

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. LXVI

May–June 2022

Nos. 5–6

+

“There are three that
bear record in heaven:
The Father, the Word,
and the Holy Ghost;
and these three are one.”

—1 John 5:7

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. LXVI

May-June 2022

Nos. 5-6

Official Organ of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*

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

The Concordia Lutheran Editor.

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

Book and Tract Editor

The Rev. Robert J. Lietz
233 North Cuyler Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

Lay Member

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

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

Officers of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*

PRESIDENT:

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

VICE PRESIDENT:

The Rev. Robert J. Lietz
233 North Cuyler Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

SECRETARY:

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

TREASURER:

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

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To set forth in simple and plain language the pure doctrine of God's Word as taught by the true Lutheran Church in full accordance with the **Book of Concord of 1580** and the **Brief Statement of 1932**.

To show, **on the basis of Scripture**, what true Christians are to believe and how, out of love for their Savior Jesus Christ, they are to lead Godly lives.

To furnish aids for Bible study and articles for Scriptural devotion and meditation.

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or false church body, but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them.

To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are *"perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (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.

The Physical Ascension of the Lord Jesus —Proof Positive of His Omnipotence also according to His human nature

“And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.” Luke 24:51



Parting from dear friends, beloved relatives, and especially from cherished brethren in the faith is never easy—even if just for a short time. Their absence from our immediate lives leaves a real void, an emptiness, which cannot be filled to complete satisfaction even by occasional contact by letter or by telephone. And, when such parting is to be *permanent*—when the chances are overwhelming that we will probably never again lay eyes upon a loved one here in this world—oh, then the parting is fraught with indescribable **pain** and **heartache**, which only those who have experienced it can truly appreciate.

With **parting** viewed from that perspective, we can better sympathize with the disciples of the Lord Jesus whose hearts were filled with “*sorrow*” (John 16:6) when He told them of His impending departure to be with His heavenly Father. He would no longer be *visibly present* with them to teach them, to guide them, yea, even to reproach them and admonish them, and thus to restore them to the paths of righteousness, comforting them with His precious Gospel.

But the almighty Savior (Matthew 28:18) did not leave them, nor did He leave **us**, in *hopelessness* and *despair*. Instead, He assured us all of His **return** someday and, in the meantime, left us the ironclad guarantee of His **abiding presence** with us “*even unto the end of the world*” (v. 20b) — including His **continual blessing** upon our work for Him, upon our lives, and particularly upon our souls, as we diligently continue in His precious Word. Those assurances took the sting out of Jesus’ departure for the disciples, and they found their sorrow gradually giving way to joy and peace in believing His promises and to eager anticipation of their fulfillment (Luke 24:52).

We too have that same “*joy and peace in believing, that [we] may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost*” (Romans 15:13) — “*hope*” being the sure and certain anticipation and expectation that the ascension of the Lord Jesus, the **proof positive of His omnipotence**, will continue to joy our hearts as we await His second visible advent.

We have that joyful hope in our omnipotent Redeemer as we witness in spirit His triumphant **ascension** itself as He rises into the heavens.

At the time of His ascension, the Savior had spent almost six weeks with His disciples, confirming to them the glorious fact of His mighty **resurrection** from the dead with “*many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1) and had “*opened their understanding*” of the Scriptures to a recognition of how wonderfully God had foretold through His holy prophets all that befell their Lord Jesus during His great and horrible passion, and had even prophesied His resurrection from the grave on the third day (Luke 24:45 and 46). Things were finally beginning to “*gel*” for the disciples, even though they still had many questions and misconceptions about Jesus’ real mission to this world of sin (Acts 1:6). These gaps would soon be filled in, Jesus promised them, with the coming of “*the Comforter*,” His Holy Spirit, who would “*teach [them] all things, and bring all things to [their] remembrance, whatsoever [Jesus had] said unto [them]*” (John 14:26).

Luke tells us that, on the day of His ascension, “*forty days*” after His resurrection (Acts 1:2-3), “*He led them out as far as to Bethany*” (Luke 24:50). They had been on this trek before: On the little road leading out of the city of Jerusalem, across the brook Kidron to the Mount of Olives, past the Garden of Gethsemane (where they had witnessed Jesus’ agony and bloody sweat as He suffered the guilt of the world, where they had all deserted Him out of fear for

their own safety). They climbed the hill called Olivet and followed the road until it branched unto a kind of fork: One path led down to the city of Jericho, the other to the nearby village of Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. It was a familiar hike up that hill; but little did the disciples know what would follow.

Suddenly Jesus paused, turned to them, and “*lifted up His hands, and blessed them*” (v. 50). In none of the Gospel accounts are the Savior’s words recorded. He might have used the Aaronic Benediction ordained by God Himself in the Old Testament (Numbers chapter 6) —the benediction **we** still use today at the close of our morning services— OR it might have been a special and very personal blessing. His hands were raised, as Christian pastors still do today when they lay the Lord’s blessing and name upon His people (Numbers 6:27); and there in His palms were still visible the “*prints*” (cf. John 20:25) or scars of the nail wounds Jesus suffered when He was crucified as our Substitute. What a tender and loving scene as the Savior bestowed upon His disciples the **fruits of His redemptive work**: Peace with God, His unmerited grace and blessing, and the assurance of God’s favor through faith in His Son...the very same blessing, in essence, laid upon **you** each and every Sunday at the close of the service.

Now our title-text tells us: “*And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.*” What a simple statement to report such a triumphant act, an act attributable only to the Savior’s **omnipotence** as the Son of God! Before their very eyes, according to His **human nature** (with His true human flesh and blood), Jesus began slowly to rise into the air! This was no illusion or trick; there were no wires or mechanical assists. But this was yet a further “*infallible proof*” of Christ’s **almighty power** as the exalted and glorified Son of God, the Creator defying the powers of His creation, rising unpropelled by anything other than His own power, higher and higher into the sky! The awestruck disciples craned their necks and shielded their eyes as they followed His ascent heavenward, until finally, Luke tells us in Acts chapter one, a passing cloud “*received Him out of their sight*” (v. 9) “*And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy*” (Luke 24:52) — joy, first of all, over **the triumphant act itself**, by which the Lord Jesus again made good on His Word, demonstrated His **omnipotence** over the forces of nature, did so visibly before their very eyes, thus confirming to them the truth of their earlier confession of Him: “*We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*” (John 6:69).

But the joy of the disciples, and **our** superb joy as well, in the ascension of the Lord Jesus as **proof positive of His omnipotence** is not limited merely to the **act of triumph** witnessed that day! It is also joy **in Christ’s triumphant reign** at the right hand of His heavenly Father, for which the disciples “*worshiped Him.*” Jesus didn’t ascend to heaven just to “BE there”! No, He ascended to **DO there** what was His divine right to do in His exaltation as the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords, namely, to “*reign forever and ever*” (Revelation 11:15). The Father “*put all things under His feet,*” under His control, Paul writes to the Ephesians (1:22), making even His enemies His footstool according to the prophecy of the Psalmist (110:1).

Now, after the deep humiliation to which He had subjected Himself in order to be our Savior, during which time He voluntarily abstained from the full and continual use of the **omnipotence** that He possessed without interruption from all eternity —now Christ sits “*on the right hand of God the Father*” (Apostles’ Creed), exercising, also according to His human nature, “*all power...in heaven and in earth*” (Matthew 28:18), ruling over all creatures, all peoples, all governments, even over Satan and all his hosts, in the particular interest of His Church on earth. At His Name, every knee must now bow in subjection (Philippians 2:10), even those who abused their temporal power to *abuse* and to *slay Him*.

