

# *The Concordia Lutheran*



“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35  
“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105


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Vol. LXVI

July–August 2022

Nos. 7–8

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“God was in Christ  
reconciling the world  
unto Himself,  
not imputing their  
trespasses unto them.”

—11 Corinthians 5:19



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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.

### *The Concordia Lutheran Editor.*

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

### **Book and Tract Editor**

The Rev. David J. Mensing  
22012 Torrence Avenue  
Sauk Village, IL 60411

### **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  
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## Officers of the *Concordia Lutheran Conference*

### **PRESIDENT:**

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

### **VICE PRESIDENT:**

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

### **SECRETARY:**

The Rev. David J. Mensing  
22012 Torrence Avenue  
Sauk Village, IL 60411

### **TREASURER:**

Mr. Robert G. Bloedel  
10017 – 61<sup>st</sup> 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 Opening Sermon*

*for the*

*Sixty-ninth Annual Convention*

*of the*

## **Concordia Lutheran Conference**

Preached by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel, President

**Text:** *“Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.”*

— Romans 5:18-19

Beloved friends in Christ and fellow hearers of His Word:

The two main doctrines of the Bible—Law and Gospel—present *universal* truths, applying to all people of all time. An interesting thing that is brought out in both verses of this short two-verse text is that the reason why the *Law* condemns all people as sinners can be traced back to *one single individual* (namely, Adam); and the reason why the *Gospel* proclaims the forgiveness of sins for all people can also be traced to *one single individual* (namely, Christ). Both of these verses are close parallels declaring how the sinfulness of Adam affected all people, contrasted with how the righteousness of Christ affected all people. In verse 18, the expression “*all men*” is a parallel to the expression “*many*” in verse 19. (In the original Greek, the text actually says “*the many*,” referring to the whole mass of humanity.) Thus we know that what the *Law* says about sin and the punishment that sinners deserve certainly applies to each one of us and every person we meet over the course of our lives since it applies to every human being on earth. Thankfully, we also know that what the *Gospel* says about God’s gracious forgiveness in Christ likewise applies to each one of us, and we can share this wonderful news with every contrite sinner we meet, knowing that they are all included in the promise of God’s grace since it applies to every human being on earth.

So then, examining the universal declarations of God’s holy Law and saving Gospel in our text for this morning, we shall meditate upon the following theme:

### **Sinfulness and Righteousness upon All Mankind**

We shall first consider the point that (I) *all people are declared guilty of sin through Adam*; and, secondly, that (II) *all people are declared righteous through Christ*.

#### **I.**

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they lost the divine image of holiness and righteousness in which they were created and brought upon themselves sin and punishment. The consequences of their disobedience not only affected *them* but all of their descendants. Their children were *not* born in the image of God but in the fallen image of their sinful parents. The Bible tells us: “Adam...begat a son in his own likeness, after his image” (Genesis 5:3). Likewise, the *punishment* that Adam and Eve brought upon themselves was also passed down upon all of their descendants. Where there is *sin*, there must also be *punishment* from the holy, just, and righteous God; “*for*,” as the Bible declares,

*“the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men”* (Romans 1:18). And this applies to all of Adam’s descendants because they are all sinful. Earlier in the same chapter from which our text is taken, we read: *“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”* (v. 12). Yes, Adam’s sin places every single human being under the Lord’s righteous wrath.

It would be wrong, however, to think of this as an unjust judgment, or as God punishing innocent people on account of another man’s sin. It is true that in the first verse of our text (v. 18), the point is made that Adam’s sin resulted in all people being condemned—declared guilty and worthy of damnation. But in the second verse of our text (v. 19), the point is made that Adam’s sin resulted in all people being sinful themselves. No descendant of Adam (with the one exception of Jesus Christ Himself) is truly innocent or free from sin. So, again, this is *not* a case of innocent people being punished for someone else’s wickedness. You will not find a single person living here on earth who is not personally guilty of committing very many sins against the Lord, and that includes newborn babies and even babies still inside their mothers’ wombs. King David wrote by inspiration of the Holy Ghost: *“The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies”* (Psalm 58:3); and again: *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me”* (Psalm 51:5). The fact that they inherited their sin from their parents and they from theirs going all the way back to Adam and Eve does not change the fact that they themselves have violated God’s holy Law and justly deserve His punishment.

The Bible has a great deal to say concerning the sinfulness of all people (which resulted from the original sin of Adam). Earlier in this same epistle to the Romans (in chapter three), we are told: *“Both Jews and Gentiles...are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God”* (v. 9–19). That is exactly how all people are in their natural condition, as they are born into this world since the fall of Adam—lost and condemned, ruined in body and soul, no righteousness whatsoever, no reverential fear of God, no love for the Lord but only a vile hatred of that which is good and a most wicked lust for that which is evil.

But why focus so much emphasis on such a negative description of humans in their natural state when we Christians are no longer in that condition of spiritual blindness, death, and enmity against God? It is true that by the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost working through the Gospel, you and I (and all true believers) have been rescued and liberated from that condition of unbelief, but it is still worthwhile being reminded about what the Lord has rescued us from so that we continue to appreciate and rejoice in His saving grace. It is, furthermore, important to acknowledge and confess that even though we love the Lord and delight to do His will according to the New Man of faith (a partial renewal of God’s image, which was given to us when He made us His believing children), yet we still have the old sinful flesh clinging to us, which is just as wicked and vile, corrupt and depraved as the unbelieving followers of Satan are.

