

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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Nos. 7–8

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“If we live
in the Spirit,
let us also
walk in the Spirit.”

— Galatians 5:25

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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*" (1 Corinthians 1:10)

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.

PREFACE

to the July-August issue

As most of our readers are well aware, the Christian church calendar or *Church Year* is divided into two halves: The *Festival Half* and the *Non-Festival Half*. And, by and large, the sermon texts treated during the church year are divided and specially arranged or systematized to address the subject matter of those halves according to *pericopes* [pair • IK • ð • peeZ] or fixed portions of Scripture which treat specific narratives and doctrines of the Bible. This assures the hearers that, not only the “favorites” of the preacher are treated during the year, but a *variety* of *Gospel lessons* and *Epistle lessons* which expose the hearer, over the course of the year, to “*all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27), that is, **all** the chief doctrines of God’s Word which they should know for their faith, for their life, and for their eventual salvation (II Timothy 3:15-17).

The *Festival Half* of the church year extends from the **First Sunday in Advent** to **Trinity Sunday** and treats particularly *what God has done and still does for our eternal salvation*. During the holy *Advent* [coming] season of four weeks, we study God’s eternal decree of redemption, the promise of the Savior through the prophets of the Old Testament, the conception and birth of His forerunner, John the Baptist, and His holy advent in the fulness of time with His conception in the Virgin Mary. And, as part of the Savior’s “coming,” we also look forward to His *second* coming on the Last Day. On the *Feast of the Nativity*, the Feast of God the Father, we study the Savior’s coming in the flesh, as the Father’s Gift to all the world, foretold by the holy prophets, and His initial manifestations to men in His infancy. The holy *Epiphany* season (particularly on the Sundays *after* His Epiphany to the Wise Men, celebrated on January 6th), presents the Savior’s making Himself known as the Son of God and the Savior of the world during His public ministry by His preaching and by His miracles. One of the chief themes during the Epiphany season is mission work. The holy *Lenten* season then sets forth in great detail Christ’s *vicarious atonement*, including His great passion and death on the cross on Good Friday as payment in full to God for the sins of the world, followed by the *Easter* cycle chronicling His mighty resurrection on Easter morning and His appearances in exaltation during the forty days thereafter until His ascension into heaven. The *Feast of Pentecost* celebrates the extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Ghost and His mighty conversion of three-thousand souls to faith in the Savior in the founding of the New Testament Church. And the *Festival Half* concludes with the *Feast of the Holy Trinity*, the only true and living God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, “*of [whom] and through [whom] and to [whom] are all things*” (Romans 11:36) pertaining to our redemption, justification, conversion and ultimate salvation.

The *Non-Festival Half* of the church year during the summer and autumn months treats chiefly the Christian’s new spiritual life of *sanctification in the narrower sense*, the **result** of his redemption, justification and conversion to saving faith, namely, his “*walk in the Spirit*” (Galatians 5:16), his walk “*in the paths of righteousness for [the Savior’s] name’s sake*” (Psalm 23:3) as the **fruit** and **evidence** of his faith. The texts preached on during this half of the church year do not follow any particular order (as did the texts in the festival half); but, as to their content, they generally treat doctrines of Scripture involving the **good works** of the Christian as *normed* by the Law of God and as *motivated* by the Gospel, **good works** which in no way help to save him or contribute to his state of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9), but works that *demonstrate* that his faith (James 2:18), *nourished* by the Word (I Peter 2:2-3), is *alive and thriving*, to the praise of God and the glory of His grace (II Peter 3:18).

In this issue of our *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN* the reader will notice particularly that emphasis on the Christian’s **good works**, not as a cause of or as contributory to his faith, but as the **result of** and **evidence of** his faith, **visible testimony** to his faith (barring of course mere civic righteousness as a hypocritical *pretense* of faith), to the glory of God and to the welfare of his neighbor (Matthew 5:15; John 13:35; etc.)

— Ed.

Who Is a Truly Wise Man?

*“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?
Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.”*

—James 3:13

The General Epistle of James differs in various ways from the other apostolic letters of the New Testament, yet not in any manner that would conflict with them, to be sure, (for there are no conflicts or contradictions in the verbally-inspired Word of our God). The Apostle James, in the words which the Holy Ghost gave him, admonishes and exhorts his readers in a practical manner concerning the **outward manifestation** of their faith in works which both prove and constitute the fruit of their faith in Jesus their Savior. And he earnestly warns against the carnal security that trusts for salvation in a mere outward (or “dead”) orthodoxy of “just so much **talk**” —a glib profession of the mouth without any works to prove that the words are even sincere. He points out in his very first chapter that, unless there is evidence of faith in the lives of those who profess to be Christians, that is, unless sanctification follows upon justification, a person “*deceiveth his own heart*” (James 1:26b), he is kidding himself about his spiritual condition and is lulling himself into a feeling of false security, because “*faith without works is dead*” (2:20), he says.

In our title-text cited above and in the verses immediately following it, James lays that gauntlet down before **us** in that same regard, as he discusses the matter of **wisdom** among Christian brethren and how **true wisdom** manifests itself. He points out that if a person is **truly wise**, his works, evident in a truly Christian way of life, will show it.

