God’s gracious forgiveness (Acts 2:38; I Timothy 6:12; Romans 5:11; Acts 10:43), and that they might be eternally saved (Ezekiel 33:11; John 3:16; Mark 16:16a; Ephesians 2:8). —All those who *deny* the **Trinity** deny God’s **whole plan of salvation** from beginning to end and, by their own fault, forfeit God’s gift of eternal life in heaven. “*Many there be which go in thereat [that is, to destruction],*” Jesus says in Matthew 7:13, “*many,*” writes St. Paul, “*[who] are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things*” (Philippians 3:18-19).

Thus, faith in the **Triune God**, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is **necessary to salvation**, as we confess in the *Athanasian Creed*: “Whoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic [*i.e.* the universal, Christian] faith, which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. ...He, therefore, that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.” For “*this is life eternal,*” says our dear Lord Jesus, “*that they might know Thee, **the ONLY TRUE GOD**, and [that is, including] **Jesus Christ**, whom Thou hast sent*” (John 17:3). “*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*” (14:6).

Thank God, therefore, that by His grace, that is, by the gracious operation of His Holy Spirit through the Gospel,

We all believe in one true God,  
who created earth and heaven,  
the Father, who to us in love  
hath the right of children given.  
He both soul and body feedeth,  
all we need He doth provide us;  
He through snares and perils leadeth,  
watching that no harm betide us.  
He careth for us day and night;  
all things are governed by His might.

We all believe in Jesus Christ,  
His own Son, our Lord, possessing  
an equal Godhead, throne, and might,  
source of every grace and blessing.  
Born of Mary, virgin mother,  
by the power of the Spirit,  
made true man, our elder Brother,  
that the lost might life inherit;  
was crucified for sinful men  
and raised by God to life again.

We all confess the Holy Ghost,  
who sweet grace and comfort giveth  
and with the Father and the Son  
in eternal glory liveth;  
who the Church, His own creation,  
keeps in unity of spirit.  
Here forgiveness and salvation  
daily come through Jesus' merit.  
All flesh shall rise, and we shall be  
in bliss with God eternally. Amen.

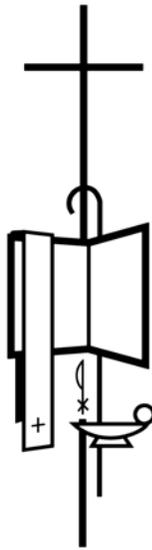
(Martin Luther, 1525)



—D. T. M.

## Considering the Pastoral Office as a Desirable Calling

*“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” — I Timothy 3:1*



In the Gospel of Matthew we hear of our Lord seeing the multitudes and being moved with compassion on them because of their sad spiritual state: *“They fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd”* (Matthew 9:36). What did the Savior say to His disciples? *“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest”* (Matthew 9:37-38). Today we are to pray the same prayer, for the need is obvious everywhere we look; and *“the laborers are few.”* Is there more that individual Christians can do in addition to their daily prayers to promote the Office of the Ministry for their own and for their children’s spiritual welfare? Yes! We can actively encourage and support the office of the Public Ministry, the Pastoral Office of the local congregation, and thus promote that sacred calling in our midst, to the end, that men desire, pursue and attain it!

If we show others what God Himself says in His Word about being a pastor, about the office, its nature and its function, men will be moved to desire this good work (I Timothy 3:1).

When I was young, I had the valuable training of the Lutheran Sunday School. One of my teachers, in particular, always spoke highly of the pastoral Office and of the privilege of being a pastor and encouraged the young boys in her classes to consider the calling as their life’s career. She did more to plant a seed of desire in me than anyone else by simply reminding the children from Holy Writ what the pastoral office was. My pastor also spoke to me privately about becoming a pastor the week before I was confirmed. I was only a young teenager, but what he said encouraged a very shy person like myself to aspire to the office. Without the influence of these two people in my life, I do not think I would have ever even dreamed of becoming a pastor. I always encourage my Sunday School teachers, the parents of the *lambs* in my congregation, and our Conference

pastors to speak highly of the calling, on a consistent basis, and to set the need for future pastors before the young men.

Our title-text states: *“This is a true saying: If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work”* (I Timothy 3:1). We are to believe what God is saying about the office of a Pastor, the office of being the spiritual overseer (*bishop*) of a local flock of Christ’s sheep and lambs, of a Christian congregation; for what God says is true, genuine and reliable. If a man desires that office, he desires *“a good work.”* The office is good, ordained by God for the spiritual benefit of sinful man. As our Prophet, Christ sends men as pastors (Ephesians 4:10-12; Luke 10:16) to preach in His name the Gospel of redemption. Pastors are gifts to His Church, through the Divine Call, to do the work of revealing the person and work of Christ, the Savior of all mankind, to the end that sinners may believe the Gospel unto life everlasting. For *“God our Savior...will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, whereunto,”* writes St. Paul by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, *“I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity”* (I Timothy 2:3b-7). The pastors of today, as preachers and teachers, do the same basic work as did the Apostle Paul, and for the same spiritual purpose — for the honor of God and for the salvation of sinful men! Paul encourages the young pastor, Timothy, with this exhortation: *“Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine. Continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee”* (I Timothy 4:16).