Much to our shame, even we Christians sin against the Lord every day of our lives more times than we can know in thoughts, desires, words and deeds. We sin when we do not do perfectly everything that the Lord commands us to do, and we sin when we do those things that He has forbidden. And even though we may have made some good progress in gaining self-control and suppressing gross outbursts of sin, yet our wicked, deceitful hearts still produce many thoughts and feelings that are *not* in line with God’s holy Commandments. Indeed, the good that we want to do according to our New Man, we do not always do; and the evil that we do not want to do, that we do, as St. Paul confesses of himself in Romans chapter 7 (v. 19).

So while it is true that our text for this morning does clearly teach that the sinfulness of all mankind and the condemnation merited by sin can be traced back to Adam’s disobedience, yet we cannot blame Adam for the many ways that *we ourselves* have broken God’s Commandments. On the contrary, we must all confess with humble and contrite hearts our own sins and unworthiness before God and cast ourselves down before Him, begging for mercy and grace.

## II.

Thankfully, the Lord has bestowed upon us great mercy and grace—all on account of our Savior Jesus Christ. He is the one whose righteousness, we are told in verse 18, grants *justification* (forgiveness) for *all men*; He is the one whose perfect obedience to the Law of God, according to verse 19, makes *the many*, all mankind, *righteous*. That “*obedience*” of Christ mentioned in verse 19 is what we refer to as His *active obedience*, in which Jesus, as our Substitute under God’s Law, perfectly kept all of the Commandments. Since this was done in the place of all mankind, “*the many*” (v. 19), “*all men*” (v. 18) are declared “*righteous*” by God, *justified* in His sight. And with the forgiveness of sins comes the promise of everlasting life. Thus we are told at the end of verse 18: “*By the righteousness of One [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*”

But how can *life* be given to those who deserve only *death*? It is a fact that we have broken God’s Commandments; and, as was mentioned earlier, where there is *sin*, there must also be *punishment* from the holy, just, and righteous God. According to God’s Law, the punishment that we deserve by our sins is *hell*; and that is precisely the punishment that Jesus took upon Himself as He hung dying on the cross. (This is what is referred to as His *passive obedience*.)

As the one who bore the sins and guilt of the entire world (Isaiah 53:6), Jesus endured the punishment that we all deserve, namely, the agony of damnation. This is what distinguished His suffering from anyone else’s who had ever been crucified. No human being on this earth has ever endured as much pain and anguish as Jesus did on the cross; nor is it even possible for anyone else in this life to experience anything remotely close to the torments of the damned in hell. But that is exactly what Jesus suffered to pay the penalty of our guilt. The Apostle Peter writes: “[*Christ*] *His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree [namely, on the cross]*” (I Peter 2:24).

Because Jesus suffered and died in our place, God’s wrath against us has been taken away; and we have been reconciled to the Lord. In verses 8 through 10 (before our text), we are told: “*God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified [declared righteous] by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*”

Now there are those who drastically limit the universal expression “*all men*,” as our text says in verse 18, and say that it really only applies to a small percentage of humans, namely, those who believe in Jesus as their Savior. They argue that it cannot really refer to all people because the text states that the gift given to them is “*justification of life*”—eternal life in heaven.

It is absolutely true that not all people go to heaven. In fact, according to the Scriptures, the vast majority of people do not go to heaven when they die, but instead pass through that wide gate that leads to eternal destruction in hell (Matthew 7:13–14). But it is also true that on account of Christ’s work of redemption, God does, indeed, grant forgiveness and life everlasting to all. This is His gracious gift to all mankind purchased for all by the precious blood of Christ. In verse 15 (before our text), St. Paul refers to this as “*the free gift*” and “*the gift by grace.*” And God has commissioned His disciples to announce His grace, forgiveness, and eternal life to the whole world (Mark 16:15). This is the proclamation of the Gospel which is to follow the preaching of the Law—bringing comfort and working faith in the hearts of contrite sinners.

Yes, it is a very sad fact that most people die in their sins and are damned in the everlasting fires of hell. But the reason for this is certainly *not* that Jesus’ redemptive work did not atone for their sins, nor is it that God refused to grant them forgiveness. Rather, it is because, in spite of the fact that Christ fully bought and paid for their forgiveness by His perfect life and death, and God graciously grants that forgiveness to all (since Jesus died for all), yet they refuse and reject the gracious offer of forgiveness and salvation by their unbelief. Accordingly, the Apostle Peter declares: “[*They deny*] *the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*” (II Peter 2:1).

It is most comforting to know that the Gospel’s gracious promises of forgiveness and salvation are given freely to *all people* since Jesus’ work of redemption was accomplished for *all*. No penitent sinner should ever doubt that he is included. You and I can greatly rejoice that we are most definitely included. The righteousness of forgiveness that is imputed, or credited, to us is based purely on the righteousness of Christ, not based on anything in us. We do not need to present anything to God in order to persuade Him to forgive us—not our works, not our love, not even our

faith. Such things are necessary, but *not* in order to move the Lord to forgive us our sins and grant us salvation. *Faith is necessary to receive and accept God's gracious gift of forgiveness. Love and works are necessary fruits of the true Christian faith.* But those things are not what cause God to forgive us. The cause is our Savior Jesus Christ, and His redemptive work. Listen to how St. Paul describes this in chapter three of this epistle: *"There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God"* (v. 22–25).

Even if no one believed the Gospel, it would still be objectively true; God's forgiving grace for all mankind based on the redemptive work of Christ would remain the same. And that objective promise of grace is what you and I trust in as Christians and thus we *receive* the forgiveness of all our sins by faith through the working of the Holy Ghost in our hearts by the Gospel.