And one of the special facets of His omnipotent reign, one which brings us particular joy, is that this glorified and exalted King not only “*sits*” in heaven (as if He were now permanently “located” there on a physical throne), but He “*ascended up far above all heavens,*” the Bible tells us, “*that He might fill all things*” (Ephesians 4:10). Now, as we well know, the **Reformed**, who ascribe to Christ only a “**local** presence” according to His human nature, who consider Him “stuck up there,” as it were, with His physical body, really sell the Lord Jesus short!! For **He is not limited** to any **thing** nor to any **place**! **That’s** why He could promise us: “*Lo, I [“I myself” (Luke 24:39), my entire self, true God AND true man], I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!”* (Matthew 28:20b). **That’s** why He could assure us concerning the **real presence** of His true body and blood in the Holy Sacrament: “*This IS My body; this IS My blood.*” He is **not** *locally enclosed* in the heavens. He is **everywhere** at the same time, **omnipresent**, also according to His human nature. Oh, what **joy** that should bring to our hearts to be able to confess of Jesus’ **real presence** in the Sacrament of the Altar, for instance:

*Thy body, Lord, is everywhere at once, in many places!
How this can be, I leave to Thee; Thy Word alone sufficeth me.
I trust its truth unfailing!*

(TLH 306, 5)

But we Christians have our most superb joy in **the triumphant comfort** that is ours because of Christ's ascension, because of the blessed functions He now fulfills in His glorious reign as our **omnipotent** Redeemer and King. The exalted Lord Jesus ascended, first of all, to be our **Forerunner**, that is, to prepare in the heavens a place for us, that where our Savior is, "*there [we] may be also*" according to His sure promise (John 14:3), living and serving Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness! Even now anticipating that "*crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10b) is a "*joy*," He tells us, that "*no man taketh from you*" (John 16:22b).

We also have the **joy** of knowing that our exalted and ascended, **omnipotent** Lord Jesus still functions as our heavenly **Prophet** by sending forth "*pastors and teachers*" (Ephesians 4:10-11) to dispense to us and to our children the precious Means of Grace, by which our souls are nourished and built up in the faith unto salvation, and by which we are equipped here in this present world to lead lives well-pleasing in His sight in proof of our faith in Him.

We also **rejoice** that, as He sits at the right hand of His heavenly Father, our exalted, **omnipotent** Savior acts as our **Advocate** or lawyer, our "defense attorney" as it were, pleading our case with God for the sake of the price He paid for our redemption: His holy life and His innocent suffering and death. You just can't get representation and mediation like that from anyone but your perfect **High Priest**, "*Jesus Christ, the righteous [One]*," ... "*who...maketh intercession for us*," the **only** intercession that avails before God, the **only** intercession made on our behalf at the Throne of Grace (I John 2:1b; Romans 8:34b).

And finally, we **rejoice** in the kind of reign that our **omnipotent** Savior exercises there at the right hand of God: A reign in which the King of kings and Lord of all lords *governs and protects His precious bride, the Church, and rules over all things*—even over our enemies—*in the interest of His Church* (Ephesians 1:19-23). With that kind of joyful assurance in the **reign** of our **omnipotent** heavenly **King**, we can confidently declare with the Apostle Paul: "*I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!*" (Romans 8:38-39). Yea, "*Even as He **lives and reigns** to all eternity, **this is most certainly true!***" (Luther, *Small Catechism*, 2nd Article).

No wonder the disciples "*worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with **GREAT JOY**, and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God*" (Luke 24:52-53). Can **WE** do **otherwise**, who "*know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (II Corinthians 8:9), who have **seen Him** in spirit through His Word **ascend** mightily into the heavens **for US** to be our **Forerunner**, our **Prophet**, our **Priest**, and our everlasting, gracious **King**? Should not **we also** be "*continually in the Temple*," making the most of every opportunity we have to "*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our [exalted and ascended] Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (II Peter 3:18)? Should not **we also** be "*praising and thanking*" our gracious God and Lord for His undeserved mercy toward us poor sinners, and then backing up our words with **lives** dedicated to the service of our glorious King? After all, we have a lot to be thankful **for**; we have a lot to be joyful **about**; and, by His grace, we have a lot to look forward to, if we but hold fast to what we have—His precious Word of truth in its purity with all its promises and assurances— "*that no man take [our] crown!*" (Revelation 3:11). Therefore, with grateful hearts, we raise our voices to our ascended, exalted, and **omnipotent** Lord Jesus, and earnestly beseech Him:

Oh, grant the consummation of this OUR song above
in endless adoration and everlasting love!
Then shall WE praise and bless Thee where perfect praises ring
and evermore confess Thee, OUR Savior and our King!

(TLH 352, 4)

— D. T. M.

Christ's Prophetic Office in His State of Exaltation

"He ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things. And He gave some...pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." —Ephesians 4:11-12

The Scriptures teach that Christ, the eternal, only-begotten Son of God willingly, yea, purposefully entered into His *State of Humiliation* in order to accomplish, vicariously, the redemption of sinful mankind by providing Himself as the all-sufficient *propitiation* which fully satisfied God's justice, turned away His wrath from the transgressors, and caused Him to reconcile the world unto Himself, "*not imputing their trespasses unto them*" (II Corinthians 5:19). For Christ's sake, for the sake of Christ's work fully "*accomplished*" (John 17:4; 19:30) in His *State of Humiliation*, God graciously granted amnesty, as it were, to all men, put the sins of the world behind His back, and remembering them no more (Hebrews 8:12; cf. Isaiah 43:25). This forensic objective justification was purchased by the Savior's vicarious atonement and is apprehended, that is, laid hold on and received, by faith — by humble, childlike confidence in what has already been rendered, accomplished, granted, declared and conveyed to poor sinners in the Gospel.

Christ's *State of Exaltation*, beginning with His victorious descent into hell, His mighty resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, and His session the right hand of His heavenly Father, also belongs to the foundation of the Christian's confidence of everlasting life as the result and fruit of the Savior's redemptive work. St. Paul links the two states in this connection, saying that Christ "*was delivered for our offenses [in His State of Humiliation] and was raised again [in His State of Exaltation] for [i.e. because of] our justification*" (4:25), as evidence of the Father's acceptance of His beloved Son's vicarious satisfaction for the reconciliation of the world. Indeed, "*if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins; ... but now IS Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept*" (I Corinthians 15:17, 20).

Also the writer to the Hebrews points out this wonderful linkage of the two states of Christ when he says that the Lord Jesus, as "*the Author and Finisher of our faith*," specifically anticipated, while in His *State of Humiliation*, according to His divine omniscience communicated to His human nature, "*the joy that was set before Him*" in His coming exaltation; and, with that joyous, glorious, and triumphant end in view, He "*endured the cross, despising the shame*." (Hebrews 12:2).

Moreover, the Apostle Paul, in his "classic" description of the states of Christ in Philippians 2:5-11, directly attributes the exaltation of Christ's human nature to the Father's unqualified satisfaction with His Son's vicarious atonement, saying: "***Wherefore*** God also hath highly exalted Him...." Thus the entire Gospel of reconciliation is firmly anchored in the two states of Christ; and our faith rests upon *both* the humble and obedient Substitute for sinners *and* the glorified and exalted Lord, who now, also according to His human nature, always and fully uses the divine attributes communicated to His human nature and rules and fills all things with divine power and majesty (*Catechism* Questions 148 and 154).

The same blessed relationship exists between the states of Christ in His threefold office, that of Prophet, Priest, and King. For the purpose of this present article, we center upon His **prophetic office**, the office in which He **reveals Himself** to be the very Son of God and the only Savior of lost mankind. This office is most easily recognized in His own public ministry during His visible sojourn here on earth, where we behold Him in the holy Gospels preaching and teaching "*as one having authority, and not as the scribes*" (Matthew 7:29). It is the office prophesied of the Messiah already by Moses in the Old Testament, who told the Children of Israel: "*The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken*" (Deuteronomy 18:15), and the office affirmed of Christ by God the Father on the Mount of Transfiguration when He said in fulfillment of Moses' prophecy: "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him*" (Matthew 17:5).