Can there be a greater “good” than this? The work of saving souls by the preaching of the Gospel is the ultimate good: The good and gracious will of God Himself! The chief reason for which an individual should desire the Pastoral Office is entirely Gospel-based: Moved by gratitude for his own salvation, he should want others to receive the same gracious gift. Consider yourself in this equation: The Son of God loved *you* and gave Himself for *you* (Galatians 2:20). Moved by His grace, *you* should want to live for *Him*; constrained by His love for *you* (II Corinthians 5:14-15), *you* should be moved to proclaim that same gracious, saving love to others, to *“preach the Gospel”* (Mark 16:15), the good news of God’s good will toward sinful men in providing them a Savior to redeem them from their sins (Titus 2:14) and to reconcile them to Himself (Romans 5:10) by His perfect life and by His innocent suffering and death in satisfaction of His justice.

The Psalmist asks: “*What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?*” (116:12). Besides personally appropriating God’s salvation by faith and calling upon his Name (v. 13), it is a “*good work*” (I Timothy 3:1) for a man to desire the Pastoral Office and thus to render unto the Lord a work of thanksgiving for the ultimate spiritual benefit of one’s fellow man, to meet the most dire need of one’s fellow sinners. Are you, as a Christian man, moved with genuine compassion for the plight of your fellow sinners? Are you moved with gratitude for your own salvation whereby God graciously snatched you from the jaws of eternal death for Jesus’ sake and made you an heir of eternal life by faith in His Son? Are you seeking a way to render due thanks to Him for that unspeakable gift and benefit? Oh, then, consider the Office of the Pastoral Ministry!

The Pastoral Office is honorable work: “*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine*” (I Timothy 5:17). The work is honorable labor for the benefit of souls, not only as a steward of the precious Gospel of Salvation to benighted souls sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death (Luke 1:79). But God’s Word enables a pastor to be a spiritual problem-solver in giving the right answer (I Peter 3:15) for Godly edification and spiritual growth (I Timothy 1:4), that the members of his flock may be and remain sound in the faith (Titus 1:13), maintain good works (Titus 3:14), and ever be reminded of what they need to know and believe for salvation: “*If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained*” (I Timothy 4:6).

The pastor is given divine authority to speak, to preach, to teach, to exhort, to convict by the Savior Himself (Luke 10:16) in and through God’s Word (II Timothy 3:15-17; Titus 1:3, 2:15; II Timothy 4:2-5). He is also given the ability to perform his work faithfully by God Himself: “*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament — not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*” (II Corinthians 3:5-6; cf I Timothy 1:12, 14). God Himself also gives the wherewithal to do the work: “*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*” (II Timothy 1:6-7). The pastor’s strength is provided by God’s

grace: *“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”* (II Timothy 2:1). The Apostle testifies to God’s sure grace in these words: *“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”* (II Timothy 4:17-18). The Lord gives a pastor the ability to use His Word to rescue victims from the devil: *“And the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will”* (II Timothy 2:24-26). The Lord grants the pastor understanding to apply His Word, Law and Gospel rightly-divided, to every situation: *“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things”* (II Timothy 2:7, cf. v. 15).

The work is good and honorable; the office is given by Divine Authority (God’s Word); the ability to do the work is a gracious gift promised by God; and the benefit to others is the greatest possible: eternal life. God Himself moves a person to desire the office by His grace in the Gospel, just as all good works are motivated and wrought by Him, *“for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure”* (Philippians 2:13). That God-wrought, Gospel-generated, desire and willingness are mentioned in this exhortation to pastors by the Apostle Peter: *“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock”* (I Peter 5:2-3).

A man should be willing to do the work, having *“a ready mind.”* God *creates* this ready willingness within a person by His Word. God also *preserves* such ready willingness despite hardships and sufferings: *“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”* (I Peter 5:10). God’s grace *enables* a man to be a faithful pastor: *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. ...But watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry”* (II Timothy 4:2, 5).