May God keep us from ever trusting in ourselves, our works, or our faith as that which causes God to forgive us our sins. Instead, may we always hold fast, by true faith in the Lord Jesus, to God's promise of Objective Justification (His forgiveness of the world for Christ's sake)—thus receiving His gracious forgiveness subjectively for our eternal salvation. Amen.

*Soli Deo gloria*



# CONVENTION DIGEST

(distilled from the minutes of the Convention)

MOTTO: *Holding Fast to Objective Justification*

It was with grateful hearts that the members of the constituent congregations of the Concordia Lutheran Conference once again took opportunity to gather all together at a convention! The Lord God had allowed the normal course and consciousness of the world to be altered by a pandemic, and many of His dear children by faith in Christ Jesus (cf. Galatians 3:26) felt, to varying extents, the grievousness of that chastisement while bearing it (cf. Hebrews 12:11a). As a means of escape and spiritual strengthening, He graciously preserved to us the



freedom to assemble regularly, virtually and in-person, in our various congregations, under the spiritual supervision and nurturing of our respective pastors. Yet, due to the hazards, concerns, and regulations accompanying the COVID-19 Pandemic, as well as healthy doses of Christian longsuffering, charity, and burden-bearing, it had been three years since some of us had seen each other, talked to one another in person, exchanged hearty handshakes, pats on the back, fist-bumps, elbow bumps, and especially brotherly hugs. However, in Seattle, at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 5350 South Fountain Street, from Friday, June 24th thru Sunday, June 26th, we experienced those things again, along with, of course, ample amounts of "*grow[ing] in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,*" "*provoking one*

*another to love and to good works,*" "*exhorting one another,*" "*mak[ing] a joyful noise unto the Lord,*" and "*us[ing] hospitality one to another without grudging*" (cf. II Peter 3:18; Hebrews 10:24-25; Psalm 100:1; I Peter 4:9). It felt good to our hearts, even if we did not previously realize just how much we missed it. The desire to assemble, the joy in assembling, and the spiritual recharge which the assembling provided are certainly only parts of the wonderful package of "*peaceable fruits of righteousness*" that are to still to come afterward (cf. Hebrews 12:11b)!

The Sixty-ninth Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference officially began on Friday, June 24th at 9:30 a.m. with a Divine Worship Service of Convocation in which the local pastor, Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, served as liturgist, and, as the President of the Conference, also delivered the keynote sermon based on Romans 5:18-19. His theme was: ***Sinfulness and Righteousness upon All Mankind***. He divided his theme into the following parts: **I. All people are declared guilty of sin through Adam**, and **II. All people are declared righteous through Christ**.

Following the service, the first session was called to order with a brief devotion conducted by the President. During this first brief session, *ad hoc* convention committees were appointed; the credentialed delegates were officially seated; and the assembled convention heard the Annual Report of the President. Pastor Bloedel read his report, in which he referred to the turbulent times related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Two conventions were canceled, and it has now been three years since the brethren have been able to meet in convention assembled. In the meantime, two of our officers reached the term limits specified by the constitution; and Pastor Lietz, because of health concerns, had asked not to be considered for any Conference office this coming year. These conditions, limiting the number of candidates available for particular offices, would complicate our normal election process during the Convention. Of particular concern, he noted, is the lack of pastors among us and the need going forward for laborers in the Lord's harvest, so that none of the congregations in our Conference will ever experience a famine of hearing God's precious Word (Amos 8:11). Pastor David T. Mensing appointed as the Committee to Review the President's Report: Pastor David J. Mensing and Mr. Karl Mensing. This committee would file its report, according to the Agenda, on Saturday morning.



After some brief discussion and acceptance of the printed Agenda and the report of the Press Committee, the convention considered the *Recommendations from the Board of Directors*. Since the Board had no recommendations as such this year, it was mutually agreed to take up actions of the Board of Directors *between conventions* needing ratification of the present Convention: 1) It had canceled the 2020 Convention because of the COVID-19 shut-down, postponing it to 2021; 2) it had approved the 2020-2021 proposed budget as submitted by the Finance Committee; 3) it had changed the co-signer for Conference funds from Pastor (Emeritus) Worley to Mr. Raymond Kusumi; 4) it had canceled and postponed the 2021 Convention until 2022, again because of the COVID pandemic; 5) it had approved the proposed budget for 2021-2022 as drafted by the Finance Committee; 6) it had laid before the congregations of the Conference as a referendum the cancellation of those two conventions, extension of the terms of officers and standing committees elected at the 2019 Convention, and setting aside the term limits for the Vice President. This referendum was unanimously passed. 7) Finally, it had authorized as part of the new 2022-2023 fiscal budget an attempt to transfer a “lump sum” payment of the April-May subsidy funds to Pastor Schurganoff (which had been blocked as a result of the ongoing Russia/Ukraine conflict), using a new non-sanctioned bank. All of the above actions of the Board were ratified by the Convention in a unanimously-passed resolution.

The Agenda for the Friday morning session having been completed, the President declared the convention to be in recess at 11:45 a.m. for the noon meal.

The Friday afternoon session opened at 1:15 p.m. with a devotion conducted by Pastor David J. Mensing. The first two verses of Hymn 33 were sung, followed by the reading of Psalm 28:6-9 and a prayer. The devotion concluded with the last stanza of Hymn 33 and the Apostolic Benediction.