No one likes to admit being an ignoramus, not in temporal matters, nor in **spiritual** matters; and nobody likes his ignorance and his lack of wisdom to become obvious to other people, while he himself is trying to cover it up. That’s what people call today “human nature” or the natural “self-defense mechanism” in every human being to cover his sins, to blame them on others, and to deny personal responsibility for them. The **Bible** calls it “*the flesh*,” man’s **sinful** nature, manifested in wicked pride and arrogance, . . .and **we all** have it! Fortunately for us, Christ redeemed us from slavery to sin by His innocent suffering and death upon the cross in our place, so that now, we, who by faith in Him are “*new creatures*” (II Corinthians 5:17), don’t have to serve sin anymore (Romans 6:6ff.), as if we were helpless to help ourselves! For the Holy Ghost has **renewed our hearts** by the power of the Gospel, so that we can, by His grace and with His help, overcome sin and do good works out of love to Him who first loved us (I John 4:19). Sadly, however, we won’t be completely rid of our old sinful flesh until the day we die and go to heaven; and it rises up again and again every day to **do deadly battle** with our New Man of faith in an effort to **destroy** our new spiritual life (Romans 7:18-25), to **kill us spiritually**. The manifestation of our flesh in that struggle is the tendency in each and every one of us to imagine ourselves spiritually wiser and more knowledgeable than we really are, so that we don’t feel the pressing need to “*grow in grace and wisdom daily through God’s Word*” (Cf. TLH 53, 4; also II Peter 3:18). That’s why in so many professing Christians Jesus’ exhortation to “*search the Scriptures*” (John 5:39) in daily Bible reading, in family devotions, in attendance at Bible classes, and in other opportunities for spiritual nourishment meets with so much **resistance**. People imagine themselves to be “fat” in the “knowledge” department, “overweight” in the “doctrine” department, and “just fine” in the “wisdom” department, while the evidence shows just the **opposite**! Such self-deceived people are “spiritual anorexics,” starving victims of their own pride; and they don’t even realize it! James exhorts us all to examine ourselves in the light of the **evidence**.

*“Who is a **wise man** and endued with **knowledge** among you?”* Don’t just TALK about it! **Prove** it! “*Let him **show** out of a good conversation,*” out of a consistently good walk of life here in this world, “*his **works** with **meekness** of wisdom.*” “**Actions** speak louder than words,” especially when those actions are done in modesty and humility, not for self-glory, not in “self-defense” of one’s own perceived goodness, but to serve the Lord, to His glory (Matthew 5:16), in works which **the Word** teaches are truly Godpleasing. Those who, by God’s grace, possess **true wisdom** and are **truly knowledgeable** in the way of righteousness don’t have to say a word about it. It will be **obvious** to everyone without any boasting!

*“BUT, if ye have **bitter envying and strife** in your hearts, **glory not**, and **lie not against the truth**”* (James 3:14). If, in your own imagined wisdom, you have the unbridled need to show others up in order to make yourself look good, and that zeal becomes offensive to other people and causes needless arguments and confrontations, **“glory NOT”** — don’t rejoice in your ability to win an argument just for the sake of winning it; *“and **lie not against the truth**.”* Don’t act as if the truth of the **Gospel** is prompting such behavior (which it is NOT)! For such a lie is a grievous **offense**, a “stumblingblock” which may indeed detract from the Gospel in the eyes of others, and its precious truth may well lose its appeal! God forbid! (Matthew 18:7).

*“THIS wisdom descendeth **not** from above, but is **earthly, sensual, devilish**”* (James 3:15). *“The good fight of faith”* (I Timothy 6:12), the Christian’s constant battle against wickedness and the struggles of the spirit against the flesh (Galatians 5:17), are not “scored” on **points won** at someone else’s expense, on whether the opponent was soundly “put down” and rendered speechless, on whether the victor “felt good inside” at having won an argument, on whether the other guy had to eat enough crow to give the winner “satisfaction.” If THAT’S the measure of your wisdom and knowledge, says James, forget it! For that is not **God-given** wisdom and knowledge (even though the WORDS THEMSELVES might be correct); for such tactics come from **earthly wisdom** measured in *feelings* of imagined superiority; and it is work that only the **devil** could take pride and pleasure in! *“For where **envying and strife** is, there is **confusion**,”* unnecessary disturbance in the fellowship, *“and every **EVIL work!**”* (v. 16). Not only does no **real good** come out of it, but much **evil** may result instead! **God’s people** are not edified by bickering and strife, no matter who wins the argument! They’re edified by the Word! (Ephesians 2:20). And **outsiders** will only be offended and driven away by the wicked example, by the *“**evil, devilish work**”* of partisan debate, jealous posturing, high-handed power-plays, tricky maneuverings, and behind-the-scenes plotting that all too often goes on—even in **Christian congregations**—in the name of “orthodoxy” or “Christian Liberty” or “wisdom” or “knowledge”!

Is that why Jesus purchased and won us “from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, to be his own?” (Luther). Is that why God by grace, for Christ’s sake, forgave us all our sins, created in our hearts the confidence that lays hold on and trusts in *His* merits, and made us heirs of everlasting life ...so that we could just “*continue in sin that grace may abound*” (Romans 6:1)?? Is that what “*grow[th] in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*” (II Peter 3:18) is supposed to result in?? No indeed! For such behavior, such “works,” are nothing to “glory” about, says James in our title-text, nor dare they ever be attributed to the Gospel as their source or as their motivator, for that would be a plain “lie”!

*“But the wisdom that is from **above** is **PURE**,”* writes the Apostle in verse 17, as he now shifts our attention to the **heavenly wisdom** which glorifies the Gospel, praises God’s grace, and is evident in the “*fruit of righteousness*” (v. 18) which results from **its** exercise. Heavenly wisdom is “**pure**,” James tells us. Since God Himself is its Source, and it manifests itself in believers by the operation of the Holy Spirit in their lives through His Word, this wisdom is not polluted with selfishness, pride, arrogance, the desire for personal “clout” and one-upsmanship. It is “clean” and purely motivated by the love of Jesus, who first loved us. And Christians “grow” in it by growing in the Word. We can’t get too much of that “**good part**” (Luke 10:42), the “*sincere [pure] milk of the Word*” (I Peter 2:2), nourishment for our souls. And if we want to be **truly wise** —“*wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15) and wise in our dealings with one another as dear brethren for Jesus’ sake— we won’t *habitually* pass up opportunities to be fed in the assembly of our brethren (cf. Hebrews 10:25); and we certainly won’t defend any neglect of spiritual growth and of opportunities for growth with the kinds of excuses that don’t “wash” in the sight of God (even though they might sound “reasonable” in the ears of men — perhaps even in our own)! **“Pure” wisdom** doesn’t come “cheap.” It comes from **studying**, from **hearing** (not just with ears but with eager hearts); it comes from **gladly learning true wisdom** at the feet of our Savior — like Mary at Bethany, who put aside pressing earthly concerns, even concerns laid upon her by her dear sister Martha, to **do** so, to “*seek first the kingdom of God*” (Matthew 6:33; cf. Luke 10:42).