Given all these Scriptural facts, what *prevents* a person from desiring the “*good work*” of the Pastoral Office? The Bible contains some examples of excuses used to avoid such service. **Moses** offered several excuses in reply to God’s call to serve. The first was his lack of *personal authority* (Exodus 3:11). But God told him: “*Certainly I will be with thee*” (Exodus 3:12), assuring him that he had divine authority and divine help. Then he pleaded a lack of *knowledge* regarding God’s Name (Exodus 3:13). God answered, stating His Name explicitly and clearly (Exodus 3:14ff.). But Moses had still another excuse: “The people will not believe me” (Exodus 4:1)! So God made provision for miracles to be done with Moses’ rod (Exodus 4:2-5) thus enabling him to confirm his words with signs. When Moses then complained that he was not eloquent and that he was of slow speech and tongue (Exodus 4:10), God promised him everything he needed for taking on and fulfilling the task (Exodus 4:11-12). Moses then provoked God to anger by asking Him to send someone else (Exodus 4:13)! God then told Moses that He would use Aaron, his brother, as a helper and a spokesman for Moses (Exodus 4:14-17). In short, God removed all excuses and replaced them with promises and assurances.

**Gideon** also offered excuses: “*Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house*” (Judges 6:15). God gave him His promise and even a miraculous double sign to show that he had been chosen to lead God’s people (Judges 6:16-21).

**Jeremiah** also received an answer from God when he offered *his* excuse: “*Then said I, ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child.’ But the Lord said unto me, ‘Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak*” (Jeremiah 1:6-7).

The prophet **Amos** gives us a proper example of *not* using our own status or position as an excuse when he replied to the priest of Bethel: “*Then answered Amos and said to Amaziah, ‘I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, ‘Go, prophesy unto My people Israel’*” (Amos 7:14-15). Amos did not allow his “background” to be used as an excuse for not heeding God’s call to preach. Whatever “excuses” the mind of man can bring forth, God’s gracious promises are able to remove. If any of you men reading this article have “excuses” that prevent you from pursuing

a desire for the Pastoral Office, God can remove them. Be honest and share your concerns with your pastor. God will use him to help you “get out of your own way,” as it were, by teaching you to deal with excuses using God’s Word.

It is the mutual responsibility of the entire Church to do all that is necessary with God’s blessing and by His grace to provide pastors for future generations: “*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*” (II Timothy 2:2). The need is ever present. Currently, the seminary program of our Concordia Lutheran Conference has no students. Let us pray the Lord of the harvest to move men to desire the Pastoral Office out of thankfulness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ: “*For it pleased the Father that in [Christ] 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 unreprouvable in His sight, if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I, Paul, am made a minister*” (Colossians 1:19-23). To give the hope of the Gospel by preaching the work and benefit of Jesus Christ to others is a “*good work.*” Christ gave Himself as the perfect ransom-sacrifice for the entire world, to satisfy His Father’s justice and thus to reconcile the ungodly to Him by paying the full price of their redemption. By His holy life in their place, which earned for them perfect righteousness before God, and by His innocent suffering and death in their stead to pay the penalty of their guilt, Christ presents sinners before God as perfect as He is: Holy, unblameable and unreprouvable! To be made a minister, a servant, preacher and steward of this precious Gospel, to bring the only hope of salvation to mankind, and to be made a spiritual overseer over a flock of the Good Shepherd’s precious sheep, what greater calling could there be?

— **Pastor Edward J. Worley**, Chairman  
Committee on Theological Education

(Series: Exposition and Application of the Ten Commandments)

## VIII. The Eighth Commandment

*“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”*

— Exodus 20:16

The Eighth Commandment deals with a person’s good reputation. Reputation refers to the overall, general quality or character of a person as viewed by and judged by the public or world at large. As such, it could also be called one’s good name, one’s public standing, one’s status or level of public respect. In the Eighth Commandment God says:

*“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”*

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, nor defame our neighbor, but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

Consider what God forbids by this Commandment. When we “bear witness” or give testimony regarding someone else, it must not be false, it cannot be a lie, an untruth. When do we “bear witness?” In the most formal venue we give testimony in court. Here *an oath* is required of us by the government; so the Second Commandment also applies as we take God’s Name to witness the truth of what we say and to punish us if we lie. Lying under oath is called perjury. God tells us: *“A false witness shall not be unpunished”* (Proverbs 19:5a). For our warning and instruction, many examples of perjury are recorded in Holy Writ. We note the use of false testimony against Naboth and against our Lord Jesus, both cases resulting in the murder of the innocent (cf. I Kings 21:13; Matthew 26:59-61). All sworn testimony in court, whether oral witness or in written form (depositions), must be true. In addition, signing various legal forms which include affirmations of veracity and the phrase “under penalty of perjury” carry the same weight as an oath in court. Our witness regarding our neighbor must always be true; we must abide by our oath to God when we testify.

