

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. LXV

March–April 2021

Nos. 3–4

“It is
finished!”

— John 19:30



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Official Organ of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

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

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Scriptural Publications, 17151 S. Central Avenue,
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913. A special notice of
expiration will be inserted in the issue which
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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.

“Behold the Man!” in agony for YOU

*“And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly;
and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”*

— Luke 22:44



Ash Wednesday signals the beginning of the holy **Lenten season** on our Christian church calendar, that period of six weeks just prior to Easter during which we give particular attention to our dear Savior’s suffering and death for the sins of the world. And what a wonderful opportunity we have, quite a few of us in special midweek services, not only to *hear* once again the **Passion History** of our Lord Jesus, compiled by Martin Chemnitz according to the four evangelists, but to *study* its Gospel portions in greater detail, to *meditate upon* its mysteries, and to *appreciate* ever better the **real significance** of Jesus’ **passive obedience** — His suffering at the hands of others — for our eternal salvation!

Of course, most of us have heard the blessed *Passion History* many times before — some, no doubt, to the extent that we have it practically memorized. And the Old Evil Foe would like nothing better than to see us become **bored** with the prospect of hearing it *again*, so that, like Jesus’ disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, we drift off into spiritual sleep and inattentiveness to the precious Gospel of our Savior! “*The spirit*” — our New Man of faith, who always seeks to do what is right and proper in God’s sight, — that “*spirit indeed is willing*” to hear, to learn, to study, to search, and to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Savior; “*but the flesh*” — the Old Adam of sin within every one of us — “*is weak*” (Matthew 26:41) and lulls us over and over again into

drowsiness and complacency. And the Savior has to nudge us and shake us awake with the admonition of His Word: “*What?? Could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation!*” (Matthew 26:40-41a). So it was with Jesus’ disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus began His great passion in payment for the sins of the world. There they had the special opportunity, with their own two eyes, to “*behold the man*” (John 19:5), “*despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and [they] hid as it were [their] faces from Him*” (Isaiah 53:3) in slumber.

We had the very same opportunity this past Lenten season to see, with OUR own two eyes riveted upon the **Gospels**, our suffering Savior treading the path of sorrows all the way from Gethsemane’s garden to Calvary’s hill, in anguish of body and soul for our redemption. Let us once again return to the Savior’s *beginning* of sorrows in the meditation before us and, just as if we were sitting with the disciples, “*behold*” our precious Redeemer in agony for US.

Open your eyes with me in the Lenten retrospectives presented in this issue of our **CONCORDIA LUTHERAN**, moved and impelled by the Holy Spirit of our God, to *look at*, to *examine*, yes, to *scrutinize* the horrible image that looms up before us in the accounts of Jesus’ great passion: The image of an innocent victim, the holy, spotless Lamb of God Himself, in agony FOR YOU, betrayed, denied, accused and abused for YOU, crucified and slain for YOU as your SUBSTITUTE! Do not hide, as it were, *your* face from Him, wretched, bruised and gory though He be; but, as Pontius Pilate said to the Jews when he brought this sad spectacle-of-a-man out to them in hopes of arousing their pity, “*Behold the man!*” (John 19:5).

We read in the Gospels that Jesus and His disciples had left the upper room where the Savior had just instituted the holy supper of His very own body and blood, had crossed over the brook Kidron [Cedron] to the Mount of Olives, and had entered into a secluded garden or olive grove called *Gethsemane*. The Lord and His little band of followers often went there for some peace, quiet and solitude. “*And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed*” (Luke 22:41). Even before we hear the words of His prayer, we see in what is happening before our eyes the clear portrait of our Savior in His *state of humiliation*, the Lord of heaven and earth on His knees in prayer to His heavenly Father. ***Behold the Man*** in this striking pose, and consider the reason for it.

Here is the very Son of God Himself, God from all eternity, who was sent by His heavenly Father down to this world of sin to redeem lost and fallen mankind. In order to carry out this vital work of redemption, Jesus was “*conceived by the Holy Ghost*” and was “*born of the Virgin Mary*,” we confess in the Apostles’ Creed; that is, He took our human flesh and blood *into* God, so that, from the time of His incarnation, He was and still is BOTH true God and true man in one indivisible person —perfectly holy and without sin. But the mere having of a human body was not enough; for Paul writes to the Philippians, chapter 2, that, although Jesus is and always was TRUE GOD, He “*made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and ...**humbled Himself**, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (vv. 7-8).

As we know from our study of the Scriptures, when our dear Lord Jesus “*humbled Himself*” to be our Savior, He did not always and fully use the divine attributes or qualities which, as true God, He always had in all their fulness from eternity already, attributes which were fully communicated to or shared with His *human* nature (Colossians 2:9) —even tho’ He could have used them to His personal advantage. But, as we see very particularly from the *Passion History* taken from the Gospels, Jesus did NOTHING to get Himself out of suffering and dying for the sins of the world. And here in our title-text for this article, we witness His humble, earnest prayer to His heavenly Father in the anguish of knowing what was in store for Him: “*Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done*” (v. 42). It wasn’t that Jesus’ will was different from that of His Father; but, in His *state of humiliation*, Jesus dreaded in His truly human body and soul the thought of suffering and dying, just like any other man. And yet, He conformed His will to that of His Father in **humble obedience** to God’s eternal decree of Redemption — in which He Himself, as the only-begotten Son of God, had participated in the first place— and He prayed “*Thy will be done*.” In so doing, He not only demonstrated His humility, but He also left us His perfect example of how WE should pray.

“*And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him*” (v. 43). Immediately His heavenly Father answered His prayer in His own best way—for our salvation— not removing from Him the cup of suffering He had to endure, but ***strengthening*** Him to bear it, as bear it He ***must*** to atone for the sins of the world. Notice here also regarding the Savior’s *state of humiliation* that the King of kings and Lord of lords was not using the strength of His very own almighty power for the battle ahead, but humbly permitted Himself to be strengthened by one of His own creatures, an angel, which He had made in the beginning!

“*And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly*” (v. 44). What a powerful example for us Christians, that when the going gets rough for us here in this world, and we haven’t received from the Lord the answer that we think we should have, we don’t give up on prayer to our heavenly Father, but pray even ***more earnestly***, bringing our petitions to the Throne of Grace, saying in all humility with our Savior: “*Not MY will but THINE be done*.”