Christ's prophetic office in His *State of Humiliation* included also the innumerable miracles whereby He confirmed His almighty power and authority, His own prophecies of things to come, His exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures particularly in those passages referring to Himself, and His debates with the scribes and Pharisees in which He expounded, defended, and demonstrated the authority, inerrancy, integrity and sufficiency of "*Moses and the prophets*" (Luke 16:29 and 31). His prophetic office was in no way "defective" in His *State of Humiliation* just because He did not always and fully use the divine attributes communicated to His human nature; on the contrary, Christ's divine authority was not diminished in His *State of Humiliation*, nor did His message lack anything in substance, or in efficacy, or in power, or in truth (John 6:63; 8:31-32).

Christ's prophetic office then continued in His *State of Exaltation* after His resurrection from the dead as He "*expounded unto [His disciples] in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself*" (Luke 24:27), as He "*opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures*" (v. 45), as He spent the forty days before His ascension "*speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*" (Acts 1:3), and as He committed to His Church on earth the **Office of the Keys**—the office of the Word and Sacraments, of forgiving and retaining sins (John 20:21-23)—the public administration of which He vested in the **Pastoral Office** of His local flocks or congregations (John 21:15-17; cf. Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2ff., etc.).

Did not the disciples' hearts "*burn within [them] while He talked with [them] by the way, and while He opened to [them] the Scriptures*" (Luke 24:32)? Since His ascension into heaven, however, Christ no longer "*talks*" with His disciples, as He did when He was locally present with them. Instead, He performs the functions of His prophetic office by giving to His Church on earth and to His local churches in particular (Titus 1:5; Revelation 2:7; etc.) "*pastors and teachers*" (Ephesians 4:11), *messengers* [Greek: ἄγγελοι, Revelation 1:20], *preachers* (Romans 10:14b-15), to speak in His Name (Luke 10:16). And yet, how many Christians today often "burn" with a misguided desire to listen to the Savior's *own* voice, to sit personally at *His* feet (as did Mary of Bethany), and to hear *HIM* expound His precious Word of Life! Wouldn't *such* preaching be more *authoritative*? Wouldn't *that* Word be more *efficacious*? Wouldn't *direct* hearing be more *effective*, than the second-hand "*ministry of reconciliation*" (II Corinthians 5:19-20) that we have today??

Fortunately, for our own comfort and assurance, we can answer such speculations with a resounding "No!" on the basis of God's clear and inerrant Word. For the ascended Savior's prophetic office continues uninterrupted to this very day and will continue to the end of time as the exalted Christ sends men to preach in His Name. His prophetic office is *generally* exercised when an *individual Christian* bears personal witness to the precious truth of His Word (John 8:31-32; I Peter 3:15), speaks as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11), confesses Jesus Christ before men (Matthew 10:32) as the only Name under heaven whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12), owns Him as his personal Savior (Romans 10:8-10), gathers with true brethren for edification from the Word (Hebrews 10:25), marks and avoids errorists (Romans 16:17), and brings up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

But the ascended Christ's prophetic office is very *specialy* exercised through the **Pastoral Office** of the local congregation, the **office** of preaching and teaching in the churches (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; I Peter 5:2; etc.). This is an office distinct from the spiritual priesthood of all believers, established by Christ Himself and vested originally in "*the apostles whom He had chosen*" (Acts 1:2). Incumbents of this office are not to usurp the rights of the spiritual priesthood, but they *administer* those rights *publicly* for the local congregations of believers. Indeed, while some of the special aspects and gifts peculiar to the ministry of the apostles have passed away, the office of preaching the Word of God, of administering the Sacraments, and of feeding and overseeing the local flocks of God is to continue to the end (I Peter 5:1-4). The Bible in its clear and certain passages (*sedes doctrinae*) sets forth the qualifications, duties, functions, responsibilities, authority, and honor due the incumbents of the Pastoral Office (I Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9; Hebrews 13:17; I Thessalonians 5:12-13; I Timothy 5:17; etc.).

This is a divinely-instituted and *commanded* office (Titus 1:5) in which pastors who proclaim and teach the Word of God as taught by Jesus and the apostles and prophets speak with the same authority as *they* did, yea, in the Savior's own voice, who assures His mouthpieces and ambassadors: "*He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me*" (Luke 10:16). Through this office of preaching, in which He gives His Church "*pastors and teachers*" (Ephesians 4:11b), the ascended and exalted Christ continues in His prophetic office to make known His will and grace to the children of men, for the "*perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*" (v. 12). Thus Luther rightly states concerning the Pastoral Office: "When the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, ...this is

as valid and certain in heaven also, as if Christ our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself.” Yea, when His ambassadors (II Corinthians 5:20; I Corinthians 4:1) preach, Christ Himself is preaching; when they teach, pupils sit at the feet of their ascended Savior; when they “*exhort and convince the gainsayers*” (Titus 1:9), Christ Himself is bringing the needed admonition; and when they “*feed the flock*” (I Peter 5:2), “*the church of God*” to which they have been called by the Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28), Christ Himself is building up His mystical body, the Church, and is arming it and strengthening it to “*withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*” (Ephesians 6:13).

As we at our upcoming Convention in the report of the Committee on Theological Education give special attention to the need for future pastors in our midst and for the training and support of students in our **Concordia Theological Seminary**, we pray that the Lord of the harvest will provide men who, motivated by the precious Gospel of their Savior, purpose to “*study to show [themselves] approved unto God*” for the work of the Holy Ministry (II Timothy 2:15); and with the hymnwriter we beseech our ascended and yet ever-present Prophet:

*Thou hast, O Lord, returned, to God's right hand ascending;
Yet Thou art in the world, Thy Kingdom here extending.
Through preaching of Thy Word in every land and clime,
Thy people's faith is kept until the end of time.*

*O blessed ministry of reconciliation,
that shows the way to God and brings to us salvation!
By Thine Evangel pure, Lord, Thou preserv'st Thy fold,
dost call, enlighten, keep, dost comfort and uphold!*

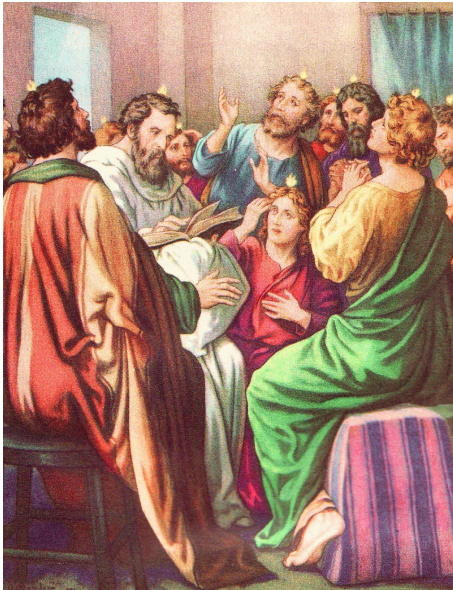
(TLH 485, 2-3)

—D. T. M.



The Significance of Language in the Propagation of the Gospel

“We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.” — Acts 2:11b



Language is commonly defined as a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings (Merriam Webster). While secular scholars who “specialize” in “*pre-history*” (a self-contradictory term in and of itself) generally regard *graphic* language to have preceded *vocal* language, judging from ancient scribbles and crude pictures found in caves, it is significant for us Christians to observe from **God’s own record** of what has transpired since the beginning of time — from the Holy Scriptures “*given by inspiration of God*” (II Timothy 3:16a) — that *vocalized* communication occurred **first**, and that *graphic* or *written* language came along **much later**.