God also forbids us to lie about anyone, to lie to anyone, or to withhold the truth in order to harm anyone. God warns us all: *“He that speaketh lies shall not escape”* (Proverbs 19:5b). The Holy Ghost, through the

Apostle Paul, sets the standard with these simple, straight-forward words: “*Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another*” (Ephesians 4:25). The first creature to lie was Satan. He lied about God and lied to Eve. Satan slandered God, and Eve believed his slander. Satan told Eve that God had lied to Adam and to her about the penalty of eating the forbidden fruit (cf. Genesis 3:4-6). The Lord Jesus says of Satan: “*There is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it*” (John 8:44b). Scripture affirms “*Let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Romans 3:4) over against the slander of both Satan and men against God. The tragic consequences of the fall of Adam and Eve were clearly and immediately evident when Adam lied to God when questioned about their sin (Genesis 3:10). Ever since the Fall, human beings lie to God and to each other, especially to avoid moral responsibility for their actions. Scripture declares: “*Lying lips are abomination to the Lord*” (Proverbs 12:22a). “*Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds*” (Colossians 3:9; cf. Zechariah 8:16; Leviticus 19:11; Psalm 5:6). In the sad account of the servant of the Prophet Elisha, we observe Gehazi lying about Elisha and then lying to him (II Kings 3:22, 25). The punishment he received stands as a warning to all — God knows when we lie. In the account of Ananias and Sapphira, Satan filled their hearts to lie to the Holy Ghost and to the church at Jerusalem (Acts 5:1-4). Their swift punishment also affirms that God knows all hypocrites and their lies (Acts 5:6-11).

Parents see how easily lies come from their children. I recall an incident when a child said: “If I had known that you saw me, I would have told the truth.” I explained that God *always sees* what we do: “*His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men*” (Psalm 11:4). “*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth*” (II Chronicles 16:9a). We can’t hide from God, nor can we hide from Him what we say. Consider Psalm 50, where unto the wicked God saith: “*Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself. But I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver*” (vv. 19-22).

God also forbids us to slander or defame our neighbor, that is, to speak evil of him and thus injure or destroy his good name. In legal terminol-

ogy, this is called “defamation.” Civil law defines “defamation” as “disseminating information that is known to be false and intended to harm a person’s reputation. Defamation in print is called *libel*. Defamation in speech is called *slander*.” In our so-called “Information Age,” such defamation can spread quickly by way of electronic means in posts on social media. Courts have recognized cyber-libel and the widespread damage it can have. What is “cyber-libel”? “‘Cyber-libel’ is a term used when someone has posted or e-mailed a statement that is untrue and damaging related to another individual on the Internet, including in message boards, bulletin boards, blogs, chat rooms, personal websites, social networking sites, or other published articles.” A Canadian Superior Court Justice, Justice Faieta, made the following remarks in such a case:

Communication via the Internet is instantaneous, seamless, interactive, blunt, borderless and far-reaching. It is also impersonal, and the anonymous nature of such communications may itself create a greater risk that the defamatory remarks are believed.

...Internet defamation is distinguished from its less pervasive cousins in terms of its potential to damage the reputation of individuals and corporations by the features described above, especially its interactive nature, its potential for being taken at face value, and its absolute and immediate worldwide ubiquity and accessibility. The mode and extent of publication is, therefore, a particularly significant consideration in assessing damages in Internet defamation cases. It is important to highlight the possible catastrophic effects a defamatory statement may have on an individual should a social media post go “viral” and reach a much larger audience than it was intended to. [*Defamation in the Internet Age: The Law and Social Media*, Sean Valentine, June 2017 citing (2004), 71 O.R. (3d) 416 (C.A.)]

In these days of instantaneous electronic communication, people have opened up the door to libel with a simple hashtag and then added names to a general accusation. Social media can spread lies faster than ever. Christians know that they should deal with an offender directly as Jesus instructs us in Matthew 18:15. There the Lord says: “*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*” And, as we are not to listen to gossip or to spread it, we should not on social media “like” a libelous comment, “link” to it, re-

post or retweet it, or give it any venue whatsoever. To do so makes us guilty of other men's sins, as an accessory or "*partaker*" (cf. I Timothy 5:19-22). What should we do when confronted with gossip? Tell the person who tries to "share" information about another to go and talk to the subject directly! [Luther is pointedly instructive concerning gossip and slander in his *Large Catechism* on the Eighth Commandment, and we would direct our readers to his Scriptural admonitions cited immediately following this article.]