“*And His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground*” (v. 44). What intense agony of body and soul our dear Savior was suffering there in the Garden of Gethsemane! And this was just the beginning! What made that agony so *intense* for Him? Just imagine for a moment the **real nature** of Jesus’ agony: His was the torture of a *guilty conscience*, a sin-laden soul —laden not with His OWN sins (for He had none of His own - I Peter 2:22) — but laden with the sin, guilt and shame of every person who ever lived in this world and who ever will yet live on the face of this earth! The Bible tells us: “***God made Him, who knew NO sin, to be sin FOR US, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him***” (II Corinthians 5:21).

OUR conscience is used to dealing with guilt, for it is with us every day and compounds itself every moment we live and breathe, *for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment* [Luther]. And so we penitently bring all our sins to Jesus constantly for the assurance of God’s forgiveness for His sake and for the reassurance of His love. But **Jesus’ conscience**, the *human* conscience of the holy Son of God, had been completely clear and innocent from

His birth! (Cf. John 8:46). NOW SUDDENLY it was burdened down with the sins of the **world**! NOW for the first time Jesus was feeling the anguish of **guilt**, multiplied by all the guilty souls of sinful men! —multiplied by YOUR sins and MINE! “*Surely He hath borne **our** griefs and carried **our** sorrows,*” Isaiah prophesied of Jesus in his 53rd chapter! (v. 4). Is it any wonder then that the Savior broke out into a SWEAT? —into a GUILT-SWEAT? —into an intense sweat of ANGUISH over the GUILT He was experiencing?? —into a sweat so overwhelmingly great that it was “*as it were **great drops of blood** falling down to the ground*”??!

“Behold the Man,” dear watchers with Him in His hour of anguish! **Behold the Man... IN AGONY FOR YOU!** And, as you behold your Savior in spirit, kneeling in humble prayer to His Father in heaven, drenched with bloody sweat and His poor heart pounding in bitter anguish, remember WHY He is there! Remember FOR WHOM He is there! Remember WHOSE GUILT He is bearing and WHOSE PANGS OF CONSCIENCE He is suffering! Then come to Him with contrite hearts, humbly and freely confessing your many sins and your utter unworthiness of His mercy and grace! (Psalm 51:17). And fall down gratefully on your knees of contrition and faith beside Him there in the garden, and pray:

*Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?
It is MY SINS for which THOU Lord must languish.
Yea, all the wrath, the woe THOU dost inherit,
This **I** do merit!*

*There was no spot in me by sin untainted;
Sick with sin's poison, all my heart had fainted!
My heavy guilt was laid on THEE to languish
For ME in anguish!*

*I'll think upon Thy mercy without ceasing,
In penitence for sin which caused Thy woe increasing.
I trust THY merit; humble thanks I render,
Savior, so tender!*

(TLH 143, vv. 3,6 and 12)

—D. T. M.





... abused for you

*“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him.
And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head,
and they put on Him a purple robe and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!”
And they smote Him with their hands.”*

— John 19:1-3

We again “*behold the Man*” (John 19:5) in another special Lenten retrospective, this time observing the Lamb of God, the “*Man of sorrows*” (Isaiah 53:3), **abused for us** as He “suffered under Pontius Pilate” (Apostles’ Creed). In the previous article we witnessed how He bore **the agony** of OUR GUILTY CONSCIENCES before God in the Garden of Gethsemane, so that by virtue of His anguish, we might have the answer of a good conscience before God by faith in Him as our Redeemer. It is noteworthy that, as we read in the Gospels — and specifically in the *Passion History* condensation of the Gospel accounts — Jesus suffered **vicariously**, that is, **in our place**, everything that was necessary to purchase for us and all mankind the forgiveness of sins (I Peter 1:18-19; etc.); and He did it all in less than twenty-four hours! —In Gethsemane, Jesus “*bore our griefs and carried our sorrows*” (Isaiah 53:4), as “*the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (v. 6). —Jesus was *betrayed* into the hands of His enemies, so that we could be rescued from our enemies—from sin and death and Satan. —Jesus was *denied*, so that we might be confessed by Him before His Father in heaven and admitted into His heavenly wedding feast as His “*friends*” (John 15:15), clothed by faith in His righteousness. —Our Savior was *accused* for you and me, accused of the very sins of which we stand guilty before God, as the Father in heaven “*made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us,*” in our place, “*that we might be made the righteousness of God in [and through] Him*” (II Corinthians 5:21). —AND He also bore the *penalties* attached to those accusations in your place and mine. He suffered the punishment that you and I deserve to suffer. He suffered innocently for us, the guilty ones. It’s not easy for us to face that fact, simply because it is an agonizing and humbling thought to have to reckon with, that someone else would take all that degradation, mockery and pain

upon Himself for US! And yet, there He stands in the Judgment Hall of Pilate! As gruesome as He looks, do not turn your eyes away from Him, do not hide as it were your face from Him (Isaiah 53:3), but recognize what your sins did to the sweet Lord Jesus, as you see Pontius Pilate turn to you and say, “*Behold the Man!*” ... Abused for YOU!”

Remember that the Roman governor had questioned Jesus carefully and examined Him closely on all the charges that had been brought against Him and had found Him completely innocent on all counts. In fact, he had just stated to the Jews in the words preceding our title-text: “*I find in Him no fault at all.*” One would certainly assume after such a clean and clear-cut verdict of innocence that the acquitted defendant would immediately be set free. But Pilate had that mob of rabble-rousers to contend with, the din of their blood-curdling screams pounding in his ears and the prospect of an investigation by Caesar on his mind; for the Jews had threatened to blackmail the governor, saying: “*If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend!*” (John 19:12). And so Pilate’s self-serving brand of justice began to show itself in what now followed — his interest **not** in seeing the innocent go free, but in seeing that he and his interests were protected.

“*Then Pilate **therefore** [because He was **innocent**] took Jesus and **scourged** Him,*” our text tells us. He took this innocent defendant and, instead of setting Him free, he began to inflict upon Him one of the most sadistic forms of **abuse**. **Scourging** was a particularly **cruel** punishment. It was not just a lashing with a whip, such as was commonly inflicted upon galley slaves in a ship and upon prisoners on a rock pile. That would have been bad enough! But a *scourge* was an instrument of TORTURE! It was a whip of multiple rawhide strips or thongs, each one tipped with a sharp piece of metal, designed to tear into the victim’s flesh and to lay it open in long, deep gashes! The sweat on the prisoner’s back would then be beaten into these gashes to burn and to irritate them even further, as well as to infect them; and some soldiers even threw a handful of salt onto the wounds for “good measure”! Many victims of scourging suffered cardiac arrest and died from that punishment alone!