And “*the wisdom...from **above**”* (v. 17) manifests itself so differently from the wisdom of this world in the **manner** in which it is **applied**. It’s NOT argumentative, pushy, and selfish. Truly **wise** Christians are “*swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath*,” says James in chapter 1, v. 19. They don’t insist on their “rights” and abuse their “liberty” to do as they please among their brethren, daring anyone to do something about it. Verse 17: “*But the wisdom that is from **above** is...**peaceable**”* [as Christians endeavor to settle disputes on the basis of **God’s Word** rather than to fire

up their adversaries with clever human rhetoric], “**gentle**” [as brethren yield personal prerogatives rather than push their rights], “**easy to be intreated**” [as members gladly subject themselves to those who are over them in the Lord and who beseech them to heed His Word (I Thessalonians 5:12) —as well as to those of their brethren who exhort them and provoke them to love and to good works, as they see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25)], “**full of mercy and good fruits**” [as they are kind and considerate to those in trouble and in need and do only what will be spiritually and morally **beneficial** for them]; “**without partiality**” [not playing favorites **or** singling out some over others], “**and without hypocrisy**” [operating honestly, from a pure heart, not pretending love, either for God or for the brethren]. Notice how all these characteristics of **heavenly wisdom** are exemplified by God’s perfect mercy and grace to us undeserving sinners in Christ Jesus!

Now if that’s the way we **always** and **consistently** dealt with one another as brethren, what would be the blessed result of exercising “*the wisdom that is from above*”? How would that *heavenly* wisdom become **evident**— even beyond the Christian **manner** in which it is applied? James says: “*The fruit of righteousness is sown in **peace** of them that **make peace***” (v. 18). **Wholesome fruit** grows and flourishes where the peace of God rules in the heart. Righteousness of life, Christian virtues, “*the fruit of the Spirit*” as St. Paul calls it by divine inspiration (Galatians 5:22), **follows** wherever “*the wisdom that is from above*,” the wisdom poured out upon true believers by the Holy Spirit of God through His precious Word, is cherished in faith, increased in spiritual growth, and applied with humble diligence by those who “***know** the grace of [their] Lord Jesus Christ*” (II Corinthians 8:9), by those who in grateful hearts **confide in** and **treasure** God’s unmerited gift to them of forgiveness of sins, life and salvation for Christ’s sake; by those who humbly **desire to serve** in love **Him** who loved them first (I John 4:19; II Corinthians 5:15).

“*Who is a **wise** man and endued with **knowledge** among you?*” James asks **us**. **By nature**, not one of us, to be sure! In the perverse recesses of our **old sinful flesh**, not one of us! And, sad to say, in our **imperfect lives of sanctification**, not one of us, to be sure, consistently exercises “*the wisdom which cometh down from above*” (Collect for the Church, *TLH*, p. 14) to the extent he **should**, nor increases in it to the extent he **could**! May the Lord graciously pardon us for our UNfaithfulness and LACK of diligence in applying ourselves unto **His** wisdom, and forgive us for the lack of fruit which our neglect often evidences in our strife-torn, self-centered, and miserable lives! And may He, “*[who] is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*” (Ephesians 3:20), plenteously endow us with His grace through His Word to bring forth **the fruits of our repentance** and **the evidence of our faith** as He works in each and every one of us “*both to will and to do of **His** good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13) as His grateful children, to the praise of the glory of His grace in Christ Jesus, our precious Savior!

—D. T. M.

*Wisdom’s highest, noblest treasure,
Jesus, lies concealed in Thee.
Grant that this may still the measure
of my will and actions be.
Humility there and simplicity reigning,
in paths of true wisdom my steps ever training.
Oh, if I of Christ have this knowledge divine,
the fulness of heavenly wisdom is mine.*

TLH 366, 5

Let Us Look Out for One Another!

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.”

—Hebrews 12:15

As we well know, the **chief** benefit of Jesus’ **vicarious** (or *substitutionary*) **atonement** is the fact that, because of it, God the Father in heaven freely forgave the world its sins and declared all men righteous in His sight (II Corinthians 5:19, etc.). That was His “**gift**,” the Bible tells us, “*not of works*” performed by poor sinners trying to appease His wrath, “*lest any man should boast*” (Ephesians 2:9). A synonymous term (a word that means the very same thing) is “**grace**” —grace which forgives sins for Jesus’ sake, but also grace which produces the faith to accept the gift, as well as grace which produces in the lives of all true believers the “fruits” of that faith in “*newness of life*,” in holiness of living, in what the Bible also calls “*sanctification*.” We can’t **see** one another’s **faith**, but we **can** see and recognize the **fruits of faith** as evidence of what the grace of God in Christ Jesus has worked in the heart. It is just **that evidence** to which the holy writer of our title-text directs our attention and urges us to be our brethren’s spiritual “keepers” (Cf. Genesis 4:9). His exhortation is simply this: “Let us look out for one another, lest any of our number FALL from the Grace of God!” That would, of course, be a grievous calamity for the person himself; it would be even more catastrophic if others too were led astray; and it would be particularly tragic if the resulting damage had lasting consequences.