But it is not enough simply to avoid gossiping ourselves. For God requires us to be proactive in defending our neighbor. What does that involve? It is actively standing up for the person as an advocate and a shield. He cannot defend himself because he is not *there*. But you *are*. As you would want someone to speak up on your behalf in such a situation, do the same for them according to the Savior's "Golden Rule" in Matthew 7:12, "*All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.*" Therefore the Lord instructs us: "*Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy*" (Proverbs 31:8-9).

In addition, we should speak well of our neighbor. Our words regarding him should be positive as we truthfully point out his good qualities and actions. Remember how Jonathan spoke well of David to his father, King Saul (I Samuel 19:4), and the people of Capernaum spoke well of the Roman centurion and his deeds (Luke 7:4-5). Mothers often tell their children: "If you can't say something nice about somebody, say nothing at all." The Apostle James instructs us as the penman of the Holy Spirit: "*Speak not evil one of another, brethren*" (James 4:11).

What shall we do when someone confides in us or tells us something that he or she wants to keep private? People often betray confidences and reveal private information to hurt others. Scripture says: "*A talebearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter*" (Proverbs 11:13). At times, however, a "secret" must be told. The Second Table of God's Law requires us to protect, defend and befriend our neighbor, particularly when he is in need or danger. The general rule is: If keeping "the secret" will allow harm to be done to your neighbor, you must reveal it! This could involve knowledge of abuse or of potential abuse or a crime about to be committed. This is especially important in the case of children who are targeted for vic-

timization. Parents need to know what is going on if their children are to be protected from harm. To offer to go with the person to tell the secret information, particularly to proper authorities, may help to give courage to someone who is otherwise reticent or fearful to reveal it. What we would want others to do for us under similar circumstances must always be kept in mind as the general “Golden Rule” (Matthew 7:12, etc.). Of course, the best case is to get the person himself to share the truth voluntarily.

The Eighth Commandment also obligates us to “put the best construction on everything” (Luther), that is, to cover up a person’s faults and explain in his favor whatever can be so explained in keeping with the truth. In this instance, a careful distinction must be observed. This does not mean we are to ignore a person’s sins so that we do not rebuke him for them and fail to admonish him (Luke 17:3; Matthew 18:15; Leviticus 19:17). Nor should we conspire to “cover up” wrongdoing by others, nor become a willing participant with someone who is covering up his own sins in impenitence (Proverbs 28:13). What then does it mean to “put the best construction on everything”? First of all, it refers to our general attitude toward our neighbor! We should not have evil thoughts against him nor presume him to be guilty when no wrongdoing has been proved. *“Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD”* (Zechariah 8:17). Secondly, we should exercise Christian charity and readily forgive the penitent, neither holding against them any longer, nor reporting to others, what they had done after we have forgiven them: *“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins”* (I Peter 4:8). The power to keep this commandment flows from the Gospel of God’s forgiveness toward us: *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you. 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”* (Ephesians 4:32 - 5:2).

Consider how God forgives us: Fully, freely, for the sake of the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. God has forgiven you and all sinful mankind without exception because His Son graciously loved the ungodly world and gave Himself as the Ransom, the Sacrifice, the Atonement, the Offering to God that forever satisfied His holy justice. His vicarious atonement was a sweetsmelling offering to His Father that gave righteousness and remission to the whole world: *“And He is the propitiation*

*for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:2). The Gospel declares: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ... But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:6, 8-10). The motive and power for forgiveness exercised toward others by individuals is the universal atonement Christ gave for all sins and the objective justification the Father gave the ungodly world because of that work. The Gospel declares this and the Gospel alone works saving faith in us so that we desire to thank God, empowered by His gracious justification and forgiveness, in keeping the Eighth Commandment.*

To put the best construction on everything specifically refers to situations which *need* a construction because they may be read two different ways – good or bad. Until facts are known which contradict our initial assessment we are to always explain everything in a person’s favor. We may find out later that we were not correct. Scripture tells us: *“Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid” (I Timothy 5:24-25). We are to assume the best out of charity: “Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (I Corinthians 13:7). People sometimes say “I want to give you the benefit of the doubt.” But they hesitate to believe a person because they do not know if what the person said is true. We are to move beyond this and put the best construction on what we can from the outset. The world cannot do this. It requires fear, love and trust in God and His Word flowing from God-wrought, Gospel faith. The world is cynical, ever distrustful of a person’s sincerity or integrity, questioning motives and imputing evil toward a person’s actions. Christians are to do what God says. The Lord promises His blessing: “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17). Christians know what they should do and are enabled by Gospel grace to daily strive to do it: “These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zechariah 8:16). “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).*

You may have heard the phrase “Too Much Information,” often abbre-

viated by the acronym T.M.I., to describe “over-sharing” of private or uncomfortable details about a person’s personal life. The standard individuals have for sharing their *own* information varies greatly and some people share virtually nothing while others seem to have no “filter” at all. But *God* sets the standard for what we say about *others*. The standard is clear: the Eighth Commandment! God ever grant us the grace of the Gospel to abide by His standard and forgive us, for Christ’s Sake, when we fail!