Before man was created to be the intelligent receptor of *language* communicated by God, before the sixth day of creation on which “*God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness’*” (Genesis 1:26), the Book of Genesis records *historically* the Lord God *speaking* into outer space, where there were no human ears to hear, *saying* the words: “*Let there be light!*” “For the **record**,” as a matter of **fact**, for the sake of His own **historical** record, God condescended to His foremost visible creature by using *language* which mankind would subsequently comprehend, so that men would know and accept as true the greatness of His creation of all things. On the subsequent five days, God again employed *language*, “*Let there be...*,” in the creation of “*all things...visible and invisible*” (Colossians 1:16). We do not, of course, know what specific language God spoke “*in the beginning*” (Genesis 1:1); but it was communicative; it was meaningful; and it was obeyed to-the-letter, as it were, as each creature called into existence appeared at God’s command (“*and it was so*”). And so the Psalmist confesses: “*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth*” (33:6). And with the holy writer, we confess: “*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God*” (Hebrews 11:3). Moreover, Adam and Eve, who were of no nationalistic or linguistic heritage, understood God’s words perfectly well, and He theirs, as they conversed together in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2 and 3).

More specifically with reference to the title of our article, it was in *intelligible language* that God expressed the single **prohibition** that He enjoined upon Adam in the garden: “*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*” (Genesis 2:17). Indeed, it was that same *intelligible language* which Eve clearly and unmistakably comprehended and was therefore responsible to obey; for she said to the serpent: “*Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, ‘Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die’*” (Genesis 3:3). Moreover after Adam and Eve, contrary to better knowledge, had disobeyed the Lord’s prohibition and brought sin, death and condemnation upon all mankind after them, the Lord expressed in *intelligible language* His **first promise of a Savior**, the propagation of **the Gospel**, *saying* to Satan: “*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel*” (Genesis 3:15). That “*Seed*” of the woman, Eve well knew, was “*the Lord*,” God’s *Christ*, His anointed Redeemer (Genesis 4:1b; cf. Galatians 4:4-5; 3:16; etc.).

Over the next two-thousand five-hundred years (approximately), the Lord continued speak to men *by word of mouth*. He *spoke* in *intelligible language* to Noah, directing him to prepare the ark of rescue from the Great Flood; and it was in *words* that Noah *preached* for 120 years God’s condemnation of the world and warnings of the wrath to come (Genesis 6:13ff.). It was by *word of mouth* that the Lord spoke to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,

conveying to them **vocally** both the demands of His Law (e.g., Genesis 17:1) and the promise of His precious Gospel: *“In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 22:18; 26:4; etc.).

Interestingly, no record of **written** language is found in the Bible until God gave His Law to Moses on two tables of stone (Exodus 24:12). On those tables, the Lord Himself **wrote** His Ten Commandments (*“with the finger of God”* — Deuteronomy 9:10) in human **language**, the record that was preserved by His people in the Ark of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 10:2; Hebrews 9:4). And Moses’ writing of detailed additional commands (Exodus 24:4) and his subsequent writing of *“the Law,”* the rest of the *Torah*, was also preserved in the Ark (Deuteronomy 31:9, 11, 24-26). From that time onward, until after the establishment of the New Testament Church, the Lord communicated with His people *“by the prophets”* through direct **vocal** revelation *“at sundry times and in divers manners,”* as He did when He *“spoke”* to them (Hebrews 1:1), and as they then spoke to the people, saying: *“Thus saith the Lord!”* He also communicated to them through His **written** Word, *“Moses and the prophets”* (Luke 16:29), *“the Scriptures”* (John 5:39), which Jesus Himself identified as *“the Word of God”* (Luke 11:28; cf. also Matthew 4:4, 7 and 10) which was publicly *“read every Sabbath day”* in the synagogues of the Jews (Acts 13:27). Moreover, as the very Son of God, Jesus equated the written Scriptures with *His own Word* (John 5:39; 8:31).

All of those writings together —the writings of *“the apostles and prophets”* (Ephesians 2:20), the Old Testament Scriptures written in Hebrew and the New Testament Scriptures in the Koine dialect of Greek —*“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God”* (II Timothy 3:16). We today are not to expect “direct revelations” vocalized by God, nor would we even recognize His voice as did His apostles and prophets; but we have in *their* God-inspired writings *“the Holy Scriptures”* (II Timothy 3:15), His Word, His complete revelation of Himself to men, in **language** that we can hear and learn, read and study, know and understand, grow in ourselves and teach unto our children, believe in regenerate hearts, and follow in humble, childlike faith.

We know from Scripture itself that *“holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (II Peter 1:21). According to the context of this passage, the expression *“holy men of God”* refers specifically to the prophets of the **Old** Testament, who **spoke** the words of the Lord as He Himself provided them by divine, verbal (word-for-word) inspiration (in-breathing). *“All the prophets [gave] witness”* or testified to the Lord Jesus as God’s Messiah and the Savior of mankind and to *“remission of sins”* by faith in Him (Acts 10:43). Their inspired words were also recorded in **written** form (*script*) for a permanent record — the **Holy Scriptures**. As to the **New** Testament evangelists and apostles, St. Paul testified: *“We speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth...”* (I Corinthians 2:13). Some of the prophets, evangelists and apostles who spoke also **wrote** the words themselves. Moses, for example, **wrote** the **Torah** (Deuteronomy 31:9, 24-26; cf. John 5:46-47), the first five books of the Bible; some spoke, but their words were written down by others. Paul’s letter to the Romans, for example, was written by Tertius (Romans 16:22); other epistles he wrote himself: *“...the things that I write unto you”* (I Corinthians 14:37); *“...the salutation of me, Paul, with mine own hand”* (16:21); *“I write these things...”* (II Corinthians 13:10); *“These things write I unto thee...”* (I Timothy 3:14); etc. Nevertheless, in situations wherein a scribe penned the words, writing from dictation, the named author is still regarded as the “writer” of the book.

Thus *“all Scripture,”* including the Scriptures of the apostles and evangelists (John 17:17 and 20), is *“the Word of God”* (Ephesians 6:17; I Peter 1:23), *“the Word of truth”* (II Corinthians 6:7), God’s perfectly-preserved written revelation of Himself to men in **human language**, not one letter of which (*“jot”*) or even part of a letter (*“tittle”*) shall pass away *“till all be fulfilled”* (Matthew 5:18; cf. 24:35; Isaiah 40:8; I Peter 1:25).

The above passages are **especially** significant because the claim is made by those who deny the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture that, since only the *original autographs* (the original manuscripts hand-written by the *“holy men of God”*) were verbally inspired, and since to the best of our knowledge those originals no longer exist (and we wouldn’t be able to recognize them as authentic if they *did* exist), we are compelled to rely upon “mere” copies which could contain errors and inaccuracies; and that leaves us with only a “fairly close” approximation of what the originals looked like. Such efforts to discredit the Bible and its inerrancy, infallibility, and sufficiency fly in the face of God’s own guarantee that we shall have His true Word until the end of time (Isaiah 40:8; I Peter 1:25).

Moreover, since *translations* into other world languages are not verbally inspired, the effort is made by modernists in the service of Satan (*“Yea, hath God said??”* — Genesis 3:1) to discredit as unreliable and therefore as lacking the authority of God Himself any and every translation of Scripture. *“How do we know, for example, that our King James Version of the Bible is the true Word of God??”* We could, of course, argue from the standpoint of diligent Christian

scholarship that proper textual study of the original languages as we have them in the “best manuscripts,” together with sound Biblical *hermeneutics* (the principles of proper and reliable Bible interpretation — including the study of the words themselves according to their usual or general meaning, the syntax of the original languages, examination of the near and remote context, and the assumption that no interpretation is valid that conflicts with the *analogy of Scripture* — the body of *prooftexts*) gives us a **reliable rendering** of the text of Scripture **in our own language** — teachable to OUR people. The very same argument can be used for translations into OTHER languages. And for that reason, the study of the *original* languages, Hebrew and Greek, and the study of sound Biblical *hermeneutics* and proper *exegesis* (Bible interpretation) are important components in the curriculum of our theological training program.