The verse immediately preceding our title-text is a kind of “preamble,” setting the stage for what is to come by showing how “*the grace of God*” should be **manifesting itself** in our lives as Christians, so that we can **recognize one another** as brethren. We read: “*Follow **peace** with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*” The context indicates that the word “*all*” refers to “*all [the brethren]*” in particular— not merely all people in general (a virtue treated in other passages); for the writer is speaking of those who, by means of the Gospel, have received the grace of God (I Corinthians 15:1-2), fellow-Christians, who should, as a fruit of their faith, “*endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of **peace**,*” as St. Paul instructs the Ephesians (4:3), and as he exhorts the Thessalonians, “*Be at **peace** among yourselves*” (I Thessalonians 5:13).

“*...and [follow] **holiness**,*” that is, a sanctified walk of life here in this world which, like a light or beacon, should “*shine before men*,” Jesus says, as an **identifier** that we are in deed and in truth the children of God by faith in Him, beneficiaries of His redemption, conducting ourselves in such a way that our fellowmen can “*see [our] good works and glorify [our] Father which is in heaven*” (Matthew 5:16) for His grace. “But isn’t this ‘**holiness**’ an option for Christians? After all, we aren’t saved by works, are we??” We hear that quite often from people today, as if the Lord isn’t at all interested in our “*fruits*” (and no one else should be either!) But the holy writer says: “*[Follow] **holiness**, without which no man shall see the Lord!*” Holiness doesn’t save us, but it shows that we have been saved! Holiness doesn’t get us the grace of God; it merely shows that we have “not received the grace of God in vain” (II Corinthians 6:1). “*Faith **without works** is dead*,” James tells us (2:20) —It’s a sham; it isn’t real. It’s like a flame without heat! And everyone who knows the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 8:8), everyone who is constrained by His love (II Corinthians 5:14), everyone who values and clings to the sacrifice He made on the accursed tree of the cross (I Peter 1:18-20), everyone who anticipates “*see[ing] the Lord*” (Hebrews 12:14) in His heavenly home, will strive to cultivate “*peace*” with his brethren and a life of “*holiness*” to the glory of God’s grace.

Now, contrary to the notion of some, who think that the manner in which they conduct themselves and the way in which they live is *their own* business and strictly between *them* and *God*, the holy writer of our title-text says otherwise. He says we should be “*looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God.*” The expression “*looking diligently*” in the Greek is the same as “overseeing” or “supervising,” being “on the lookout” for brethren whose life and confession do not testify to the same thing. Christian fellowship, born of God by the Gospel, is a close and tightly-knit relationship. It’s closer than mere friendship! (We often speak of our circle of so-called “friends”

among the children of this world as so important to us — How about our **Christian brethren**??) Fellowship is closer even than kinship! (What are blood-relatives to us anyway, who despise our Savior and His precious Word, mock our faith, ridicule our church, bad-mouth our doctrinal position and practice, our pastor, and our Conference fellowship??) There is, after all, “*a **friend** that sticketh closer than a [*flesh-and-blood*] brother*,” writes Solomon in the Proverbs (18:24); and that’s one of your Christian fellowship! Your life and how you live it (that is, whether you live it according to “*holiness*”) IS the business of your brethren, and their life in that regard is **your** business! And, as we carefully “*[watch over]*” one another, like attentive mother hens, we are not being “nosey” if we are really concerned about one another’s **soul**!

But if a brother or sister is persisting in **sin**, despising the Means of Grace; “*walking in the counsel of the ungodly*,” “*standing in the way of sinners*,” and “*sitting in the seat of the scornful*” (Psalm 1); stirring up strife, envy and unrest in the fellowship; sliding into spiritual complacency; embracing a false doctrinal position or practice; flagrantly violating God’s Commandments; and the like... **DO something** about it! “*Go and tell him his fault!*” (Matthew 18:15). “**Restore** such an one!” (Galatians 6:1). Why?? So that your dear brother or sister in Christ does not “**fail of the Grace of God**” —lose his **faith** and end up in **hell**!! If you love your neighbor (and particularly your Christian brother), the Bible says you’ll “*rebuke him!*” (Leviticus 19:17). What a **calamity** it would be for one who had “*know[n] the grace of [his] Lord Jesus Christ*” (II Corinthians 8:9), who once had been a believer in Jesus, to end up in everlasting **damnation**— and YOU didn’t bother to admonish him for his sins! What a horrendous waste of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, “*the blood of the Covenant*” (Hebrews 10:29) that would be!

But it would be even more catastrophic, the verses following our title-text show us, if **others too** were led astray by the defection of one individual! And hasn’t **that** happened before? We read: “*Looking diligently...lest any **root of bitterness** springing up trouble you, and thereby **many** be defiled!*” The imagery of a “*root of bitterness*”—the root of a poisonous plant which spreads out beneath the surface to pollute healthy plants with toxins that can kill them—is found in the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 29, in this same spiritual context. There is nothing quite as destructive as a “*behind-the-scenes*” or “*below-the-surface*” movement to disrupt the fellowship, to destroy the peace, to defile the “*holiness*” of God’s saints, to undermine people’s faith, to enlist their complicity in some wicked scheme or plot, to discredit faithful brethren or even a faithful pastor. Such a “*root of bitterness*” isn’t only a “*corrupt tree bringing forth evil fruit*” (Matthew 7:17), but it is a clear and present danger, an “*offense*” (Matthew 18:7b) or stumbling-block, to the whole congregation of believers! Therefore our title-text tells **you** to be “*on the lookout*” for “*roots of bitterness!*” You might not notice them until they “*spring up [to] trouble you*”—until they try to get **you** involved. But then you must expose them, resist them, and combat them because it’s not only your soul at stake! “**Many** (may) be defiled thereby.” “**Many**” could “*fail of the grace of God*” because of their poison — “**many**” for whom the dear Savior shed His precious blood, whom the Father forgave for Christ’s sake, and whom God earnestly desires to be saved! It’s **your** business to “get involved” in exposing “*roots of bitterness*” in defense of the grace of God and out of concern for the souls of your brethren!