Following the devotion was the *Initial Report of the Finance Committee*. The initial report concerned, first of all, the past fiscal year, as Mr. Robert G. Bloedel, the Conference Treasurer, briefly summarized the financial condition of the Conference during the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, and then presented the Financial Report for fiscal year 2021–2022. The report showed a beginning cash balance of \$23,736.64 in the General Fund plus total receipts of \$34,455.00, yielding total cash available of \$58,191.64. Expenditures totaled \$28,915.68, leaving an ending cash balance as of May 31, 2022 of \$29,275.96. The report also showed an increase in the Student Aid Fund from \$61,247.00 at the beginning of the fiscal year to an ending balance of \$65,532.00 on its closing date, May 31, 2022. Total cash in all funds as of May 31, 2022: \$94,807.96.

The Treasurer then distributed the Finance Committee’s Budget Worksheet for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023. It showed a beginning cash balance of \$29,275.96 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$34,300.00, for an expected total cash available of \$63,575.96 in the General Fund. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$37,300.00 divided among the following items: *Scriptural Publications*—\$2,000.00; Ekaterinburg Pastoral Salary Subsidy—\$14,000.00 and Ekaterinburg Transportation Aid—\$2,800.00 — including the amounts for April and May of the previous fiscal year which were blocked from transmission; St. Mark’s Salary Subsidy—\$12,000.00; General Travel Expense—\$3,000.00; Convention Expense—\$1,000.00; and Miscellaneous Expenses—\$2,500.00. In the Student Aid Fund, the estimated income for the new year is \$2,400.00. Total budget proposed for 2022-2023 is \$37,300.

This report was adopted and the preliminary budget proposal was accepted, subject to amendment, and pending final approval later in the convention.

The *Chairman of the Committee on Missions*, Pastor Lietz, being absent from the convention because of ill health, submitted his report in writing; and it was read to the assembly by Dale Peterson, a member of the Committee. In the report, Pastor Lietz briefly surveyed the condition and circumstances of the Orthodox Lutheran Church of Ekaterinburg, Russia, including its pastor, its membership, the frequency of its worship services and classes, and the reports to the committee’s chairman from Pastor Schurganoff concerning its on-going work. He also noted that the congregation’s request for subsidy this coming year is the same as in the past fiscal years, namely, \$1,000.00 per month toward the pastor’s salary and \$200.00 per month for bus rental, or \$14,400.00 annually. Pastor Lietz also gave a similar report concerning St. Mark’s Ev. Lutheran Church of Sauk Village, Illinois, which included its subsidy request of \$1,000.00 per month or \$12,000.00 per year toward its pastor’s salary. Lacking



up-to-date information from the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations in Nigeria*, Pastor Lietz was unable to provide a current report on the Nigerian situation. The report was adopted.

Next, was the *Report of the Editorial Committee*. This report concerned the editing and publishing of the Conference's official organ, the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN*. Editor Mensing stated his appreciation for the other members of the committee in proofing the articles submitted for publication. Since during the pandemic virtually no articles were submitted by the pastors of the Conference, it was necessary that he write all the articles himself. He expressed the hope that, in the coming year, the pastors, though few, would exercise the charity of cooperation (Galatians 5:13) in submitting assigned articles in a timely fashion, articles which require no more time than the preparation of a nominal sermon — three or four times a year — not a burdensome expectation. While attempting to get back to publishing the C. L. in its customary booklet format, the editor expressed the willingness also to produce it in the 8.5 x 11" pdf format which can be easily e-mailed to our people and which has been specially requested by quite a few readers. He also expressed his special gratitude to Mr. Jason Mabe, the lay member on the committee, for his consistent readiness to proofread each issue for typos that creep in despite the best efforts of the editor to catch them. The report was adopted.

The Chairman of the *Publishing House Board of Control*, Pastor Lietz, absent because of health reasons, gave his report in writing. During this past year, *Scriptural Publications* again provided daily devotions to subscribers on the Conference website, thanks especially to Brother Phil Martin for his time-consuming efforts; and these continue to be loaded and edited as necessary. *Scriptural Publications* has also, largely due to the efforts of Phil Martin, loaded and formatted computer tablets for our Nigerian brethren — their pastors and seminarians in particular — giving them in effect a virtual pastoral library at their fingertips. This past year again, Phil has served as the Print Shop Manager and the acting Business Manager of the publishing house. Thanks was expressed to Peace Congregation for again providing space and utilities at no cost for the use of *Scriptural Publications*, and to the Conference for its continued annual subsidy of \$2,000.00. Following the report of the chairman, Mr. Phil Martin, the acting Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications* since the severance of fellowship on the part of Martin Trusty, gave a further "interest report" before his regular *Financial Report*. This concerned detailed aspects of his work with the Conference website, its content, including the daily devotions, archived past issues of the *CONCORDIA LUTHERAN* and orthodox material we can post without transgressing any copyrights, and the production of the computer tablets — virtual theological libraries chiefly for the Nigerian pastors and seminarians. The entire report was adopted.

Mr. Phil Martin continued by presenting the *Financial Report* of the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*. This consisted chiefly in his detailed balance sheet summarizing the finances of our publishing house. The report showed an opening balance of \$1,502.10, total receipts of \$2,787.95, total expenditures of \$749.82, and an ending balance of \$3,540.23. His report was adopted.

There was no official report from the *Committee on Lutheran Union* at this convention. Pastor Lietz, the chairman of this committee as Vice President of the Conference, was not present to give his report; and it appeared from his e-mail to the President that the committee was basically inactive over the past three years since there was no inquiry from any other other Lutheran body concerning our doctrine and practice nor any expressed desire for us to set up an exploratory meeting with them.