There are, however, **two factors** — one of which we have already explored on the basis of clear Scripture — that assure us of our Holy Bible’s authority, inerrancy, infallibility, clarity and sufficiency as **the Word of God**:

1) The first is that, although we do not have (to the best of our knowledge) the *original autographs* of the Scriptures which were inspired by God; although we have only copies of and editions of original language texts that contain “variants” that are traceable either to unintended copying errors or to deliberate changes that were intended to “clear up” perceived problems — which variants, happily, do not affect even one doctrine of Holy Writ; and although so-called “higher critics” use these circumstances to try to create doubts and misgivings in the minds of “*the simple*” Christian (Psalm 119:130); nevertheless God Himself assures us that His true Word, “*the foundation*” of His Church (Ephesians 2:20), will not pass away but will endure forever (Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 40:8; I Peter 1:25).

2) Secondly, since God, according to His universal will of grace, earnestly desires “*all men to be saved*” and to come to faith *through the instrumentality of His Word* (I Timothy 2:4; Romans 10:17; John 17:20-21), since Christ Himself commissioned His disciples to preach the Gospel in “*all the world*” (Mark 16:15) “*for a witness unto all nations*” (Matthew 24:14), and since the Savior Himself in His revelation to St. John revealed that the innumerable multitude of the saints in glory will include those “*of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues*” (Revelation 7:9), we observe **God’s own operation** in bringing this to pass in the prototype of this multi-lingual fellowship of the saints, in the 3,000 souls converted to faith on the Day of Pentecost by the hearing of the Word (Acts 2), in that **the Word** preached by the disciples — the convicting Word of the **Law** and the effectual, converting Word of the **Gospel** — was disseminated among the people, **according to the working of the Holy Ghost, in their native languages!** “*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ... Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language. ... How hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?? ... We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God!*” (Acts 2:4, 6, 8, 11).

Indeed, in the “Great Commission” of the Lord Jesus, in His description of the multi-lingual host of glorified saints in heaven, and in the miracle of Pentecost itself we find wonderful evidence that **God Himself** assumes the necessity of **translation** for the propagation of the Gospel “*in all the world for a witness unto all nations*” (Matthew 24:14). And, inasmuch as the preaching of a perverted Gospel does not hallow God’s Name nor lets His Kingdom come (Luther: *First and Second Petitions* of the Lord’s Prayer), nor does it accomplish what our gracious God pleases (Isaiah 55:10-11), we can rightly assume that the Word of God *in its truth and purity*, carefully translated into “*other tongues*,” is the “*incorruptible seed*” (I Peter 1:23) whereby poor sinners, languishing in spiritual ignorance and in the outer darkness of unbelief, are “*born again*” and are called by God Himself “*out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (I Peter 2:9; II Corinthians 4:6), even though they neither understand nor speak Hebrew or Greek.

It is indeed a great blessing and a salutary and useful tool for Christian pastors to have a working knowledge of the original languages in which the Holy Scriptures were written aforetime. For it not only permits them to examine the texts underlying our English translation and to engage in proper Bible interpretation (*exegesis*) on the basis of the rules of Christian *hermeneutics*, but it also enables them to bring to their hearers the more subtle meaning of words and expressions in Scripture that a lexicon or dictionary may not supply. However, no Christian layman who lacks linguistic training in Hebrew and Greek should ever waver in his confidence that **the Bible IS the Word of God** — “*given by inspiration of God*” (II Timothy 3:16), “*written for [his] learning*” (Romans 15:4), “*able to make [him] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15) and to train him in holiness of living (v. 16b), the very “*foundation*” of faith (Ephesians 2:20), the only source and norm of spiritual “*truth*” (John 17:17; 8:31-32), “*a lamp unto [his] feet and a light unto [his] path*” (Psalm 119:105), “*the sword of the Spirit*” to wield in his battles against Satan (Ephesians 6:17b), and “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Romans 1:16; I Peter 1:5).

The fact that we have God's Word "*in our own tongue wherein we were born*" is a great and immeasurable blessing; and it gives us a great duty and privilege, not only with regard to ourselves but also to our children; for the Lord says to US *in language* that **we** can readily understand: "*These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). The love, reverence and diligent use of His precious Word should be for every Christian a "24/7" joyful duty and responsibility, "*lest [we] also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from [our] own steadfastness*" in these latter days of sore distress. Rather let us "*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever!! Amen*" (II Peter 3:17-18).

— D. T. M.



*"[They] began to speak with other tongues,
as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

Acts 2:4

The prophecy of Joel concerning the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, as Peter preached it in Acts 2:17 —

וְהָיָה אֲחֵרִי־כֵן אֲשַׁפּוּ אֶת־רוּחִי עַל־כָּל־בָּשָׂר

καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις λέγει ὁ θεός
ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα.

**Et erit in novissimis diebus dicit Dominus
effundam de Spiritu meo super omnem carnem.**

Und es soll geschehen in den letzten Tagen, spricht Gott,
ich will ausgießen von meinem Geist auf alles Fleisch.

**Dans les derniers jours, dit Dieu, je répandrai de
mon Esprit sur toute chair.**

*Y en los postreros días, dice Dios, derramaré de
mi Espíritu sobre toda carne.*

И будет в последние дни, говорит Бог,
излию от Духа Моего на всякую плоть.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith
God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.

The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Apostolic Benediction

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all!”*

II Corinthians 13:14

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!

What a significant day for our Christian faith is the **Feast of the Holy Trinity**! For it not only gives us Christians a unique opportunity to link together in a kind of summary statement or confession the church festivals dedicated to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost — Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost respectively— but it reminds **us** and testifies also to **others** that these three persons of the Godhead are not **three gods**, but **ONE God**. And, at the same time, it bears witness that the **one true and only God** consists of **three distinct persons**, co-equal and co-eternal. —The doctrine of the Trinity is not “unreasonable” or “illogical” (as the modernists, rationalists, and other anti-trinitarians claim). It is, however, admittedly a great **mystery** of God, which is simply *beyond* our poor human ability to comprehend, but a mystery (like so many others) which anyone would be a “*fool*” to **deny** simply because he didn’t understand it! Yet the fact remains, according to clear Scripture teaching, as we confess it also in our Catechism, that “the **only TRUE God** is the **Triune** God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost —three distinct persons in one divine being or essence.”

Rejection of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, be it *blatantly evident* (as professed by the Unitarians, by the so-called “Witnesses of Jehovah,” by the Mormons, by the *pseudo*-“Christian Scientists,” and by other anti-Trinitarian sects and cults, as well as by the lodges and Scouting organizations of our day), **OR** be that rejection more *subtle* and *disguised* (as among theological skeptics, rationalists and blasphemers, the so-called “modernists,” who have infested just about every denomination in outward Christendom —even Lutheranism!) —such rejection in *any* form puts its adherents **outside the Christian Church** and labels them “idolaters,” worshipers of a false god, a non-existent god, a “*nothing in the world*,” as by verbal inspiration St. Paul calls **idols** (I Corinthians 8:4). —And beside such *outright rejection* of the Trinity, there is an ever-growing tendency or movement in nominally Christian churches and denominations simply to de-emphasize the Trinity in the minds of the people by such transparent maneuvers as removing from the *non-festival half* of the Church calendar the term “Sundays after **Trinity**” and substituting the term “Sundays after **Pentecost**”—an accomplished fact by this time even in most “Lutheran” hymnals!

By God’s grace, however, we still believe and profess the **Scripture doctrine** of the **Holy Trinity**, as summarized in our precious **Athanasian Creed** (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 53). For on the basis of many clear passages of Holy Writ, including the **Apostolic Benediction** before us, we are privileged still boldly to confess, “We all believe in one true God” (*TLH* 251 – Luther, 1525) — the **Father**, whose *love* for all the world wrought our very salvation; the **Son**, whose *grace* to undeserving sinners was manifested in His redemptive work as satisfaction of God’s justice for our justification; and the **Holy Ghost**, whose abiding *communion* or fellowship is evident in us who believe.