It just could be that the damage caused by an individual to himself, or by an individual also to various others, might have **lasting consequences** — offenses, for example, that cannot effectively be removed, that continue to haunt the fellowship even though repentance has been expressed by an offending brother or sister — so that the former Godpleasing relationship of “*peace*” and “*holiness*” cannot be fully restored. Take **Esau**, for instance. “*Look diligently... lest there be any **fornicator** [quite evidently to be understood in the spiritual sense of one who defiles himself in spiritual adultery or unfaithfulness to his Savior] or **profane person** [one who fouls himself with the filth of sin after having been washed clean by the blood of Jesus]... as [was] **Esau**, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*” He so despised the grace of God, manifested in the promise of the coming Savior, that he sold his heritage of grace for a bowl of **soup**! — Do people do that **today**?? Do Christians sometimes get so seduced by the world, by worldly “*friends*” and influences, that they trade off their spiritual blessings of God’s grace for some kind of temporal advantage — a job, a promotion, a circle of new “*friends*,” a social and intimate “*relationship*” (as they call it today) with an attractive “*someone*” who is not a true believer, opportunities that they think they can’t get otherwise than by sacrificing the grace of God and the Gospel whereby it is preserved to them?? Oh, yes indeed!

Sometimes, (and we’ve witnessed this often enough in our own Conference fellowship over many years), people make

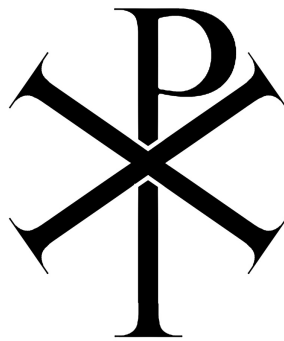
that trade-off and never seem to miss what they once had! They get used to doing *without* it! Former members of our congregations, who were confirmed as teenagers, who had been thoroughly instructed by their respective pastors in the precious truths of God's Word and swore faithfulness to the Triune God and to His Word even unto death, but "took off" for some purely temporal advantage on what to they thought would be a "short-term" relocation, never came back; and now they are either members of some **heterodox** fellowship, which they once were able to identify as such, OR they are completely **unchurched**, spiritually blind, and "*failed of the grace of God.*" Jesus says: "*The **last** state of that man is **worse** than the **first***" (Matthew 12:45). Sadly, yea, tragically, there are dozens of just such cases of sinful separatism in the official records of our congregations!

Then occasionally there are some who, like the Prodigal Son, suddenly **realize** by the indicting Law of God what they gave up, **repent** of having callously "*sold [their] birthright for a mess of pottage,*" and earnestly **desire** to have it back again—but their "conditions" are such that they can't return to what they once enjoyed: They live too far away now; they have established new "lives;" they have too many responsibilities and too little time to be re-instructed; the whole family (which they raised in the meantime) is quite "happy" with the status quo of "easy religion" (or "no religion") to which they have become accustomed; and, in spite of regrets (and even "*tears*"), it's just too late! They have been overwhelmed by the world and its temptations! And we never hear of them again!

*"For ye know how that afterward, when [Esau] **would have** [that is, **wanted to**] inherit the blessing, he was **rejected**; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."* When Esau, who had despised his birthright, later tried to get it back, he did not succeed. Even though he begged his father, Isaac, "*with tears*" to change his mind, (which is the primary meaning of the word "*repentance*" in the original Greek), it was too late. Isaac refused to change his mind about giving the blessing to Jacob, for whom **God** had intended it. —And although the illustration in this verse does not show that God wants some to be lost, nevertheless it does serve as a **warning** against **spurning** one's time of grace and **despising** one's spiritual blessings—which, as the result of God's just, judicial punishment, may not be retrievable! For the Lord could visit "*a famine*" upon the land, as He warns through His Prophet Amos (8:11-12), a famine "*of hearing the words of the Lord,*" so that those who took the Means of His grace for granted "*shall not find it!*"

When we "*know [as we do] the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for [our] sakes He became poor, that [we] through His poverty might be rich*" (II Corinthians 8:9); when we know that the grace of God is offered in and through the precious Gospel and the Sacraments—the Means of Grace; when we know that, without the regular and consistent feeding of our souls with that Bread of Life, we are sure to become weak in faith and even to "*fall from our own steadfastness*" (II Peter 3:17), that is, to "***fail of the Grace of God,***" shall we not willingly, yea, eagerly, heed the exhortation of our title-text and diligently **look out for one another, lest any of our number fall from Grace?** There's too much at stake to do otherwise! May God graciously grant us the courage and diligence to be **faithful brethren** one to another, so that, humbly clinging to our Savior, we may all come to the home that He has prepared for us from the foundation of the world, to "*see the Lord*" face-to-face, and there to live under Him in His kingdom, and to serve Him in everlasting righteousness and true "*holiness,*" in innocence, and blessedness forevermore!

— D. T. M.