“*Behold the Man!*” Picture Him in your mind’s eye, bare to the waist, tied to a stone pillar, making no effort to resist, and yet knowing full well what was in store for Him. The scourge is brought out, dried blood from other prisoners still caked on its cruel tips. A soldier raises it high over his head and brings it down hard upon the poor Savior’s back! Again and again it tears into Jesus flesh until He slumps against the pillar in a near faint, His back a raw and bloody mass of deep lacerations!

Can you feel it? Can you even truly imagine it? No. Why not?? Because Jesus is bearing it FOR you. “*Surely **He** hath borne **our** griefs and carried **our** sorrows,*” writes the Prophet Isaiah. “*The chastisement of **our** peace was upon **Him**, and with **His** stripes **we** are healed.*” (Isaiah 53:5). The chastisement or flogging that we deserve was laid on Jesus’ back, and with the stripes inflicted on Him “*we are healed*” from the guilt of sin. “**Behold the Man**” — *abused FOR YOU*, and keep the image of your Savior’s scourged back in your mind’s eye, so that when you are tempted to transgress God’s Holy Ten Commandments in thoughts, words, or deeds, your FIRST reaction as a Christian will be: “*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*” (Genesis 39:9b) —when I know what it cost my dear Lord Jesus?!”

But this scourging was only the beginning of the abuse to which Jesus was subjected for us. For “*the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head; and they put on Him a purple robe and said, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they smote Him with their hands.*” Pilate’s soldiers now took Jesus and used Him for their own vile amusement. They thought of His claim to be the spiritual King of the Jews to be a first-class joke, especially in view of His rejection by His own people (Cf. John 1:11). And so they **mocked Him**! They **made fun of Him**! Not only did they sarcastically costume Him as a king, but they continued to **torture** Him, both physically and emotionally!

In their wicked and sadistic cruelty, they fashioned a symbolic “*crown*” out of the branches of a “*thorn*” bush, placed it on His head, and pushed it into His scalp. Other evangelists tell us that they beat this crown down upon His head with sticks! More innocent blood oozed from the Savior’s body and ran down His sweet and kindly face, making Him look so gruesome that Isaiah tells us in prophecy: “*We hid as it were our faces from Him*” (53:3). And, as for Jesus, He said through the Psalmist, “*Reproach hath broken My heart, and I am full of heaviness! I looked for some to take pity, but there was none!*” (69:20). Those soldiers had no sympathy whatsoever for this poor specimen of a man; for, after all they had already done to Him, now “*they smote Him with their hands*” —in other words, they slapped Him around, punched Him in the face; and Mark says, “*[They] did spit in His face!*” “*And bowing their knees [they] worshiped Him.*”

Can you imagine such abusive treatment being inflicted even upon a **guilty** person?? And Jesus was **NOT guilty!** He took all this abuse quietly like a sheep “*dumb before his shearers,*” as uncomplainingly as a “*lamb led to the slaughter,*” even though He was King and Lord of all! (Isaiah 53).

“*Pilate...went forth again and saith unto them, ‘Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find **no fault** in Him.’ Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them: ‘Behold the Man!’*” (John 19:4-5). Here then is the summary of the abusive spectacle before us: Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Son of God, holy, harmless and undefiled, declared to be completely innocent even by that heathen, Pilate, has been subjected to cruel mocking and sadistic torture to satisfy the blood-lust of wicked men —both the soldiers who inflicted this abuse upon Him, and the Jews who demanded it and screamed for it.

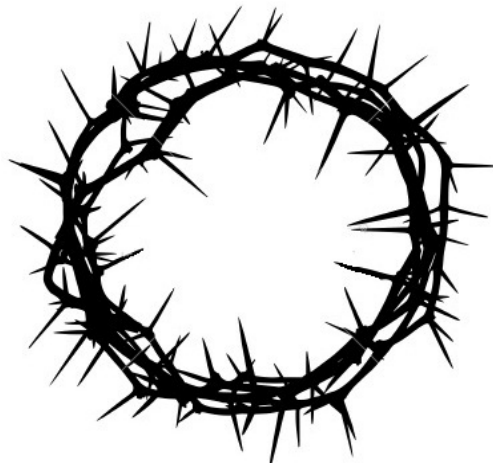
But that is not all! For even the “modernists” of our day, who believe Jesus to have been a mere man, a martyr to the cause of love and brotherhood among men, even they can agree that Jesus suffered innocently and that His whole case was a miscarriage of justice and a disgrace before the law! But that is still NOT ALL! For Jesus was the **willing** victim who said, “*No man taketh [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.*” (John 10:17-18). This was the very **Lamb of God**, who “*[gave] Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour*” (Ephesians 5:2). Yes, as our Substitute under the sentence of **God’s justice**, Jesus’ shed His precious blood as the price of our redemption from sin, death, and the power of the devil; for “*He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. ...The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53:5, 6b) —“**Behold the Man!**” —**abused for YOU!**

But let not the gruesome spectacle before you in our title-text and ancillary verses, and in the classic portrait of our thorn-crowned Savior, drive you to despair over the magnitude of your sins and over the price required to pay for them. But rather may the sight of His bruised cheeks, His spit-covered face, His thorn-crowned head, and His bleeding back draw you ever closer to Him, who so loved you and gave Himself for you, that you cling in childlike confidence to this precious Redeemer, your Substitute under God’s Law, so that you gratefully accept in true faith the sacrifice He made for you, and lovingly show forth your appreciation by fashioning your life in His image, to the praise of the glory of His grace, praying to Him in Paul Gerhardt’s precious Lenten hymn:

*O Sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded,
with thorns Thine only crown.
O Sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss til now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I JOY TO CALL THEE MINE!*

(TLH 172, v. 1)

— D. T. M.





What Did Jesus *Accomplish* for Us?

*“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar,
He said: ‘**It is finished!**’ And He bowed His head
and gave up the ghost.”*

—John 19:30

As we read over the “last chapter,” as it were, in the narrative of our Savior’s suffering and death and witness in spirit the sad scene of His burial in the garden tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, we cannot help but call to mind all the things that happened to Jesus, all the things that He endured during that extremely **brief** but seemingly **endless Great Passion** of His for our sakes. In actual point of time, it was all over in less than twenty-four hours —having **begun** late on Maundy Thursday evening in the Garden of Gethsemane, “*the same night in which He was betrayed,*” and having **ended** with His death on Good Friday afternoon and with His burial before sundown that same day.