This precious verse is commonly known among us as the **Apostolic Benediction** or “New Testament Blessing.” We find it in our *Hymnal* in place of the *Old Testament* or **Aaronic Benediction** at the close of *matins* and *vesper* services; and we use it commonly in the adjournment of meetings, classes, and informal gatherings. In it the Apostle Paul closes his second letter to the church at Corinth with the earnest desire that the members of that congregation, heeding his admonitions and exhortations, would be built up in their faith, grow as Christians in their lives of sanctification, and continue to enjoy those priceless blessings which he specifically ascribes to each person of the Holy Trinity, the blessings upon which their whole salvation rests. Consequently, this verse is, on the one hand, a **blessing** or **benediction** upon God’s people and, on the other, a **testimony** and **confession of faith** in the **TRIUNE GOD**, the Source

of all our blessings, but especially the blessings of *redemption* and *justification* and *sanctification*.

For the sake of our present consideration, let us take the persons of the Godhead in their usual order. Paul wants “*the LOVE of God*” to be with **all** of the **CORINTHIANS** (as well as with all of **us**, for whose learning and benefit these Scriptures were penned). Although God’s attribute of **love** is properly ascribed to **ALL** the persons of the Godhead, individually and collectively (I John 4:8), Paul HERE speaks of the **Father’s** love in particular to remind us of the **reason** for our *redemption*. That love prompted the Father to *save* sinners rather than to *destroy* them. It was a “*great* love,” Paul tells the Ephesians (2:4-5), “*wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.*” And the Prophet Ezekiel cites God’s sacred oath to bear out His sincere desire that all men be *saved* instead of being lost, saying: “*As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live*” (33:11).

Moreover, it was the **Father’s LOVE** that was “*manifested*” to all the world when He sent His Son to be the *payment* for our sins. John writes in his first epistle (4:9): “*In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God [the Father] sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love: Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*” “*God SO LOVED the world,*” **so** deeply, **so** greatly, **so** earnestly, **so** sincerely, **IN CHRIST**, that He **gave** Him to *propitiate* or *satisfy* **divine justice** with respect to the demands and penalties of His Law upon mankind and thus to make poor mortals God’s **friends** again instead of His enemies!

And it was the **Father’s** unspeakably great love **in Christ** by which He “*reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing [or charging] their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19). For **Jesus’** sake, that is, in view of the perfect satisfaction which Jesus offered to His Father **in our place**, God the Father completely forgave the sins of the **whole world** —of **everyone**, even of those who nailed Christ to His cross of agony, even of those who reject Him as their Savior! He even forgave **your** sins and **mine** before we ever believed on Him, and He brought us to the saving faith by the power of His Holy Spirit through the precious Means of Grace, making us His adopted children in Christ Jesus! “*Behold, what manner of LOVE the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!*” (I John 3:1)

“*[May that] love of God be with you all!*” Paul writes in this benediction. May that highest and noblest and unspeakably greatest love of all loves be **your** legacy of grace, **your** wondrous blessing, **your** treasured inheritance, and the cause of **your** salvation, as by faith in His Son you cling to the **loving Father’s** promise “*that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life,*” the ultimate **proof** of His love.

But the Father is not the only person of the Godhead treated in this wonderful benediction. In fact, the **Son**, “*the Lord Jesus Christ*,” is actually mentioned first —the Son, whose “*grace*” to poor undeserving sinners was manifested when He humbled Himself to be our Savior. “*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,*” Paul writes in chapter 8 of this same epistle, “*that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich*” (v. 9). —“**Grace**” means in simple terms **a gift**. Jesus willingly **gave Himself** to you and to me as a priceless “*Gift*” when He became our Substitute under God’s Law, fulfilling all its demands perfectly in our stead, and offering His perfect obedience to **divine justice** to be credited to our account with God. What a gift of **grace** that was —the gift of righteousness before God, not merited by us, but “*imputed unto us*” by faith in “*the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Moreover, this “*grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*” was manifested also in the fact that He willingly bore our guilt and suffered our punishment, “*being made a curse for us*” (Romans 3:13). — “*[In Him we have] redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace,*” Paul writes in Ephesians 1:7. Yes, He “*gave Himself a ransom for all*” (I Timothy 2:6) as “*the propitiation [or payment] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world!*” (I John 2:2).

And His wondrous **grace** is still manifested in His advocacy and intercession for us before His Father’s throne in heaven. For it is His **grace**, the gift of **Himself for us**, that counts with God; “*wherefore [for which reason] He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them*” (Hebrews 7:25), yea, for **you** and **me**, as our **gracious** High Priest! “*May [that] grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...be with you all,*” writes the Apostle here in our title-text to **all of us**. May it **calm** our troubled hearts when our sins oppress us, **reassure** our trembling souls when Satan tries to claim us as his own, **bring joy** to our broken spirits when the sorrows of this vale of tears seem to overwhelm us, and **hope** to our aching breasts as we seek to look past “*the sufferings of this present time*” (Romans 8:18). For this **grace** is our gift “*through faith*” (Ephesians 2:8) in Christ our Savior!

And St. Paul now concludes his *Apostolic Benediction* with a word about the “*Holy Ghost*,” whose “*communion*” or “*fellowship*” is evident, first of all, in the fact that it is **He** who **brought us to saving faith** in Jesus and **made us partakers** of all the blessings of redemption. For “*no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*,” the third person of the Trinity (I Corinthians 12:3). By the Gospel, He “*called*” us “*out of darkness*” —the darkness of spiritual blindness and unbelief— “*into His marvelous light*” —the light of **faith** in the mercy of God to poor sinners for Christ’s sake (I Peter 2:9).

Moreover, “*the communion [or fellowship] of the Holy Ghost*” does not leave us once we have come to faith in the Savior; but it continues to show itself in our **lives**, as He **builds us up** in our faith by the Means of Grace (the Gospel and the Sacraments), as He **enables us** to bring forth the *fruits* or evidences of faith in our lives day by day, walking ever better “*in the paths of righteousness for [the Savior’s] sake*” (Psalm 23:3), and as He **preserves us** in the true faith to the very end of our pilgrimage here on earth, as we continue in the precious Word of our God, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18).

Oh, how important it is, therefore, my dear readers, that we do not **stymie** or in any way **resist** the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts by despising **God’s precious Word** through which He operates, through which he works in us “*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13). Indeed, those who habitually minimize their intake of spiritual **nourishment** also minimize their spiritual **blessings**, “*for whatsoever a man soweth,*” the Bible says, “*that shall he also reap*” (Galatians 6:7). Rather, let each of us earnestly pray with the Psalmist: “*Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me!*” (Psalm 51:11). For it is **He** who **keeps us** in “*the love of God [the Father]*” and in “*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*,” it is **He** who makes and keeps us full partakers of all the blessings of redemption, until, by His neverfailing “*grace*” we “*apprehend*” or **lay hold on** (Philippians 3:12) the crown of everlasting life which the Father’s love created for us, which His Son purchased and won for us, and which the Holy Spirit secured for us by bringing us to faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ! How wonderfully the Christian poet sums up this entire plan of salvation from our Holy **Triune God**, as he sings in that beloved Gospel hymn:

God loved the world, so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save;
that all who would in Him believe
should everlasting life receive.

Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,
who was made flesh and suffered death.
All who confide in Him alone
are built on this Chief Cornerstone.

God would not have the sinner die.
His Spirit in the Word draws nigh
and works in men the faith to cleave
in confidence to Christ, and live.

Glory to God the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, three-in-one!
To Thee, O blessed Trinity,
be praise, now and eternally!

Amen.

(TLH 245, 1-3; 6)

— D. T. M.