—E. J. W.

---

(Excerpted from Luther’s *LARGE CATECHISM* in the translation of the *Triglotta*, we have included here the “false witness” borne against the neighbor by personal evil-speaking apart from formal sworn testimony in a court of law.)

### ***THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT***

***“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”***

...—In the third place, what concerns us all, this commandment forbids all sins of the tongue whereby we may injure or approach too closely to our neighbor. For to bear false witness is nothing else than a work of the tongue. Now, whatever is done with the tongue against a fellow man God would have prohibited, whether it be false preachers with their doctrine and blasphemy, false judges and witnesses with their verdict, or, outside of court, by lying and evil speaking. Here belongs particularly the detestable, shameful vice of speaking behind a person’s back and slandering, to which the devil spurs us on, and of which there would much to be said. For it is a common evil plague that everyone prefers hearing evil to hearing good of his neighbor; and, although we ourselves are so bad that we cannot suffer that anyone should say anything bad about us, but everyone would much rather that all the world should speak of him in terms of gold, yet we cannot bear that the best is spoken about others.

Therefore, to avoid this vice, we should note that no one is allowed **publicly** to judge and reprove his neighbor, *although he may see him sin*, unless he have a command to judge and reprove. For there is a great difference between these two things, *judging* sin and *knowing* sin. You may indeed know it, but you are not to judge it. I can indeed see and hear that my neighbor sins, but I have no command to report it to

others. Now, if I rush in, judging and passing sentence, I fall into a sin which is greater than his. But if you know it, do nothing else than turn your ears into a grave and cover it, until you are appointed to be judge and to punish by virtue of your office.

Those, then, are called *slanderers* who are not content with knowing a thing, but proceed to assume jurisdiction; and, when they know a slight offense of another, carry it into every corner, and are delighted and tickled that they can stir another's displeasure [baseness], as swine roll themselves in the dirt and root in it with the snout. This is nothing else than meddling with the judgment and office of God, and pronouncing sentence and punishment with the most severe verdict. For no judge can punish to a higher degree nor go farther than to say: "He is a thief, a murderer, a traitor," etc. Therefore, whoever presumes to say the same of his neighbor goes just as far as the Emperor and all governments. For, although you do not wield the sword, you employ your poisonous tongue to the shame and hurt of your neighbor.

God therefore would have it prohibited that anyone speak evil of another, even though he be *guilty* and the latter *know it* right well, much less if he do *NOT know it* and have it only from hearsay. But you say: Shall I not say it if it be the truth?? Answer: Why do you not make accusation to regular judges? Ah, I cannot prove it publicly, and hence I might be silenced and turned away in a harsh manner [incur the penalty of a false accusation]. "Ah, indeed, do you smell the roast?" ["Do you smell the coffee?"—Do you get the point?] If you do not trust yourself to stand before the proper authorities and to make answer, then hold your tongue. But if you know it, know it for yourself and not for another. For if you tell it to others, although it be true, you will appear as a liar, because you cannot prove it; and you are, besides, acting like a villain [malicious scoundrel]. For we ought never to deprive anyone of his honor or good name unless it be first taken away from him publicly.

False witness, then, is everything which cannot be properly proved. Therefore, what is not manifest upon sufficient evidence no one shall make public or declare for truth; and, in short, whatever is secret should be allowed to remain secret, or, at any rate, should be secretly reprov'd, as we shall hear. Therefore, if you encounter an idle tongue which betrays and slanders someone, contradict such a one promptly to his face, that he may blush. Thus many a one will hold his tongue who else would bring some poor man into bad repute, from which he would not easily extricate himself. For honor and a good name are easily taken away, but not easily restored.

Thus you see that it is summarily forbidden to speak any evil of our neighbor; exception, however, is made in the case of the civil government, preachers, father and mother, so that this commandment is not understood as allowing evil to go unpunished. Likewise, as according to the Fifth Commandment no one is to be injured in his body, yet exception is made in the case of the executioner who, by virtue of his office, does his neighbor no good but only evil and harm, and nevertheless does not sin against God's commandment. For God, on His own account, instituted that office, having reserved punishment for His own good pleasure as He threatens in the Close of the Commandments. Just so also, although no one has a right *personally* to judge and condemn anybody, yet if they to whose *office* it belongs fail to do it, they sin just as surely as he who would do so of his own accord without such office. For here [in such offices] necessity requires one to speak of the evil, to prefer charges, to investigate and testify; and it is not different from the case of a physician who is sometimes compelled to examine and handle the patient whom he is to cure in his secret [private] parts. Just so, governments, father and mother, brothers and sisters, and other good friends are under obligation to each other to reprove evil wherever it is needful and profitable.