Indeed, as we rehearse in our minds from the “Passion History” of our Lord and Savior what **all** He endured —the **anguish of His soul** already in Gethsemane, the **mockery and scorn** heaped upon Him in the course of three trials, the **pain and suffering** inflicted upon Him by cruel tormentors and abusers, not to mention the **agony** of crucifixion (one of the most **inhumane** forms of capital punishment ever devised)— we can well imagine that Jesus might have welcomed the hour of death as a “merciful end” to the unspeakable suffering He had endured! Indeed, WE surely would have welcomed such relief! And so, many people have the idea that this was Jesus’ own thought when He cried out from the cross: “*It is finished!*” —“It’s finally over and done with! I don’t have to suffer anymore!”

But that is **NOT** the meaning of our Savior’s cry at all! It was **NOT** the “cop-out”-cry of someone who just “couldn’t take it anymore”! It was **NOT** a cry of welcome relief from suffering! Rather, it was a cry of **TRIUMPH!** ...of **VICTORY!** ...of a task **COMPLETED** and of a mission **ACCOMPLISHED!!** For what the Lord Jesus actually “**cried out with a loud voice**” from His cross, as the other writers describe His shout (Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46), was a single word in the Greek of our text, **τετέλεσται**, which literally means: “*It has been and therefore stands ACCOMPLISHED!*” —something quite different indeed from a sigh of relief! It therefore behooves us, on the basis of this cry of the Lord Jesus, to ask the question: Just what did Jesus **ACCOMPLISH** for us?

In that victorious, triumphant cry, Jesus summed up His entire work of redemption, the entire task which His Father had sent Him, yea, had *given* Him (John 3:16), to do; and He summed it up not in some halfhearted, half-baked assessment like: “Well, I did *My best*...” or “*I hope* My Father is satisfied...” or “That should *just about* do it...” or “That should go a *long way* in *helping* people get to heaven.” No, indeed! It was a **declaration of FACT** that He had **paid off** our debt to God **in full** and thus had crushed the head of that old serpent, the devil —just as God had promised Adam and Eve He would do way back in the Garden of Eden!

He had, first of all, **kept the whole Law of God perfectly in our place!** At the time of His holy incarnation in the Virgin Mary, “*God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4-5). That, in and of itself, was a **miracle**, that the Son of God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords should be so **degraded**, so **humiliated**, that He was made subject to His own Law! And He did that

willingly, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and **became OBEDIENT**...” (Philippians 2:6-8), not for His own benefit, not because He had to, —but for OUR benefit, because He **WANTED** to!

God in His Law says to you and to me: “Ye shall be **HOLY**, for I the Lord your God am holy!” (Leviticus 19:2). “**CURSED** is everyone that continueth not in **all things** which are written in the Book of the Law to do them!” (Galatians 3:10). “Whosoever shall keep **the whole Law** and yet offend in **one point**, he is guilty of **ALL**.” (James 2:10). “Be ye therefore **PERFECT**, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). And yet, we sinful, corrupt and helpless human beings are **completely unable** to do that!! “We are all as an **unclean** thing, and all our **RIGHTEOUSNESSES** are as **filthy rags**” (Isaiah 64:6). “There is not a just man **upon earth** that doeth good and sinneth not” (Ecclesiastes 7:20). “**All have sinned and come short of the glory of God!**” (Roman 3:23). “Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall **NO FLESH** be justified in His sight!” (v. 20).

And so Jesus performed by His **active obedience** in man’s place what man could never have done for himself: **He perfectly obeyed every Law of God** and flawlessly complied with every demand that God had made of us human beings, so that, the Apostle Paul writes in Romans chapter 5: “By the obedience of **ONE** [namely, of Jesus Himself] shall **many** be made righteous” (v. 19). How fitting, then, that, already in the Old Testament, Jeremiah said of Jesus: “This is His Name whereby He shall be called: **The Lord, OUR Righteousness**” (23:6). Throughout His life here on earth, Jesus “was in all points tempted **like as we are**, yet **without sin**” (Hebrews 4:15), so that He could lay down **HIS spotless** record before His heavenly Father **to cover OUR miserable** record, so that **HIS** righteousness could be imputed to US to make our record **flawless** in the sight of God. That **amazing feat**, that **miracle of vicarious obedience**, Jesus actually “**accomplished**” **FOR US**, so that God’s requirements were **met IN FULL** by Jesus, **on OUR behalf**, by the time He died on the cross and “**offered Himself without spot to God**” (Hebrews 9:14) **in OUR place!** That had already been “**ACCOMPLISHED**”! And it stands still today, recognized by God Himself, as the **ACCOMPLISHMENT** of Jesus which merited OUR redemption!!

Moreover, Jesus “**accomplished**” even MORE! In case there was ever any doubt about His authority to take on this task and to complete it in our place, Jesus **perfectly fulfilled all the prophecies of the Scriptures** concerning God’s Messiah, the One anointed by God to “**accomplish**” man’s redemption. He did this not only throughout His life, but very particularly during His *Great Passion*; for He had told His disciples shortly before the end of His earthly ministry: “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and **ALL THINGS** that are **written** by the prophets concerning the Son of Man **shall be accomplished**” (Luke 18:31). —Do you remember what things they were?? —He was betrayed by His own “*familiar friend*,” Judas Iscariot, “in whom He [had] trusted” (Psalm 41:9) —for thirty pieces of silver which eventually went to purchase a “*potter’s field*” to bury strangers in (Matthew 27:6-7; Zechariah 11:13). —He was despised and rejected by His own people, hated without a cause, ridiculed and blasphemed, slapped around and spit upon, scourged, “*numbered with the transgressors*” (Is. 53:12), and crucified with His hands and feet “*pierced*” according to the prophecy in Psalm 22. —He thirsted intensely during his suffering, was given gall and vinegar to drink, prayed for His enemies, had His clothing divided in a “crapshoot,” suffered the Godforsakenness of the damned in hell, died without a “*bone of Him* [having been] *broken*,” was pierced in His side by a soldier’s spear, and then was buried in the tomb of a rich man ... **ALL** these things and many more had been prophesied hundreds of years ahead of time concerning God’s silently-suffering, *vicariously-suffering* Messiah! —And “**all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled**,” so that Jesus could declare from His cross in complete triumph, in complete vindication, in complete fulfillment of divine prophecy: “It has been **ACCOMPLISHED**, and it STANDS as My **PERFECT ACCOMPLISHMENT** of what **had to be done!**”

But there was still another accomplishment to which Jesus laid claim, as He shouted this victorious cry from the cross: He also **paid in full the debt which we owed to God because of our sins!** (I John 2:2). What was that debt? The Bible says: “*The wages of sin is death!*” Not only did Jesus have to satisfy God’s demand for **RIGHTEOUSNESS**; He also had to satisfy God’s demand for **JUSTICE!** God wouldn’t be perfectly **just, fair, and impartial** if He had simply “written off” all our sins as an “uncollectible debt” and hadn’t required satisfaction and punishment for them!