Christianity Is *Unique* among the Religions of the World



There are, in fact, only TWO religions in the world when all religions — organized religions and personally-held “religious” philosophies — are categorized according to their simplest characteristics (according to their “least common denominator,” a math term well-known even to our children). There are those which are **religions of works** (which accounts for *all but one* of the thousands of religions in this world) and the **religion of grace**, the true Christian religion, which *stands alone* according to that characteristic. We could, of course, also use the characteristics of “**true**” and “**false**” to separate the various religions; but that would be argued against as a “*subjective* difference” by those, like Pontius Pilate, who claim that there is no such thing as **objective truth** (John 18:38), even though “*the truth*” is a resounding theme and a concept-in-reality throughout the Holy Scriptures. There are, however, three very unique characteristics of Christianity, among also others, that set it aside from all other religions of the world; and our article will treat these three in particular.

The **FIRST** is that the *true* Christian religion exclusively preaches, teaches, confesses and practices the existence of a **unique God**. No other religion has a god that remotely corresponds to or even approximates or imitates the God of Christianity. As we state in our *Catechism* (CPH, 1943 Ed.), “The only true God is the **Triune God**, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three distinct persons in one divine being or essence.” The *Athanasian Creed* declares: “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet they are not three Gods but one God. ...And in this **Trinity** none is before or after other; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal, so that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.” The **unity** of this Triune God, “*the Lord*,” the great “*I AM*,” “*Jehovah*,” was stated with perfect clarity by Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 6, when he said: “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord*” (v. 7); and the **trinity** in this unity is clearly taught in such passages as Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; John 14:26; II Corinthians 13:14; and I John 5:7 among also others.

The vast majority of the world’s *pagan* religions are *polytheistic*, that is, they teach and profess belief in *many* gods, deities which are “specialized” according to the needs and desires of the people. We can immediately cite as an example the religion of the ancient Greeks, against which the Apostle Paul in particular had to contend on his missionary journeys. Beside Zeus and Hera, the “father” and “mother” of the god-family which was said to live on Mt. Olympus, there were twelve other major gods and goddesses and a multiplicity of other deities, Titans, giants, and divine concepts in a hierarchy of “supreme beings” which the Greeks worshiped and invoked. They were gods who often quarreled with, plotted to undermine, and even battled against one another. Interestingly (but not surprisingly), Luke reports in Acts chapter 17 that, on Mars’ Hill in Athens, the Greeks there had an altar dedicated to “*The Unknown God*,” the God to which their conscience bore witness (Romans 1:19-20; 2:15) but the God concerning which they had little if any information and was virtually unknown to them, the God whom Paul identified as “*Lord of heaven and earth*” (v. 24), the one true and living God, the one God who never appeared in their mythology (vv. 15-32).

There are, of course, also *monotheistic* religions, religions which profess belief in **one** god, but a god which is *not* the Triune God. Among such religions we can mention as examples Islam, Deism (including the Masonic lodges), Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, the Bahá’í faith, and modern Judaism (which rejects Jesus Christ as God – cf. John 5:23). It must be clearly understood that, contrary to the claim made by “politically-correct” modernists that Allah and all monotheistic gods are really *the same deity* (“God”) as the *Christian* God, which differ from one another only in their *different names*, such monotheistic religions as Islam, Deism and Judaism will dispute that, particularly when we insist on Jesus’ declaration: “*He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him*” (John 5:23). Therefore, the “God of Our Fathers,” hailed in patriotic songs in the United States, is not really the *Christian* God at all, but the Deistic “Supreme Being” whose name appears on our coinage, the “Grand Architect of the Universe” of the Masons, and the “God” of the Scouting organizations, clearly **NOT** the **Triune God**, as all of those organizations freely admit.

Therefore, as noted above, the first characteristic that sets *true* Christianity apart as *unique* among the religions of the

world is its confession of a **unique God**, the **Triune God**, the **only true and living God**. “*There is none other God but one*” (I Corinthians 8:4). “We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. ...He, therefore, that will be saved must think thus of the Trinity” (*Athanasian Creed*). Consequently, nominally “Christian” churches and denominations that deny the Trinity do not belong to *true Christianity*, including therefore all “modernists” in whatever denomination they may find themselves.

The **SECOND** characteristic of *true Christianity* that makes it *unique* among the world’s religions is its **unique source and norm of theology**. No other religion in the world professes that “**Holy Scripture alone** is the **only** source and norm [standard] of Christian faith and life” or “of Christian doctrine and practice.” The canonical Scriptures consist of the thirty-nine books of the **Old Testament**, “*given by inspiration of God*” (II Timothy 3:16) to the divine prophets, and the twenty-seven books of the **New Testament** “*in the words which the Holy Ghost [taught]*” (I Corinthians 2:13) to the evangelists and apostles. The true Christian Church, St. Paul writes, is “*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone*” (Ephesians 2:20). Jesus Christ identifies the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments as **His Word** and declares: “*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). That simple passage adequately describes the adherents of “*true Christianity*” and the source and norm of their faith.

Some of the world’s *pagan* religions have so-called “holy books” — some quite ancient, some of rather recent origin — which they regard either as their **sole authority** or as **an authority** in addition to which they have *other* writings, legends, myths, traditions and folklore from which they draw their principles and teachings. Of *ancient* books we can cite as an example the *Holy Koran (Qur’an)* of **Islam**, dating from 609 - 632 A.D., the revelation of Allah to his prophet Mohammed, verbally committed to him by the angel Gabriel and, according to Muslims, preserved inviolate to the present day. — Of *recent* books we recognize the *Book of Mormon*, dating from 1830, as the chief “holy book” of the cult falsely called “**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**,” the book which founder Joseph Smith called “the keystone of our religion.” Its text, say the Mormons, was handed down to Joseph Smith by an angel named Moroni on golden tablets written in an unknown, ancient Egyptian-like language. But Moroni gave Smith the key to its translation; and after the tablets were transcribed and translated, Moroni reclaimed them; and they were never seen again. That book, also known since 1982 as “*Another Testament of Jesus Christ*” (cf. Galatians 1:8), together with four other major “sacred texts” and contemporary revelations and statements of the church’s prophets and apostles, form the basis of its teachings. In spite of its outward trappings, which deceive the unwary into regarding it as a “Christian” religion, the Latter Day Saints movement is a **cult** that does not belong to Christianity.

Within the pale of *nominal* Christianity, there are denominations that, quite frankly and admittedly, teach that Holy Scripture **alone** is **NOT** the “**only** source and norm” of their doctrine and practice. **The Church of Rome**, for example, *includes* Scripture *among* its “traditions;” but it teaches that its doctrine and practice flow from “the Sacred Tradition of the Church” — including, beside Scripture, the canons and decrees of their church councils and popes, their encyclicals (or official letters), and traditions (including legends) that have been handed down through the ages. When they use Scripture, it’s not *sola Scriptura* but Scripture “as interpreted by Holy Mother Church.”

And some denominations, including the **Reformed** bodies, though they *claim* to rest their teachings exclusively on the Bible, rely upon rationalistic “*private interpretation[s]*” (II Peter 1:20) of Scripture to support many of their unscriptural doctrinal positions; and the *enthusiasts* among them (Pentecostal groups and other such assemblies) rely also upon private, extra-scriptural revelations as contemporary messages from God.

There are also denominations which this author unashamedly labels “**so-called Lutheran**” bodies, church bodies that parade under Luther’s name and claim Luther’s doctrine and practice but, upon closer examination than “name-only” identification, bear little if any resemblance to orthodox Lutheranism because, either in doctrine or practice, they have veered off the *unique* source and standard of faith and life (*sola Scriptura*) and have accommodated themselves to whatever is popular, politically-correct, or practically convenient in these latter days of sore distress. Easiest to identify among these is the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)** — now in fellowship with the *Presbyterians* and with the *Episcopal Church* — and practically indistinguishable anymore from generic “community,” non-denominational, politically correct and doctrinally-indifferent church bodies. A purely casual look at its website shocks the orthodox Christian with unscriptural and anti-scriptural positions on Holy Scripture itself,

evolution, abortion, homosexuality and gay marriage, open communion, indiscriminate fellowship, whether faith in Christ is absolutely necessary for salvation, and on and on. It is so latitudinarian that just about “anything goes” in matters of doctrine and practice. That church body does NOT represent *true* Christianity!