Make Your Calling and Election Sure

“Wherefore..., brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

II Peter 1:10

What **is** it that makes us **certain** that **WE** will enter into life everlasting? In our Catechism (1943), we have the same question in slightly different words: “Are you **sure** that **you** will enter eternal life?” (Q/A 199). And the answer, based on solid Scripture, replies: “I firmly believe that, as God has in time called me by the Gospel, enlightened, sanctified and kept me in the true faith, even so He has from eternity chosen me unto the adoption of children and unto life everlasting; and no man shall pluck me out of His hand.” (*The Election of Grace; Predestination.*) Three prooftexts (*sedes*) are supplied, but nothing more is said in our Catechism concerning this comforting doctrine. However, for the sake of a brief review, the following points should be noted:

- God has *in eternity* specially **elect**ed or chosen **some** to eternal life; and **all** the **elect** and **only** the **elect** will ultimately be saved. (Ephesians 1:3–6; II Timothy 1:9; John 10:27-28; Matthew 24:13).
- *Nothing good in us*, but **only His grace in Christ** moved Him to do this (II Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:5-6; Romans 11:6). The **elect** were NOT chosen “in view of their foreseen final faith,” as the E.L.C.A. teaches. They came to faith *because* they had been **elect**ed or “*ordained to eternal life*” (Acts 13:48b). **Faith** is **not** the *cause* of our election but its **result**, as well as the *receiving means* whereby its **result**, our eternal Salvation, is accomplished (Ephesians 2:8-9; I Peter 1:2-5; I Timothy 6:12).
- We are to **KNOW** He has elected **us** by the fact that *in time* He called us to faith, justified us by faith, sanctified us in faith, and promised us glory (Romans 8:28-30; II Peter 1:2-10; John 10:27-28).
- God elected **NO ONE** to **damnation** (Cf. John Calvin’s double predestination, in which a small minority of humanity was elected to salvation and the vast majority was written in eternity already to damnation). That would have been in direct contradiction of His express will in Ezekiel 33:11, II Peter 3:9, and I Timothy 2:4, of *universal grace* (John 3:16; Titus 2:11; etc.), of *universal redemption* (II Corinthians 5:15; I John 2:2; II Peter 2:1; John 6:33; etc.), and of *universal (objective) justification* (II Corinthians 5:19; John 1:29; Romans 3:23-24; etc.).
- Since this doctrine is *pure Gospel*, it should be used for the comfort of **true believers** who are troubled by their sins, but **NOT** as a sort of “pillow” for the impenitent and carnally secure to “sleep” on (I Corinthians 10:11-12; II Peter 3:17; also *Catechism* Question/Answer 17, 3).
- We are **NOT** to try to **comprehend** this blessed doctrine by *speculating* into God’s mysteries, but we are to **believe** it because His Word has revealed it. Whatever questions God in His Word has left UNanswered, we also must leave UNanswered (Romans 9:20; 11:33ff.; II Corinthians 10:5).

Indeed some may answer the question “Are you **sure** that **you** will enter eternal life?” – “Yes, because Jesus **died** for me.” Yes, indeed He did; but “*He died for ALL*” (II Corinthians 5:15), even for those who hate Him! (II Peter 2:1). And those that hate Him will perish everlastingly! —Others may say: “Because God **forgave all my sins** for Jesus’ sake.” Indeed He did; in fact He forgave *the sins of the whole world* (II Corinthians 5:19; I John 2:2), even the sins of the unbelievers! (II Peter 2:1). But “*he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mark 16:16), Jesus says. —Still others will add: “Because **I believe** in Jesus as my Savior.” And we ask them, “So it’s your faith that **makes** it so??” This is indeed a **tough question**, especially as we ask it of **ourselves**, a question intended not to **destroy** our confidence but rather to **direct** it to its **proper foundation**. There is, of course, nothing **UNsure** about our salvation

as far as **God** is concerned; for St. Paul reminds us: “*The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: **The Lord knoweth them that are His***” (II Timothy 2:19). The question is: How sure are **YOU**? How sure am **I**? The Apostle Peter in our title-text helps all of us answer that question to a certainty, as he bids us: “*Make your calling and election sure*” by confiding in God’s gracious promises revealed to you in His Word, by abounding in good works as the fruit and evidence of your faith, and by anticipating your entrance into Christ’s everlasting kingdom.

Peter writes in verse three of this chapter that God “*hath given unto us*” wonderful spiritual gifts “*through the **knowledge** of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.*” We know that a mere “head-knowledge” of God, such as an unconverted heathen person can surely have from the declaration of God’s creation and the testimony of his conscience, does nothing at all for him but makes him cringe in fear and dread of God’s just punishment upon him! For the “natural knowledge of God” does not even identify who the TRUE God is, nor does it show natural man the way to heaven. It IS intended, however, to bestir natural men’s curiosity about God, Paul said to the Athenians on Mars’ Hill (Acts 17:27), “*that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him*” in the Holy Scriptures. On the other hand, the “*knowledge of Him that hath called us* [more accurately translated:] *by **His own** glory and virtue*” is much **more** than a knowledge of mere **facts**! For when His Holy Spirit “*called us*” by the Gospel, invited us to partake of Christ’s blessings which are offered to **all men** in that Gospel, He (as **only GOD can do** “*by His own glory and virtue*”) “enlightened [us] with His gifts” (Luther), giving us the **saving** knowledge of Christ, our Savior, so that now we **trust** and **believe**, **rejoice**, and **take comfort** in Him. This He did “*according [to] His divine power,*” the power of His matchless **grace**, working through the **Gospel**, “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Romans 1:16), to impart such precious gifts to us whereby our spiritual “*life*” is nurtured and sustained, and our “*Godliness,*” our walk in Sanctification, is increased.

What **are** those “*gifts*” that He gives us? Peter says that they are “*exceeding great and precious promises*” (v. 4), the promises of the **Gospel**, which we focus upon especially during the **Festival Half** of the church year: The promise of a Savior given to our first parents after the Fall into sin; the promises repeated to God’s people down through the whole Old Testament; the promises fulfilled in Christ when He come down to this world of sin to be man’s Substitute under the Law —both to keep it perfectly and to suffer the consequences of transgressing it, all in the sinner’s place; the promise of forgiveness, life, and salvation, purchased by Christ and declared to be God’s free gift to all the world for His sake; the promise of spiritual renewal by faith in Christ Jesus and liberation from bondage to sin, death, and Satan; the promise of heavenly glory to all who cling in childlike confidence to these merciful and gracious gifts. —Indeed, as noted above, when the Holy Spirit “enlightened [us] with His gifts,” He gave us the **saving** knowledge of Christ, our Savior, so that now we **trust** and **believe**, **rejoice** and **take comfort** in Him and in these wondrous Gospel promises!