The chairman of the *Committee on Theological Education*, President Bloedel, read his report. He began with the observation that we presently have no students in our seminary program and that, if one were to matriculate today, it would be approximately five years before he would be a candidate for the ministry. He then also referred to losses from our pastoral ministry over the past three years, one who left our fellowship, denying the doctrine of Objective Justification, another who resigned from the ministry, having become disabled by serious health issues, and a third having had to withdraw, temporarily at least, from active Conference and congregational work because of unresolved health reasons. It is therefore incumbent upon us not only to commit our need for future pastors to "the Lord of the harvest" in prayer (Matthew 9:38), trusting His gracious answer to our petitions, but also to work ceaselessly to encourage qualified young men to desire the pastoral office as their life's work to the glory of God and the salvation of men, so that we might be spared from a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord (Amos 8:11) in our congregations and fellowship. The report was adopted.

After the Secretary read the minutes for the day, and after some brief announcements were made, the Friday sessions adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

The Saturday morning session of the convention was opened at 9:03 a.m. in the name of the Triune God with a devotion led by Rev. David T. Mensing. Hymn 297, verses 1–5, was sung, followed by the reading of I Peter 1:18–21 and a prayer. The devotion concluded with the singing of the last stanza of the hymn and the Apostolic Benediction.



Pastor Paul E. Bloedel then began presenting the *Doctrinal Essay* for this year's convention, entitled: ***"Holding Fast to the Scripture's Doctrine of Objective Justification"***. This essay was divided into five parts, as follows: **I.** The Doctrine of Objective Justification: What it *is* and what it is *not*; **II.** Objective Justification is the direct result of Christ's Universal Atonement; **III.** Objective Justification is required for a correct understanding of justification by faith; **IV.** Arguments that have been raised against Objective Justification; and **V.** Objective Justification must be defended.

Part I focused on certain terminology and relationships between, among other things, God's universal will of grace, Christ's universal atonement, and the unilateral nature of God's reconciling of the world unto Himself in Christ. The terms "objective" and "subjective" refer to actions taking place outside of and inside of the sinner, respectively. The essayist also listed and expounded several points of what Objective Justification is not. It does not mean, briefly, that those in hell are called or even considered "saints". It does not mean that unbelievers will escape eternal punishment in hell if they die in unbelief. It does not undermine or weaken the Office of the Keys, especially when the sins of the impenitent are "retained". It does not mean that forgiveness is proclaimed to the impenitent. Upon the conclusion of part I, a brief recess was observed.

Following brief recess, sessions resumed with Parts II and III in their entirety. These parts focused respectively on Objective Justification as a direct result of Christ's universal atonement and that Objective Justification is required for a correct understanding of justification by faith. Among many other things, the essayist stated that the all-sufficient payment for sin was accomplished by Christ's obedience; that the payment was accepted by God for our forgiveness; and that that fact was demonstrated when God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day. In order to ascertain the scope of people forgiven, we must only ascertain the scope of people who have been redeemed.

Furthermore, the essayist pointed out that those who deny Objective Justification lay a great deal of emphasis upon passages of God's Word that teach Subjective Justification, such as Romans 3:28 and Galatians 2:16, as if there were a conflict between them. While those passages do state that we are justified, declared righteous, forgiven *"by faith,"* they do not specify the function that faith plays, namely, that of *reception*. There is no requirement, for instance, for someone to believe in order for God to be graciously minded to forgive him. Faith is not meritorious in that regard. It is only receptive.

It was noted that the reading of the essay was proceeding more rapidly than anticipated, in part due to a less-than-expected number of comments and discussion of the material presented. It was decided to save the remainder of the essay for Sunday afternoon following the noon meal, as indicated on the printed Agenda. After a few brief announcements, the convention stood in recess at 12:21 p.m. for lunch.

Following the noon meal, the afternoon session began at 1:28 p.m. with a devotion conducted by Rev. David J. Mensing. Verses 1–5 of Hymn 459 were sung, followed by the reading of Scripture in Luke 11:1–13 and a prayer. The devotion concluded with the last two stanzas of the hymn and the Apostolic Benediction.

The Treasurer then briefly presented a further report, which referenced the Budget Work Sheets distributed the previous day. He mentioned a change under "Convention Collection," estimated at \$700.00 to \$1,589.00, the offering received in the Friday morning service, bringing the projected Total Estimated Income to \$35,889.00. Also, the Ekaterinburg subsidy amount is now \$14,000.00 for the pastor's salary and \$ 2,800.00 for transportation aid. This interim report was adopted subject to final approval.

The *Committee to Review the President's Report* presented its findings, namely, that they found the report of Pastor Paul E. Bloedel, Conference President, to be timely and edifying. The report was adopted.

The *Auditing Committee* was tasked with the review of both the books of the Conference Treasurer and those of the Business Manager of *Scriptural Publications*. To facilitate the work of this committee, both sets of books had

been *pre-audited* by *ad hoc* committees of the congregations of which those officers are members. The committee found both sets of records to be acceptable and in order. It expressed thanks to both Mr. Robert Bloedel and Mr. Phil Martin, Conference Treasurer and Business Manager respectively.

The convention then proceeded to the *Election of Officers and Standing Committees* for 2022-23. The following were elected:

**PRESIDENT:** The Rev. David T. Mensing

**VICE PRESIDENT:** The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel

**SECRETARY:** The Rev. David J. Mensing

**TREASURER:** Mr. Robert G. Bloedel

**BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:** Midwest—Mr. Brian Streich

Far West— Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi

**EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:** Pastor David T. Mensing, *C. L.* Editor; Pastor David J. Mensing, Book and Tract Editor; and Mr. Jason A. Mabe, Lay Member.

**COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION:** Pastor Paul E. Bloedel, Chairman; Pastor David J. Mensing; Pastor David T. Mensing; and Mr. Edward J. Worley.

**COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:** Pastor Paul E. Bloedel, Chairman; Pastor David J. Mensing; Mr. Jason Mabe; and Mr. Daniel Bloedel.

**COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS:** Pastor David T. Mensing, Chairman; Pastor David J. Mensing; Mr. Phillip Martin; Mr. Bill Bergstrom; and Mr. Dale Peterson.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Mr. Robert Bloedel, Chairman; Mr. Tom Fedor; Mr. Phillip Martin, and Mr. Paul Natterer.

**PUBLISHING HOUSE BOARD OF CONTROL:** Pastor David T. Mensing, Chairman; Mr. John P. Mensing, Business Manager; and Mr. Phillip R. Martin, Print Shop Manager.

After the Secretary read the minutes for the day, and after some brief announcements were made, the Saturday sessions adjourned at 3:55 p.m.



At the Sunday Morning Worship Service, the pastor loci, the Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, again served as the liturgist. The sermon on II Corinthians 5:19 was preached by Pastor David T. Mensing of Oak Forest, Illinois. His theme was: ***God's Justification of the World for Christ's Sake and Its Proclamation in the Efficacious Gospel.*** He divided his theme into three parts: **I.** What did God DO? **II.** Why did He do it? and **III.** How does He make it known? Delegates and visitors from the congregations of our fellowship then partook of the Lord's Supper together as guests of St. Luke's Congregation—for the remission of their sins, for the strengthening of their faith and of their walk in sanctification, and in testimony of their blessed unity in the Word of their Savior. Immediately following the service, delegates, visitors, and the local members assembled in the basement of the church for one of the many delicious meals served by the ladies of the congregation over the weekend.

The afternoon session began at 1:45 p.m. with a devotion conducted by Pastor David T. Mensing. Hymn 371, verses 1–6, was sung, followed by the reading of Scripture in Ephesians 2:12–18, and a prayer. The devotion concluded with the seventh stanza of the hymn and the Apostolic Benediction.

The remaining parts of the *Doctrinal Essay* were then presented by the Essayist, Pastor Paul E. Bloedel. In Part IV the essayist pointed out numerous objections that are made to the doctrine of Objective Justification, including the terminology involved, that the Scriptures contain passages that indicate that some people are not forgiven, that the Publican was justified while the Pharisee was not, that perversions of justice are abhorrent to God, etc. However in these cases the opponents demonstrate a misunderstanding of the relationship of “gifts given” and

“gifts received”, and they fail to take into account the proper distinction between and perspectives of Law and Gospel. Brief discussion centered upon the point of forgiveness given vs. forgiveness received in order to illustrate the terminology of “objectively” and “subjectively” forgiven. The essayist briefly provided some examples of the Scriptures speaking differently depending on if the message is the Law or the Gospel. Further examples of objections to Objective Justification were listed and expounded, along with argumentation to refute those objections. Further brief discussion centered upon the uses of Scripture and its treatment, specifically regarding its words and meanings which do not change with the times but rather remain static.

In Part V, the essayist pointed out that Objective Justification must be firmly maintained in order to keep leaven out of the lump of the pure Gospel. Denial of it is, generically, a perversion of the Gospel. The essayist also stated that a denial of Objective Justification makes of faith and its function something that it is not and does not do, namely, that it is meritorious and contributes to propitiating God, thus diminishing the sufficiency of Christ’s atonement.

Discussion concluded with gratitude expressed for the ability to evangelize with this doctrine all whom we come across, with glory to God. The essay was adopted with thanks expressed to the essayist pending final approval after review by the *praesidium*.

The *Final Report of the Finance Committee* was presented after a brief recess. There were no amendments to the committee’s Proposed Budget for the new fiscal year, June 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023, after it had been adjusted earlier in the Convention. The figures remained as follows: Beginning cash balance of \$29,275.96 and anticipated receipts (including the pledges of our congregations) of \$35,189.00 for an expected total cash available of \$64,464.96 in the General Fund. Projected budgetary expenditures totaled \$37,300.00 divided among the following items: *Scriptural Publications* Operations—\$2,000.00; Ekaterinburg Pastoral Salary Subsidy—\$14,000.00; Ekaterinburg Transportation Aid—\$2,800.00; St. Mark’s Salary Subsidy—\$12,000.00; General Travel Expenses—\$3,000.00; Convention Expenses—\$1,000.00; Miscellaneous Expenses—\$2,500.00. In the Student Aid Fund, the estimated income for the new year is \$2,400.00. This final budget was adopted.

Mr. Raymond S. Kusumi delivered the *Report of the Conference Statistician*. This report covered the fiscal year 2021-2022, and was adopted. Mr. Kusumi was also unanimously appointed to the position of Conference Statistician for the coming fiscal year with thanks for his continued faithful service.

The *Resolutions Committee* submitted drafts of the following resolutions to the convention for its consideration, all of which were unanimously and adopted:

- #1: Thanks to Pastor Paul E. Bloedel for his edifying essay;
- #2: Thanks for the sermons by Pastors Bloedel and D. T. Mensing;
- #3: Thanks to those who faithfully served as officers since the previous convention;
- #4: Thanks for the opening devotions conducted by the pastors;
- #5: Thanks to Mr. Jeff Mayrhofer, the organist of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, for the special organ music which beautified the services and devotions held at this convention, as well as to Mr. Jerry Sidwell and to the choir which sang under his direction;
- #6: Thanks to the local pastor and to St. Luke’s congregation for their loving and generous hospitality in hosting the Convention.