Thus a characteristic of *true* Christianity that makes it *unique* among the world’s religions is its **unique source and norm of theology**. No other religion in the world professes that “**Holy Scripture alone** is the *only* source and norm [standard] of Christian faith and life” or “of Christian doctrine and practice.”

The **THIRD** characteristic of *true* Christianity that makes it *unique* among the world’s religions is its **unique doctrine of JUSTIFICATION**. The age-old question of how a mere mortal wins notice, gains acceptance, and earns favor with his “god” (or with “the gods”) is still today, after thousands of years, the “hot button topic” among the world’s religions. Since the fall of man into sin (Genesis 3), “*the carnal mind is enmity against God*” (Romans 8:7). There is and always has been a diametric disconnect between the will of God and the will of men. And how a mere mortal, who has angered or displeased his “god” or “gods,” can compensate the deity for his failure, for his neglect, for his disobedience, for his rebellion, and re-gain the favor he once enjoyed is still today the question that all religions try to address. As they seek to be *the agency of reconciliation* between the **exalted deity** (who demands compliance, undivided loyalty, and uncompromising perfection from his creatures) and the **lowly creature** (who is incapable of perfection, resentful of authority, and indolent in his behavior), the religions of the world *again* fall into **two camps**. In the opening paragraph of our article, we observed that the two camps are, in their simplest terms, **religions of works** (which accounts for *all but one* of the thousands of religions in this world) and the **religion of grace**, the true Christian religion, which *stands alone* according to that characteristic.

With the single exception of the *true* Christian religion, ALL of the world’s religions — from the polytheistic pagans to the monotheistic but non-Christian and anti-trinitarian religions — ALL teach (and practice) the principle that man, alienated from God (or “the gods”) by disobedience and unfaithfulness, must seek reconciliation and favor with him (them) by **performing works** acceptable to the deity and in service to it (him, them). It is **the religion of the Law**, the religion that the unconverted know “*by nature*” in their conscience, the **ONLY** religion that is recognizable according to man’s **natural knowledge**. “*When the Gentiles, which have not the Law [the revealed Law of God], do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another*” (Romans 2:14-15).

The mercy and grace of God in Christ are **NOT known by nature** but are **made known** [*manifested*] in **the Gospel**, the “Good news” which is revealed in the Scriptures, as St. Paul also testifies, saying: “*But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets [the written Scriptures], even the righteousness of God which is by faith of [in] Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe*” (Romans 3:21-22).

Only the *true* Christian religion teaches the **unique truth** that a man is **JUSTIFIED** in the sight of God (made right with Him) and eternally saved **by grace through faith...** “*NOT of works, lest any man should boast*” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Only the *true* Christian religion teaches the **unique truth** that salvation is the result of God’s merciful **JUSTIFICATION** of sinful man **for Christ’s sake**. Because Christ’s perfect, all-sufficient *vicarious atonement* for the sins of “**ALL**” (II Corinthians 5:15) **satisfied God’s immutable justice** with respect to the “**whole world**” (I John 2:2), both as to His **demands** (Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:48) and as to the **punishment** He threatens against sin and sinners (Galatians 3:10; Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:20a), God was able unilaterally to “*reconcil[e] the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19). He had already imputed them to Christ (v. 21), both to bear (Isaiah 53:4, 6b, 11b; I Peter 2:24) and to expiate or pay for (Galatians 3:13; I Peter 1:18-19); and He was able to impute the perfect righteousness of Christ to the “**ungodly**” (Romans 4:5) because, by His active obedience, Christ had earned that righteousness for **all mankind** (5:18-19). God’s forgiveness and Christ’s righteousness imputed to **all** is known as “objective” justification. Moreover, only the *true* Christian religion teaches the **unique truth** that a man accepts, receives, and has for himself personally God’s justification **alone by faith** (Romans 5:1), not as a meritorious work but as the *receiving means* whereby God personally imputes His forgiveness and Christ’s righteousness to sinful men (Romans 4:5; 9:30-32). This is known as “subjective” justification. God’s gift of justification and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness “*without the deeds of the Law*” (Romans 3:28) are rejected and thus forfeited by unbelief (Mark 16b; II Peter 2:1; Galatians 5:4-5; etc.)

ALL the **other** religions of the world teach justification and salvation **by works** — either solely by works

(Pelagianism) — the *heathen* religions, as well as Deists, Unitarians, lodges and Scouts, all unchristian *cults*, and, in short, all who deny the *vicarious atonement* of Christ for the sins of the world (John 1:29b, etc.) — OR by grace coupled with works (Semi-pelagianism), such as the Roman and Eastern Orthodox Catholic churches, who make man's works a contributing factor to his salvation, who claim that man's works done according to his "free will" merit God's favor and gain His "infused" grace, which in turn enables man to earn his own salvation. Against BOTH of these fundamental errors, *true* Christianity confesses the **unique** truth that "*a man is justified by faith, **without** [totally apart from] the deeds of the Law*" (Romans 3:28), and that, as St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, "**by grace** are ye saved **through faith**, and that, **not of yourselves**, it is **the gift of God, not of works**, lest any man should boast" (3:8-9). Every teaching that attributes forgiveness and salvation to works of merit, to improvement in character, to man's effort (successful or unsuccessful), to lesser guilt in those ignorant of the Gospel, to a cooperative spirit, to lesser resistance to the Holy Spirit in conversion, and even to a sanctified life (justification by means of sanctification) — every such teaching is **totally false** and sets its adherents **outside** of *true* Christianity and on the road to everlasting perdition (Matthew 7:13; Galatians 5:4)!

While there are also other teachings which set *true* Christianity apart from all the other religions of the world as a truly **unique** religion, these three stand out as being the most definitive, the most critical, and the most distinctive. All those who have, profess, teach and practice these and all the other doctrines of Holy Scripture in their purity and administer the holy Sacraments according to Christ's own institution comprise the **true** visible Church on earth (Ephesians 4:3-6; John 8:31-32; Jude 3b; etc.) and are, by God's grace, adherents of *true* Christianity, a religion clearly **unique** among the religions of the world. May God continue to "strengthen and preserve US steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end," for "this is His gracious and good will" (Luther, *Third Petition* of the Lord's Prayer)!

— D. T. M.





Churches in Fellowship

ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG

Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 27620039 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 D. J. Frank and

The Rev. Tonye S. Omoni, Pastors

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: 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. Fyneface, Pastor

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: njohnfyneface@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 9:30 a.m.

Worship Service 11:00 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

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

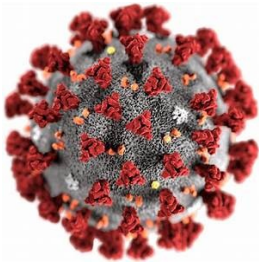
TrinityEvLutheran.com

Parsonage: (708) 386-4145

Pastor's Cell: (708) 556-892

(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 experience, though in decreasing measure, the threat of exposure and infection due to the virulent Coronavirus in its various forms, in particular to the elderly, the frail, and the immunocompromised among us. Even as we exercise prudent measures to contain this virus and to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors from contagion by means of vaccinations and other mitigations, 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. Then may it please Thee in Thine own best time and way to comfort us in this time of chastening and to calm us with regard to our concerns, granting us patience under our frustrations 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.



Announcing the
Sixty-ninth Annual Convention
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

June 24, 25, and 26, 2022

at

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

5350 South Fountain Street
Seattle, Washington 98178

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Pastor

There is NO Plenary Pastoral Conference this year.

The Board of Directors Meeting is on **Thursday, June 23rd**



Convention Motto:

Holding Fast to Objective Justification

Doctrinal Essay: *Holding Fast to the Scripture's Teaching of Objective Justification*

by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel

Friday Sermon on Romans 5:18-19 — President Paul E. Bloedel

Sunday Sermon on II Corinthians 5:19 — Pastor David T. Mensing