But the true way in this matter would be to observe the order according to the Gospel, Matthew 18:15, where Christ says: "*If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.*" Here you have a precious and excellent teaching for governing well the tongue, which is to be **carefully observed** against this **detestable misuse**. Let this, then be your rule, that you do not too readily spread evil concerning your neighbor and slander him to others, but *admonish him privately* that he may amend [his life]. Likewise, also, if someone report to you what this or that one has done, teach him, too, to go and admonish him personally, if he have seen it himself; but if not, that he hold his tongue.

The same you can learn also from the daily government of the household. For when the master of the house sees that the servant does not do what he ought, he admonishes him personally. But if he were so foolish as to let the servant sit at home, and went on the streets to complain of him to his neighbors, he would no doubt be told: "You fool, what does that concern *us*? Why do you not tell it to *him*?" Behold, that would be acting quite brotherly, so that the evil would be stayed, and your neighbor would retain his honor. As Christ also says in the same place: "*If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*" Then you have done a great and excellent work; for do you think it is a little

matter to gain a brother? Let all monks and holy orders step forth, with all their works melted together into one mass, and see if they can boast that they have gained a brother!

Further, Christ teaches: *“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”* So he whom it concerns is always to be treated [dealt] with *personally* and not to be spoken of without his knowledge. But if that do not avail, then bring it publicly before the community, whether before the civil or the ecclesiastical tribunal [the latter being the local congregation, as Christ says: *“Tell it unto the church.”*] For then you do not stand alone, but you have those witnesses with you by whom you can convict the guilty one, relying on whom the judge can pronounce sentence and punish. This is the right and regular course for checking and reforming a wicked person. But if we gossip about another in all corners and stir the filth, no one will be reformed; and afterwards, when we are to stand up and bear witness, we deny having said so. Therefore it would serve such tongues right if their itch for slander were severely punished as a warning to others! *If you were acting for your neighbor’s reformation or from love of the truth, you would not sneak about secretly nor shun the day and the light! ...*

Thus we have now the sum and general understanding of this commandment, to wit, that no one do any injury with the tongue to his neighbor, whether friend or foe, nor speak evil of him, no matter whether it be true or false, unless it be done by commandment or for his reformation, but that everyone employ his tongue and make it serve for the best of everyone else, to cover up his neighbor’s sins and infirmities, excuse them, palliate and garnish them with his own reputation. The chief reason for this should be the one which Christ alleges in the Gospel, in which He comprehends all commandments respecting our neighbor, Matthew 7:12, *“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”*

Note that the translation in the *Concordia Triglotta*, the book of our Lutheran Confessions, may be rather stilted and cumbersome in its English expressions. However, we do well to remember that this time-honored translation of Professors Dau and Bente, 1921, is *literally faithful to the original languages*, even though the sentence structure could be simplified and made more readable if rendered in more modern style. Since we have at hand few faithful translations of this work, let us cheerfully bear with the style until a better translation is made, and, in the meantime, benefit from the content and become familiar with the Scripture principles embodied and set forth in this treasured *Large Catechism* of Dr. Martin Luther.

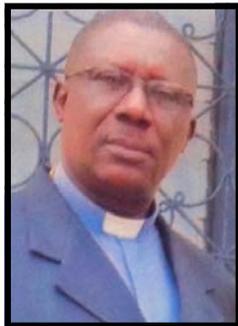
—D. T. M.

*In memoriam...*

## a Pastor God'stime Eberechi Douglas a

*“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. God'stime Eberechi Douglas** was the beloved Co-Pastor, together with Pastor Nimi B. Fyनेface, of **St. Paul's Nyemoni Lutheran Cathedral** in Abonnema, Rivers State, Nigeria; and his presence as a beloved husband and father, as a faithful shepherd of Christ's sheep and lambs in Abonnema, and as a dear and trusted colleague in the ministry of Brother Fyनेface will be sorely missed.



Pastor Douglas, by God's grace alone His humble and faithful servant, was born on November 20, 1956, in Abonnema to Mr. and Mrs. Eberechi Dokubo Douglas, both of whom preceded him in death. His elementary education was received at the Bishop Crowther Memorial School in Abonnema, and his secondary schooling at the Ideal Commercial Institute, also in Abonnema. He originally prepared for a secular career through the British Career Training College and Transworld Tutorial, Jersey, Britan. 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 by St. Paul's Nyemoni Lutheran Cathedral to assist Pastor Fyनेface, where he was ordained and installed on December 27, 2003, and where he later served with Pastor Fyनेface as Co-Pastor of the congregation until his death.