The *Committee on Registration and Excuses* submitted their final report. As noted in detail in the Committee’s initial report, four congregations were represented at this convention by three pastoral delegates, seven lay delegates, and three alternate delegates who were actually present. (Two of the alternates listed did not attend.) Total number of votes cast on any measure was 12. Total attendance at the Friday service was 108 and at the Sunday service 164. Approximately 100 souls communed as guests of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church. Total offerings at the Friday service to the benefit of the Conference General Treasury were \$1,589.00. The Sunday collection to benefit the local congregation was \$4,222.81. The report was adopted.



*Peace Ev. Lutheran Church of Oak Forest, Illinois*, through its Pastor, extended to the Conference its tentative invitation to host the 70th Annual Convention in 2023. This convention is scheduled to include a preceding Pastoral Conference on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 20th and 21st. The Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 22nd. The Convention dates are Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 23rd, 24th, and 25th. This kind invitation was accepted with thanks.

After the minutes of the Sunday sessions were read by the newly-elected Secretary, and after several brief announcements, the chairman entertained a motion to adjourn the convention. This motion was made, seconded, and unanimously carried; and adjournment followed at 4:45 p.m. with a closing devotion conducted by President David T. Mensing with the usual closing formula, the singing of Hymn 53, a prayer, and the Apostolic Benediction.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. David J. Mensing, Secretary



# *Sermon for the Sunday Service*

## *Sixty-ninth Annual Convention*

### *of the*

### Concordia Lutheran Conference

Preached by the Rev. David T. Mensing    Oak Forest, Illinois

**Text:** *“To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation.”*

II Corinthians 5:19

In the Name of Jesus Christ, the perfect Redeemer and only Savior of poor, lost and condemned sinners, dearly beloved hearers of His precious Word:

When God created Adam and Eve in the beginning, He specially formed their bodies, gave them each an immortal soul, endowed them with rational minds, with a completely free will to exercise moral responsibility, and especially made them in His own image, that is, perfectly holy and blessed, with a blissful, happy knowledge of God, and completely attuned to His will. *“And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was **very good**”* (Genesis 1:31), that is, according to the Hebrew, *incapable of improvement*. And He set the bar extremely low for their continuance in that estate: *“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”* (2:17). Eating of that forbidden fruit would destroy their blessed relationship.

But Eve, yielding to the lying temptation of the devil, willingly disobeyed God, ate of the fruit, transgressed His simple command, secured Adam’s complicity with her; and they lost their *“first estate.”* They lost their moral perfection and their friendship with God and brought moral perversion and sin’s “wages” upon the whole human race, so that man thereafter was totally corrupt and depraved, without righteousness, without true fear, love and trust in God, inclined only to evil, was spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God, and subject to death. And since the best things that man attempts to do in an effort to please God are *“as filthy rags”* (Isaiah 64:6) in His sight, man is totally incapable of restoring the relationship that once existed between them. *“There is none that doeth good, no, not one”* (Psalm 14:3), so that *“by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight”* (Romans 3:20). THAT’S the BAD news.

The GOOD news is the **Scripture** doctrine of justification **by God, His unilateral *objective* justification** of all mankind **in Christ**, the doctrine to which, by God’s grace, we hold fast as **the essence of the Gospel**, the doctrine that exemplifies the universal grace of God to poor sinners, and the doctrine which we have taken as the theme of our convention this year. This doctrine is hotly debated by *“gainsayers”* who claim that it is the creation of theologians and dogmatists, that it is of recent origin in Christian Dogmatics, and that “O.J.,” as some call it in obvious derision, is nowhere found in Holy Scripture. As our essayist is clearly demonstrating in his presentation, such claims could not be further from the truth; and even in the brief text of God’s Word before us this morning, we see, clearly set forth *“in the words...which the Holy Ghost teacheth”*

**God’s Justification of the World for Christ’s Sake**  
**and Its Proclamation in the Efficacious Gospel.**



## I.

The words “*to wit*” simply mean “namely” or “that is” in further explanation of what was said immediately before in the preceding context. In verse 18 we read: “*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit,*” that is, “namely,” what is written in our text as a further detail of what God **did**.

What exactly did God do? Critics claim that the word “*justified*” is not in the text, “*justified*” meaning “made just or right with God by His **forensic** (or legal) act,” as a judge or a governor, or a president does when he **pardons** a criminal. The criminal DID IT; he committed a criminal act, a *capital* offense; and he had been charged, tried, convicted and sentenced to death as “*the wages of [his] sin*” (Romans 6:23). The pardon does not undo the deed —the murder victim does not suddenly come alive— but the pardon *legally sets aside* the crime and its sentence “*for the record,*” so that the crime does not COUNT against the criminal. What he DID is not “imputed” to him. He has been given **amnesty** for that crime.

But God is both perfectly JUST and perfectly MERCIFUL, two attributes that to US seem **contradictory**. Being perfectly JUST, God must punish the guilty. Being perfectly MERCIFUL, God must *forego* the punishment and extend kindness to the undeserving. As the **bridge** between God’s justice and mercy, CHRIST comes into the picture, making it possible for God to be perfectly just and perfectly merciful at the same time.