The only way that you and I could render satisfaction to God for our sins would be to **go to hell** and there to **suffer forever** the unspeakable trauma of **eternal death!** But God also says, according to His **mercy** in and through Christ Jesus, His Son: “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11). Instead He wants “*all men to be saved*” (I Timothy 2:4). In order for **that** to happen, however, someone else had to satisfy God’s punitive justice and

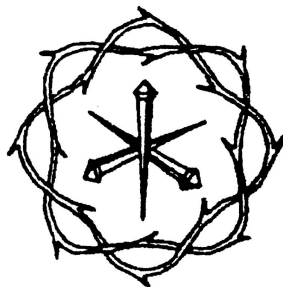
pay off our debt to Him. That “someone” was **Jesus**.

God made **JESUS** to be the **guilty one**, so that He could punish **HIM** with everlasting death instead of us! “*He hath made **HIM** who knew no sin to be sin **for us**, that we might be made the righteousness of God **in Him***” (II Corinthians 5:21). “*The Lord hath laid on **HIM** the iniquity of **us all**,*” Isaiah writes in his 53rd chapter ... “***HE** was wounded for **our** transgressions; **HE** was bruised for **our** iniquities.*” Jesus “*became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Philippians 2:8), suffering not only **temporal** death as the result of sin (which the malefactors also suffered) but **ETERNAL** death, the “*wages of sin,*” **OUR** sin. It was Jesus who was **FORSAKEN BY GOD** that we might be pardoned by Him, “*who gave **Himself** for **US**, that He might redeem us from all iniquity*” (Titus 2:14), “*who gave **Himself** a ransom for **ALL***” (I Timothy 2:6), who became “*the Propitiation [the payment demanded and accepted] for **our** sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the **whole world***” (I John 2:2).

Thanks be to God, “*It is **FINISHED!***” It has been **ACCOMPLISHED!** And it **stands**, for the record, an **accomplished FACT** for your assurance and for mine! What a **miracle** of God’s grace to us poor, lost, and condemned sinners: The **VICARIOUS ATONEMENT**, the **substitutionary satisfaction** of God’s justice in our place by the **ACTIVE and PASSIVE OBEDIENCE** of His Son, the **perfect satisfaction** that purchased for us reconciliation with God and our full and free justification in His sight! “*Thanks be unto God for His **unspeakable Gift!!***” (II Corinthians 9:15).

—D. T. M.

ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ!



The Fourfold Comfort and Assurance We Have in the Message of the Easter Angel

“And he saith unto them: ‘Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee, as He said unto you.’” —Mark 16:6-7



On Easter Sunday we Christians marked once again, as we do each and every year, the most **significant**, the most **essential**, the most **glorious**, and to be sure the most **comforting** festival on our church calendar: The Festival of the ***Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, from the Dead***. Indeed, the event we commemorate on Easter Day is **absolutely central** to our entire Christian faith, as central as the hub is to a wheel; for virtually every fundamental doctrine of Holy Scripture is inseparably linked to the *fact* of Christ’s resurrection — either pointing **to** it, stemming **from** it, or depending **upon** it! In fact, Jesus’ life here on earth, His entire public ministry, and His death on the cross for the sins of the world — all would be **for NOTHING** if He had not truly risen from His grave on Easter morning! For Jesus of Nazareth would have been the greatest fool, fraud, and “flim-flam” con-artist the world had ever seen, a liar and deceiver without equal in the annals of history! And WE, His disciples, would be fools as well to have fallen for His “line” and placed our confidence in Him!

The devil, of course, would have us and all men for that matter believe precisely that very thing about the Savior and His mighty resurrection; for Satan deeply **resents** that final and ultimate victory which Jesus won over him when He rose from the dead on the third day! And so the Foe’s **adherents** have, from that very moment, sought to discredit, disprove, and even poke fun at the resurrection account in hopes of destroying our most holy faith and leading us to everlasting destruction! But these enemies of Christ and His Word are **doomed to failure** from the outset, for they fly in the face of the TRUTH, of established FACT, of incontrovertible EVIDENCE and eye-witness TESTIMONY. For *Jesus of Nazareth did in fact rise from His grave* on Easter Sunday morning after having *died* the previous Friday afternoon! His **true death** was certified by *objective medical evidence* and by *professional evaluation*, and His **true life** after His resurrection was amply demonstrated “*by many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3). Consequently, the claims of unbelieving scoffers notwithstanding, the **FACT** of the Lord’s resurrection **speaks for itself!**

Therefore, what we want to examine in this present article is not so much the FACT but the **RESULT** of Jesus’ resurrection, namely, what it **accomplished** and why it is of such **importance** to us Christians. We note that the Easter angel’s message to the women at the empty sepulchre brings us a **fourfold comfort and assurance** from the Savior’s resurrection — the fourfold importance and comfort that we confess also in our *Catechism* (CPH, 1943, pp. 117-118) and cannot repeat and review often enough as we battle every year the onslaughts of blasphemers who would rob us of our Easter joy.