Pastor Douglas, who, like others of his brother pastors, had been suffering from high blood pressure, diabetes and malaria, had been taken to the University Teaching Hospital in Port Harcourt, gravely ill, where he died peacefully during the night of April 2nd; and Pastor Fyनेface informed us of his death in an email to Pastor Lietz on April 3rd. He also officially informed the voters of St. Paul's during the monthly meeting

of their Voters' Assembly on Saturday, April 14th, according to another e-mail to Pastor Lietz. Although the F. L. C. N. executive members started preparations for his burial the following Friday, we have not heard further concerning those arrangements.

We are grateful that the Lord in His mercy did not permit Brother Douglas to be tried beyond his ability in humble, childlike faith to endure the chastisements of his heavenly Father; 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, at only sixty-one years of age, 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 Douglas is survived by his beloved wife, Inoma, and seven loving children. The care of the large congregation in Abonnema is now solely in the hands of the remaining shepherd of the flock, Pastor Fyneface; and we wish him God's continued blessings upon his work to the Lord's glory. We confidently commit the Douglas family and the sheep and lambs of St. Paul's Nyemoni Lutheran Church, as well as all the dear sorrowing brethren in the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations in Nigeria, to the tender, loving care of our Savior, whose Gospel comfort is confirmed to all of us in the inspired benediction of the Apostle Paul and enables us to uphold one another with these precious words: "*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). Therefore we rejoice in Pastor Douglas'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 Vice 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 Biobele Aaron, Pastor**

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

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

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

**(Pastoral Vacancy at present)**

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

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

Kula, Nigeria

**(Pastoral Vacancy at present)**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

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

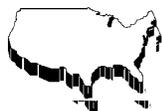
Abonnema, Nigeria

**The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface, Pastor**

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

4090 S. Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730      On the Web at: *GoodShepherdLutheranChurchTucson.com*

**Worship Service** ..... 9:30 a.m.

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

**The Rev. DANIEL P. MENSING, Pastor**

8464 East Wildcat Drive, Tucson, AZ 85730

**E-mail:** goodshepherdlutherantucson@gmail.com

Telephone (520) 721-7618

Pastor: (520) 448-8694

### PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171<sup>st</sup> Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913      On the Web at: *PeaceEvLutheran.com*

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 8:30 a.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 10:00 a.m.

**The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor**

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

**E-mail:** pastormensing@yahoo.com

Telephone: (708) 532-4288

Pastor: (708) 532-9035

Pastor's Cell: (708) 601-3943

### ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355

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

**Worship Service** ..... 11:00 a.m.

**The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor**

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

**E-mail:** revbloedel@gmail.com

Telephone: (541) 258-2941

Pastor: (541) 258-2941

### ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 9:00 a.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 10:30 a.m.

**The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor**

9658 - 54th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118

**E-mail:** revworley@comcast.net

On the Web at:

*StLukes-CLC.com*

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

Pastor: (206) 723-7418

**NOTE:** Services are also held in **Victoria, British Columbia** on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.

**Worship Service** ..... 7:00 p.m.

**Adult Bible Class** ..... 4:30 p.m.

**Adult Catechism Class** ..... 8:30 p.m.

### ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

**Worship Service** ..... 3:30 p.m.

**Adult Bible Class** ..... 4:45 p.m.

**The Rev. DAVID J. MENSING, Pastor**

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

**E-mail:** d\_mensing@hotmail.com

On the Web at:

*StMarksEvLutheran.com*

Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Pastor: (708) 655-7549

### TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 9:00 a.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 10:15 a.m.

**The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor**

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

**E-mail:** robertjlietz@gmail.com

On the Web at:

*TrinityEvLutheran.com*

Telephone: (708) 386-6773

Pastor: (708) 386-4145

*Announcing the*  
**Sixty-seventh Annual Convention**  
of the  
**Concordia Lutheran Conference**

June 22, 23 and 24, 2018

at

**St. John's Lutheran Church**

Sixth and Tangent Streets

Lebanon, Oregon 97355

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Pastor

with

*The Plenary Pastoral Conference* on June 19th & 20th

*The Board of Directors Meeting* on June 21st



**Essay:** *“The Vital Importance of Preaching Both  
Law and Gospel in Every Sermon”* (II Timothy 2:15)

by Pastor David T. Mensing

**Friday Sermon** on Romans 6:23 — President Edward J. Worley

**Sunday Sermon** on Luke 24:47 — Pastor David T. Mensing

**Motto: The Vital Importance of  
Law and Gospel Preaching**