And what is the blessed result of these unspeakable gifts, these “*exceeding great and precious promises*”? Peter says in verse 4: “*That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*” There are, of course, poor fools who, in their fleshly arrogance, imagine that the Apostle here refers to spiritual “perfectionism” whereby Christians become the equivalent of **demi-gods** for their holiness and sinlessness! “*God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are!*” (Luke 18:11). Were that the case, the Apostle Paul needlessly condemned himself in Romans 7 as a “*wretched man,*” “*carnal, sold under sin,*” in whose “*flesh dwelleth no good thing,*” whose Old Adam still “*serve[d] sin.*” On the contrary, by God’s “*exceeding great and precious promises,*” He sanctifies us in the true faith, renewing our heart so that we “*put on the **New Man**, which **after God**,*” in the image of our Maker, “*is created in righteousness and true holiness*” (Ephesians 4:24), “*which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him*” (Colossians 3:10), even though the Old Adam, while we still live in this world, keeps us from attaining perfection in our life of sanctification.

Just as Adam, before his fall from the knowledge of God, before his fall from righteousness and true holiness, was a “*partaker of the divine nature,*” and yet was not **himself** God, but a **creature** made after the image of God, so we by grace and the power of His Gospel promises participate in the “*divine nature,*” **not** according to its substance but according to its qualities, so that we are now able to overcome sin and do good works, “*having escaped [or fled from] the corruption that is in the world through lust,*” having been redeemed from the slavery of sin and from “*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*” (I John 2:16) which “*natural man*” is unable to resist!

*“And beside this, giving all diligence, **ADD** to your faith **virtue**; and to virtue **knowledge**; and to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance **patience**; and to patience **Godliness**; and to Godliness **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness **charity**”* (vv. 5 - 7). The Apostle James writes: *“Faith without works is dead”* (2:20). Indeed, *“faith without works”* is **no faith at all**, for the Lord Jesus tells us in no uncertain terms that unfruitful, dead trees are *“hewn down and cast into the fire”* (Matthew 3:10). Therefore, as *“new creatures,”* as trees which have been **made alive** or *“quicken[ed], who were dead in trespasses and sins”* (Ephesians 2:1), it is incumbent upon us as those who now are *“partakers of the divine nature”* to **act like it!** This is no easy task, and that’s why we have to *“give all diligence”* to the business of **abounding in good works, as the fruit and evidence of faith!**

Notice that Peter speaks of these fruits as being *“added,”* not to create faith, not to increase the quality of faith, not to enhance it in any way, but to give tangible, visible, demonstrable **evidence** that the faith is **alive and well**. Justification must precede Sanctification; first comes faith, then and only then, the **fruits** of faith; for *“without faith it is impossible to please Him,”* the Bible says (Hebrews 11:6). By these *“added”* fruits, called by St. Paul the *“fruit of the Spirit”* (Galatians 5:22), *“if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (v. 8). —They are not to be latent, merely potential, fruits which no one can detect in your life; they are not to be simply intended fruits which never quite get beyond the “budding” stage; and they are not to be dribbles and drabs of good fruit, nor puny, underdeveloped fruit unworthy of a *“good tree”*! For such poor production shows the tree to be *“idle,”* the Greek says —nothing’s **going on** in the “life” of that tree! There’s no growth *“in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (II Peter 3:18) and consequently no growth in *“virtue,”* that is, spiritual vigor and courage under fire; no growth in *“knowledge”* (as often is evident in *“idle”* Christians who don’t *“let the Word of Christ dwell in [them] richly”* (Colossians 3:16). There’s no growth in *“temperance,”* that is, in self-control and self-discipline over one’s base desires; no growth in *“patience,”* in the ability to maintain a steady course in stormy seas; no real growth in *“Godliness”* either, so that walking the the paths of righteousness for the Savior’s sake is **not** the heart’s true desire. And there’s no growth in *“brotherly kindness,”* in real love of the brethren as evidenced by the priority that fellowship is given in one’s day-to-day contacts with his fellow Christians. And finally, there’s no real growth in *“charity,”* that is, in that highest, most noble of all loves, the self-sacrificing love which imitates the love of the Savior for us!

*“He that **lacketh** these things is **blind** and cannot see **afar off**, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins”* (v. 9). A person who lacks these fruits, yea, who even lacks them in abundance, can hardly expect to be confident about his salvation. In fact, he can barely **see** ahead of himself far enough to *“behold [his] redemption drawing nigh”* (Luke 21:28). He’s spiritually **myopic**; he’s so nearsighted concerning the things of his soul that life everlasting is “out of sight and out of mind.” And at the root of the problem is the fact that he **no longer appreciates** the mercy and grace of God to poor sinners like himself, the sacrifice of His Savior on his behalf, the forgiveness of sins extended to him by God for Jesus’ sake, and the reprieve from the death sentence of damnation which he once enjoyed as a child of God (John 3:16b). And the sad part about it is that he blinded **himself**, so that he now sees nothing ahead in which he can take comfort.