The first of these is that, by rising from the dead, ***Jesus of Nazareth proved Himself to be the very Son of God***. The words of the angel were plain enough: “*He is risen; He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him.*” The fact of Jesus’ resurrection was clear for anyone to see who cared to look at the evidence. “***Behold!***” said the angel; “***LOOK*** at the place where you yourselves saw Him laid out on Good Friday afternoon, unmistakably dead, the blood solids already separated from the lymph, as the Roman centurion also saw and testified. ***Look NOW*** at the empty slab before you, the linen burial windings lying empty and the napkin from Jesus’ face neatly folded and laid aside as no hurried grave robber would have bothered to do. ***See*** for yourselves!” And this word “*behold*” points not only those women but also **US**, who have the additional Gospel accounts and their evidence, as well as the eyewitness testimony of literally hundreds who saw the Savior alive during the forty days following, yes, that word directs **US** to recognize ***without doubt*** the **FACT** of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

But the words “***He is risen!***” give us much more than a mere report of this **fact**. They convey to us the **assurance** that, in this mighty act, ***Jesus proved Himself to be the very Son of God!*** For who but **God alone** has the ability to raise

Himself from the dead?? Who but the **almighty Lord of heaven and earth** could have exercised such superior might that, concerning His very own life, He could declare in advance: *“I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again”*?? Thus the Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, chapter 1, verse 4, **confirms** this first assurance of the Easter angel, saying: *“He was declared to be the **SON OF GOD** with **POWER**...by the resurrection from the dead.”*

And, lest anyone dare claim that Jesus’ words and promises were mere empty boasts and vain prophecies, the angel brings us his second Easter comfort and assurance, saying: *“Be not affrighted”* — don’t be so **amazed** and **astonished**, as if this were an unexpected development — for, by His mighty resurrection from the dead, **Jesus of Nazareth has shown His Word to be the truth!** *“He is risen; He is not here...But He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.”* Jesus had not only promised to rise again on the third day, but He had told His disciples that they would see Him face-to-face thereafter in Galilee. And Matthew’s record shows that the angel’s words, *“as He said unto you,”* refer not only to Jesus’ appearance in Galilee but to the **resurrection itself**; for Matthew quotes the angel as saying: *“He is risen, as He said!”* And St. Luke, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, adds striking detail, quoting TWO angels at the grave giving the women this assurance of the truth of Jesus’ Word: *“Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spake unto you...saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again’? And they remembered His words.”*

Why, even Jesus’ enemies knew well His words concerning His resurrection from the dead. Oh, they **pretended** at first not to have understood them, when at His trial before Caiaphas they introduced false witnesses to make it seem as if He had threatened to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem and to rebuild it in three days. But they **gave themselves away** when, after His death, they went to Pilate for a seal on the grave, saying: *“Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’”* Pilate should have marked well and believed those words, for Jesus had told him in advance, *“Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.”* Yea, **ALL** of Jesus’ Word — not just the red print highlighted in modern-day Bibles, but **ALL** of the Holy Scriptures, which He identified as **His precious Word** — is the **TRUTH**, absolutely reliable in every detail; for He assures us: *“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).

And it is this very freedom to which the angel refers in the third assurance we have in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, namely, that **His heavenly Father accepted His vicarious sacrifice as payment-in-full for the sins of the world.** *“Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified,”* said the Easter angel. The very purpose of Jesus’ crucifixion, yea, of all His suffering, was to provide, **in our place** and **on our behalf**, a ransom-price of sufficient value that God in heaven would accept its payment as complete satisfaction of divine justice. Thus Isaiah had prophesied concerning Jesus in his 53rd chapter: *“The Lord hath laid on **Him** the iniquity of **us all**.”* Yes, *“Christ suffered for us,”* Peter writes in his first epistle, chapter 2, *“who His own self bare **our sins** in **His own body on the tree**,”* — *“Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified.”*

And yet, if Jesus had suffered all that anguish, including the very pains of hell itself (Matthew 27:46, etc.) in our place, but then had **remained in the grave**, helplessly bound in the chains of death, His entire sacrifice would have been **for nothing!** For He would have been “shown up” to be a mere man, just another human being, *“none of [whom] can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is **precious!**”* (Psalm 49:7-8). Then indeed we would be fools for trusting in Him as our Redeemer; for St. Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:17, *“If Christ be **not** raised, your faith is **vain**; ye are yet in your sins!”* We would still be lost and condemned, headed for hell!

But thanks be to God, beloved fellow-sinners, that Jesus of Nazareth did **NOT** remain in His grave but **rose victoriously** on Easter morning as the **Mighty Conqueror** of sin, death, and Satan — **not** just a mere man whose sacrifice of Himself would otherwise have been an empty gesture and completely in vain, but as the **certified Redeemer** of lost mankind! For the Bible tells us, Romans 4:25, *“Christ was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again **for our justification**,”* as the sure sign that His payment **made good** our debt to God! That was God the Father’s *seal of approval*, so to speak, *“which **He** wrought in Christ when **He** raised Him from the dead”* (Ephesians 1:20).

What a wonderful assurance and comfort to us Christians is this glorious fact of God’s own Word, that the Father in heaven raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead as **ironclad testimony** that **He fully accepted the sacrifice of His Son for the reconciliation of the world** unto Himself, and has, because of what Jesus paid on our behalf, forgiven the sins of the whole world and declared all sinners righteous in His sight. This free gift of **OBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION**

He has published to all men in the Gospel, earnestly desiring “*all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4), “*that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” (John 3:16). Thus, as His adopted children and heirs of salvation by faith in His Son, we rejoice to praise Him with the Apostle Peter, saying: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven **for YOU!***” (I Peter 1:3-4)

And the promise of that blessed inheritance brings us now to the fourth and final assurance and comfort we have in the message of the Easter angel, namely, that ***we too shall see our Savior face-to-face at our own resurrection on the Last Day.*** For the angel instructed the women to tell Jesus’ disciples that He would go before them into Galilee; “*there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.*” We can well imagine the JOY that these words brought to the disciples with the prospect of seeing their Savior alive, face-to-face, just as He had promised them! But the angel’s words should fill also **OUR HEARTS** with the very same **joy of anticipation!** For the Lord’s promise to **US** is **just as sure** as His promise to the disciples! Yes, the **FRUIT** of **Jesus’ resurrection** will be **our own resurrection**, for He Himself links them together, saying: “*Because **I** live, **ye** shall live also.*” (John 14:19) “*I go to prepare a place **for you**,*” He tells us, “*and I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where **I** am, there **ye** may be also*” (John 14:2-3).

In Christ, our risen and everliving Savior, we have the very **prototype** of **our own** resurrection from **our own** graves on the Last Day; for as St. Paul assures us in I Corinthians 15, “*If in **this life only** we have hope in Christ, we are of all men **most miserable!** But now **IS** Christ risen from the dead and become the **firstfruits** of them that slept...but every man in his own order: Christ, the **firstfruits**” [that is, the **prototype**] “*afterward **they that are Christ’s** at His coming.*” Even Job in the Old Testament was confident of his bodily resurrection to eternal life as an heir of God through faith in Christ his Savior; for he declared: “***I know that my Redeemer liveth**, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet **in my flesh shall I see God**, whom I shall see **for myself**; and **mine eyes** shall behold, and **not another**, though my reins be consumed within me!*” (Job 19:25-27; cf. TLH 200).*

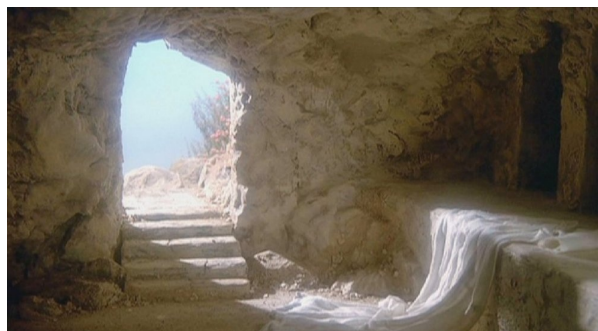
O what sweet joy and gladness is ours this holy Easter season — joy not merely in the **FACT** of Jesus’ mighty resurrection from the dead, but, even better, joy in the blessed RESULT of this miracle-of-miracles, yea, His own **assurance** to quell our fears and His own **comfort** to dry our tears! For Christ’s resurrection **proves** without a doubt that He is truly the almighty **Son of God**. It **establishes** beyond any question the **truth** and **absolute reliability** of **His Word**. It **testifies** that God the Father was **completely satisfied with Jesus’ sacrifice** for the reconciliation of the world. And it **assures** every believer, according to Jesus’ own promise, of **resurrection in like manner** to everlasting glory on Judgment Day.

May the words of the Easter angel ever remind us of all these blessed assurances and strengthen our confidence in them day-by-day, until by God’s matchless grace in Christ, our crucified and risen Redeemer, we enter the mansions He has prepared for us in His heavenly home and glorious kingdom!

*He lives! All glory to His Name!
He lives, my Jesus still the same!
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:
“**I KNOW that my Redeemer LIVES!**”*

(T.L.H., 200, 8)

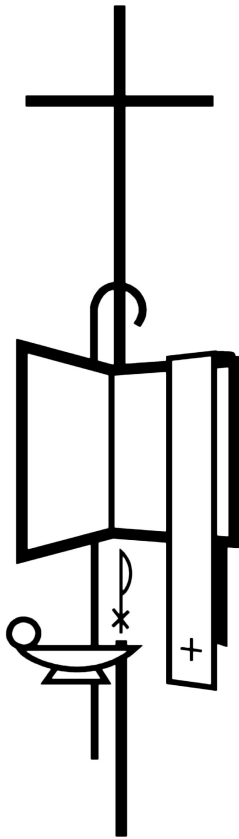
— D. T. M.



✠ Chronology of the Risen Savior's Appearances ✠

- ❖ Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James (“the less”) and of Joses; Salome, the wife of Zebedee; Joanna; and “other women” came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun on Easter morning (Matthew 28:1ff.; Mark 16:1ff.; Luke 24:1ff.).
- ❖ Seeing the tomb open, Mary Magdalene immediately left the group and returned to the city in panic. She found Peter and John and told them that someone had taken Jesus’ body from the grave. John, sprinting ahead of Peter, and Mary Magdalene bringing up the rear, headed back to the sepulchre to investigate (John 20:1ff.).
- ❖ Meanwhile the other women had heard the angel’s message and, at his directions, began their return to Jerusalem. They apparently took a different road than that taken by Mary, Peter and John, because there is no indication that they encountered one another en route.
- ❖ While the women were returning to Jerusalem, John and Peter, followed at some distance by Mary Magdalene, arrived at the sepulchre and investigated the empty tomb. Having examined the circumstantial evidence of the empty graveclothes and the face napkin neatly folded and laid aside by itself, they returned home (Luke 24:12; John 20:4-10).
- ❖ But Mary Magdalene, who had trailed along behind them, remained yet for a short time outside the sepulchre weeping. As she then peered into the tomb, she saw for the first time the angels (which apparently had not made themselves visible to Peter and John when *they* looked in). She still was of the mistaken opinion that Jesus’ body had been stolen. It was then that Jesus appeared to her personally —His first appearance on Easter morning. (John 20:11-18; Mark 16:9).
- ❖ Meanwhile, the other women were still proceeding on their way back to Jerusalem. Suddenly Jesus Himself appeared before them on the road —visibly, audibly, tangibly— to confirm to them the mission and message which the angel at the tomb had directed them to deliver to the disciples (Matthew 28:9-10).
- ❖ On Easter afternoon, Jesus appeared to two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus and engaged them in a protracted discussion about His suffering, death, and resurrection on the basis of Old Testament prophecy. After making Himself known, He vanished. (Luke 24:13ff.)
- ❖ Sometime between His resurrection and His appearance to the assembled disciples on Easter evening, the risen Christ also appeared to Simon Peter, a personal and apparently private appearance of which we know nothing except that it occurred, and that the other disciples knew of it (Luke 24:34). St Paul mentions this appearance (“*He was seen of Cephas*”) also in his report (I Corinthians 15:5).
- ❖ On Easter afternoon, Jesus appeared to two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus and engaged them in a protracted discussion about His suffering, death, and resurrection on the basis of Old Testament prophecy. After making Himself known to them “*in the breaking of bread,*” He vanished. (Luke 24:13ff.).
- ❖ On Easter evening (and also one week later), Jesus passed thru locked doors and appeared to the assembled disciples as a group, ate before them [on the *first* visit], and permitted Thomas to touch Him and examine His wounds [on the *second* visit] (John 20:19ff.; Luke 24:36ff.).
- ❖ Other post-Easter appearances then followed during the 40 days before His ascension into heaven: To the seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee, where the risen Savior also restored Peter to his apostleship (John 21); to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus issued to them their “marching orders” in His *Great Commission* to “*make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:16-20); to “*above five hundred brethren at once,*” of whom the majority were still alive at the apostle’s writing to testify as to what they saw (I Corinthians 15:6); to James, concerning which appearance we have no further details (I Corinthians 15:7); to the eleven at His ascension into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:2-9).
- ❖ Later, after His ascension, the risen Christ appeared also to Paul, who saw Him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) just as surely as did those “*who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead*” (Acts 10:41). This is further evidence of the Savior’s personal union and the communication of attributes to His human nature also in His *state of exaltation*; for Paul reports his own eyewitness testimony right along with the eyewitness testimony of the others (I Corinthians 15:8).

—D. T. M.