And now we come back to our title-text: *“Wherefore **the rather**, brethren...”* instead of being so shortsighted and blind to your spiritual lot, *“give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”* We confess in our Catechism concerning the **Doctrine of Election or Predestination** (as cited at the beginning of our article): *“I firmly **believe** that, as God has in time called me by the Gospel, enlightened, sanctified, and kept me in the true faith, even so He has from eternity chosen me unto the adoption of children and unto life everlasting; and no one (Gk.) shall pluck me out of His hand.”* That’s our **confession**. That’s what we **believe**. But how do we make it *“SURE”*?? What **evidence** do we have for that conviction? — Our *“calling and election”* is *“sure”* on **God’s** part, for *“the Lord knoweth them that are His”* (II Timothy 2:19); and Jesus says of His true flock, *“I know My sheep”* (John 10:14). But for a person to make this blessed Gospel doctrine of Election a sort of psychological “pillow” to sleep on spiritually, while he thinks and acts and lives as he chooses here in this world, in carnal security and self-indulgence, thumbing his nose, as it were, at the Word and will of God, is the height of folly! Of **his** *“calling and election”* such a person **cannot** be *“sure.”* Indeed, his entire attitude shows the very **opposite!**

On the other hand, the true believer will be satisfied **only** when he walks *“in the paths of righteousness”* for Jesus’, his Good Shepherd’s, sake (Psalm 23); **only** when he, *“like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringeth forth his*

fruit in his season” (Psalm 1), **only** when he keeps “*adding to [his] faith*” the graces and virtues of the Spirit. For such fruit is the “external witness” of God’s Holy Spirit that we are His children and heirs of eternal life, evidence that both **we** and **others** can **SEE**. “*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples,*” Jesus said (John 13:35) concerning the fruit of brotherly love. “*If ye do these things, ye shall never fall,*” Peter tells us in our title-text —**not** that the fruits **keep us** in the true faith, but they show that we **ARE** in the true faith. “*My sheep...follow Me*” (John 10:27), says Jesus; [“that’s how you can tell that they are My sheep.”]. **That’s** how we make our calling and election sure!

And then we can **anticipate with joyful confidence** “*the end of [our] faith, even the salvation of [our] souls*” (I Peter 1:9), “*for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*” (v. 11), not as a reward **deserved** by our “*walk in the Spirit*” (Galatians 5:16), but as the result of **God’s free grace** in Christ Jesus in having worked out His **eternal purpose in us**. Thus, even now, having “*made our calling and election sure,*” we praise and magnify Him who surely chose us for His own, declaring with St. Paul in Ephesians chapter one: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved!*” (vv. 3-6).

God grant such **confidence** of salvation, such **surety** of our calling and election, and such **gratitude** for His mercy and grace, to each and every one of us, for Jesus’ sake!

—D. T. M.

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The following **referendum** was unanimously passed by the constituent congregations of the Concordia Lutheran Conference:

Pursuant to specific wording in the Conference *Constitution* and especially in view of the unprecedented inability of the Conference to assemble in annual conventions to authorize or otherwise dispose of matters specifically left to a convention of the Conference, the congregations unanimously

- 1) approved the Board’s action of canceling two consecutive annual conventions of the Conference (in the summer of 2020 and 2021 respectively) because of the Covid pandemic and the governmental restrictions on travel and large in-person assemblies (Compare *Constitution*, Article X, 1);
- 2) approved the Board’s action of by-passing the “Election Procedure” stipulated in the Bylaws (*Bylaw* Number 2) and simply extending, until the next regular convention, the terms of those officers and standing committees (*Constitution*, Article IX, Preamble, “...to be elected...” elected in 2019;
- 3) approved temporarily setting aside the term limits for the Conference Vice President (“two consecutive terms,” *Constitution*, Article XI) until the next regular convention;
- 4) agreed that the above actions are NOT to be regarded as precedent-setting but are intended only for the present contingency.

Certified and respectfully submitted,
Rev. David T. Mensing, Conference Secretary



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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

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SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abalama, Nigeria

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Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

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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

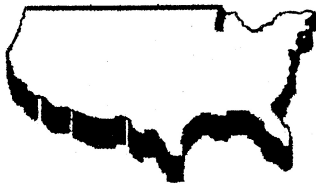
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Directory of Member Congregations

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PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

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PeaceEvLutheran.com

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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.

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Telephone: (541) 258-2941

Pastor's Cell: (206) 579-8861

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178

Sunday School & Bible Class 4:00 p.m.

Worship Service 5:30 p.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

On the Web at

StLukes-CLC.com

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

Pastor's Cell: (206) 579-8861

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

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

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID J. MENSING, Pastor

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

E-mail: d_rnensing@hotmail.com

On the Web at

StMarksEvLutheran.com

Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Pastor's Cell: (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

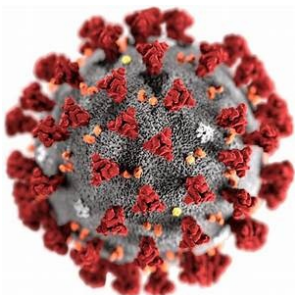
Telephone: (708) 948-7075

Parsonage: (708) 386-4145

Pastor's Cell: (708) 556-1892

(During the current pandemic, please call the respective pastors regarding **assembled** or alternative **“virtual”** services.)

Help us, Good Lord!



“Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

—Philippians 4:6

Lord God, dear heavenly Father, we thank Thee that, according to Thy merciful providence, Thou hast regarded our beloved country in this time of peril and hast permitted our society to open up to a great extent as we experience far fewer infections with the Coronavirus due to natural and acquired immunity and successful inoculations with effective vaccines. Even as we still exercise prudent measures to contain this virus and to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors from contagion, keep us from anxiety, depression and despair, and cause us rather, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to let our requests come before Thy throne of grace, commending ourselves to Thy special fatherly goodness for Jesus' our Savior's sake. May it please Thee in Thine own best time and way to comfort us in this period of chastening and to protect us from harm and danger, granting us meanwhile patience under adversity and a happy issue out of all our afflictions according to Thy promise that all things work together for good to them that love Thee, to them who are the called according to Thy gracious purpose. We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ, our precious Redeemer, our only Mediator and Advocate at Thy throne. Amen.