News from St. Luke's, Seattle

On June 14, 2020, after months of dealing with severe physical, mental, and emotional hardships, which he acknowledged to be loving chastenings from the Lord, the Rev. Edward J. Worley resigned from the pastoral office at St. Luke's in Seattle, Washington, informing his voters that he was no longer able to give account to God for the souls placed under his care. The secretary of the congregation informed the pastors of the Conference of this fact and told them that a motion had been made, seconded, and carried "to accept Pastor Worley's resignation with heartfelt thanksgiving to the Lord for his many years of faithful service to St. Luke's Lutheran Church and grant him a peaceful release from his pastoral duties, beseeching the Lord to shed His mercy upon him to restore him once again to health."

For the next nine months, the flock of believers in Seattle was without a shepherd. With no trained *Candidates for the Reverend Ministry* in our Conference, nor any students in our seminary, St. Luke's congregation needed to consider calling one of the pastors who were already actively engaged in the office of the ministry in one of its sister congregations.

On March 14, 2021, the voters of St. Luke's unanimously decided to elect and send a divine call to the Rev. Paul E. Bloedel to serve as their new pastor. With the approval of St. John's, the congregation he is still serving, Pastor Bloedel accepted the call and began traveling to St. Luke's on March 28, 2021. An installation service was held on April 11, 2021—Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi, one of the elders of the congregation, officiating.

On a normal week, Pastor Bloedel holds Sunday morning services at St. John's in Lebanon, Oregon, after which he drives to the Eugene airport and flies to Seattle to conduct services, meetings, and classes at St. Luke's from Sunday afternoon through Monday evening. By Tuesday morning, he is back in Oregon where classes and meetings are held at St. John's for the remainder of the week according to their usual schedule.

Having one pastor serve two congregations in this manner is certainly not ideal, and the only hope for success can be found in the Lord's gracious blessing and guidance (Psalm 127:1). Accordingly, the prayers of the brethren upon this endeavor are requested and greatly appreciated. May God continue abundantly to bless both St. John's and St. Luke's so that they may continue to flourish through His precious Means of Grace (II Thessalonians 3:1), and may He also move the hearts of men throughout our Conference with the earnest desire to be pastors and to train for such service in our seminary so that a future ministry may be provided for us and our children after us for generations to come!

Preserve this ministry
while harvest-days are keeping;
and since the fields are white
and hands are few for reaping,
send workers forth, O Lord,
the sheaves to gather in
that not a soul be lost
which Thou art come to win.

Yea, bless Thy Word alway,
our souls forever feeding;
and may we never lack
a faithful shepherd's leading!
Seek Thou the wandering sheep,
bind up the sore oppressed,
lift up the fallen ones,
and grant the weary rest.

(TLH, 485;4, 6)

— P. E. B.

UNANIMOUS DECISION of the BOARD of DIRECTORS regarding the Sixty-ninth Annual Convention of the Conference

Originally, the **Sixty-ninth Annual Convention** of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference* was scheduled by the previous convention to be held in Seattle, Washington, on **June 26, 27 and 28, 2020**, and by the gracious invitation of St. Luke's Lutheran Church was to be hosted by its congregation. However, by the action of the **Board of Directors** in a unanimous resolution reported in the *Concordia Lutheran* in its March-April issue, 2020, that convention was ***canceled*** because of the Corona Virus pandemic and the resulting restrictions on travel, assemblies, and other personal contacts.

Seattle, Washington was one of the first locations in our country to be visited by this pandemic and is still reported to be one of the “hot spots” of the infestation, because of which stringent regulations are still imposed regarding social contact between individuals, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, limitations on the number of persons permitted to meet together either publicly or privately, restrictions even on singing in public (which would affect congregational singing at a convention), and severe warnings to avoid where possible any public gatherings.

Consequently the Board of Directors again this year considered the advisability and practicality of holding an annual convention — and of having it in Seattle under the circumstances. The following points were unanimously approved by the Board, as reported by President Bloedel in his e-mail of April 24th with respect to a convention this coming summer:

- That we again thank St. Luke's Congregation for its generous and well-intentioned invitation to host the 2021 Convention and graciously accept its offer, God-willing, to host the **Sixty-ninth Annual Convention in June of 2022** (June 24, 25 and 26).
- That we **cancel** the **2021 Convention** and the plenary **Pastoral Conference** associated with it and look forward to the next regular convention, still the **Sixty-ninth Annual Convention**, in **June of 2022** (June 24, 25 and 26), God-willing in Seattle, Washington.
- That the motto, essay, essayist and preaching assignments remain the same as originally set for 2020 and 2021; and
- That the Board consider and ratify the proposed **2021-2022 Annual Fiscal Budget** when it is set before it by the **Finance Committee** of the Conference
- That any other contingency items with respect to Conference business during the coming year be addressed by the Board of Directors as they arise and be dealt with appropriately according to the *Constitution*, subject, of course, to ratification by the 2022 Convention.

We, of course, strive in the meantime, according to the will and direction of Almighty God, to put away from ourselves all anxiety concerning the pandemic still confronting us and by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests for relief be made known unto God, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think for Jesus' our Savior's sake (Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 3:20-21). ✠

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, President

The Rev. David T. Mensing, Secretary



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

E-Mail: kanboinnocent@yahoo.com

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abalama, Nigeria

The Rev. Bateinm Bestman, Pastor

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

E-Mail: tbaaron2@gmail.com

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

The Rev. Onimim Frank, Pastor

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: PH-djreal17joe@gmail.com

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

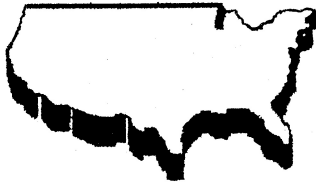
The Rev. Faith N. J. Asembo, Co-Pastor

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk

E-Mail: faithasembo1@gmail.com



Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

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

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

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

On the Web at

PeaceEvLutheran.com

Office Telephone: (708) 532-4288

Parsonage: (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'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

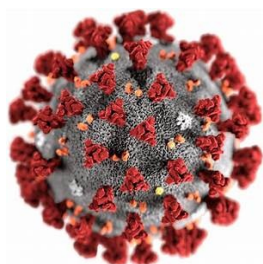
Telephone: (708) 386-6773

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, may it please Thee according to Thy merciful providence to regard our beloved country in this time of peril as we still face a serious but thankfully a decreasing pandemic of the virulent Coronavirus threatening particularly our most vulnerable citizens with exposure and infection. Even as we 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, that it may please Thee in Thine own best time and way to comfort us in this time 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.