## II.

“*In Christ*” **God** reconciled the world of “*the ungodly*” (Romans 4:5) “*unto Himself.*” He re-established the relationship that once existed between sinners, between the “*ungodly,*” and Himself, UNILATERALLY — “*unto Himself*” — by virtue of His **eternal decree of redemption** (I Peter 1:20). In eternity already, having seen man’s sin, though He had not willed it, God purposed to

save lost and fallen mankind by the death of His Son. He “*so loved the world*” (John 3:16), “*in Christ*” (text), “*that He gave His only-begotten Son*” (John 3:16) to be the all-sufficient sacrifice to appease His justice in the place of sinners. He therefore “*imputed*” or charged the sins of “*the world*” to His innocent Son, and “*made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us,*” (II Corinthians 5:21), in our place, as our Substitute, “*that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*”— because of His vicarious atonement. Thus Jesus, the Father’s sacrificial Lamb, “*took away*” the sins of **the world** (John 1:29) by offering up Himself, assuming in His human soul and body the guilt of our sins and suffering the penalty of our transgressions. “*He was wounded for OUR transgressions; He was bruised for OUR iniquities*” (Isaiah 53). God required of Christ **perfect obedience** to the demands of His Law in our place [*active obedience*] **and** perfect satisfaction for OUR transgressions [*passive obedience*] as “*the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD*” (I John 2:2).

Moreover, God did not have to *wait*, as it were, for Christ to die on the cross before His could recognize His propitiatory sacrifice as sufficient for the reconciliation of the world; for **in God**, as far as **God** was concerned, that payment had been made **in eternity already** by “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Revelation 13:8). That payment had propitiated God’s justice and had caused His kingdom to be prepared for “*the righteous*” “*from the foundation of the world*” (Matthew 25:34), “*given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*” (II Timothy 1:9).

A “**propitiation**” is a payment or satisfaction of sufficient value, not only to *retire a debt*, but to change the way a creditor regards his former debtors, as if they had never owed Him in the first place. Thus, in view of Jesus *propitiatory* sacrifice, God put the sins of the world behind His back and remembers them no more (Isaiah 38:17; Hebrews 8:12), as if they had never been committed. That’s what it took to “*reconcile the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.*” If He no longer “*imputed their trespasses unto them,*” that means that He FORGAVE them or JUSTIFIED them forensically **AND** that, having imputed no sins to them, in effect declared them **righteous** in His sight and restored them to the original relationship that they enjoyed with Him in the

beginning. This “*reconciliation*” He effected for “*the world*,” our text tells us, not just for believers. That makes His **justification** of sinners in eternity “**objective**,” as His free gift to **all the world**. “Peace on earth and mercy mild; God and sinners reconciled,” we sing in the Christmas carol, as a paraphrase of the angels’ song of rejoicing at the birth of God’s *Propitiation*: “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!*” (Luke 2:14).

### III.

Now our text tells us that God “*hath committed unto us the **Word of Reconciliation**,*” the “*good tidings of great joy which shall be to **all people***” (Luke 2:10 ). The good news of the Gospel of reconciliation God has committed “*unto us*” to preach in all the world because “[God] will have **all men** to be **saved** and to come unto the knowledge of **the truth**,” the Bible tells us (I Timothy 2:4). The knowledge of WHAT truth?? What **saving truth**?? — The knowledge of the **Scripture** truth that “*God was in Christ reconciling **the world** unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.*” The knowledge of this precious truth makes us “*wise unto salvation through faith which is in **Christ Jesus***” (II Timothy 3:15), faith in God’s **Propitiation** of His justice which effected His love and mercy to “*the world*” of poor, lost and helpless sinners.

But this “*Word of Reconciliation*” is not merely “**information**” about what God has done for the world’s salvation, so that the world has been made “aware” of it. The “*Word of Reconciliation*” is also the efficacious “*power of God unto salvation*” whereby the Holy Ghost works in the hearts of men the very faith whereby those reconciled souls **accept**, lay **hold** on, **receive** and **have** the blessings of redemption **given** to “*the world*” as God’s free and unencumbered gift of reconciliation! There is no need of being terrified of God’s justice, of being despairing as an enemy of God, of being hopeless of salvation, of facing God’s wrath and punishment in hell. **God’s done it all** — unilaterally, “*in Christ*,” because of Christ’s *vicarious atonement* which propitiated His justice and made way for His grace— God **reconciled** “*the world*” of *strangers, foreigners, and enemies* (cf. Ephesians 2:19 and Romans 5:10) unto **Himself**, “*not imputing their trespasses unto them*,” restoring to them the relationship of righteousness from which they had fallen. “*Repent ye, and believe the Gospel!*” preached the Lord Jesus (Mark 1:15). *Believe* the amnesty of **objective justification** which He purchased and won for you and all mankind!

And *believe* that the same **reconciliation** which God wrought in eternity for all the world continues in its blessed effect **still today** as “we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment” (Luther, 5<sup>th</sup> Petition); for “*the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations*” declares the Psalmist (Psalm 100:5). Thank God, beloved hearers, that the same “*God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness [on the first day of creation] hath shined in our hearts*” by means of His precious Gospel, “*to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (II Corinthians 4:6), so that now we trust and believe, rejoice and take comfort in Him “*who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world*” (I Peter 1:20) to be “*the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the **whole world***” (I John 2:2) and **in whom** “*God reconcil[ed] **the world** unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the [blessed] Word of Reconciliation!*”

Let us by God’s grace ever hold fast to the precious **Scripture doctrine** of God’s **objective justification** of the world by grace for Christ’s sake unto life everlasting!

Amen.

# 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](http://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](mailto:pastormensing@yahoo.com)

On the Web at

*[PeaceEvLutheran.com](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:revbloedel@gmail.com)

On the Web at

*[StLukes-CLC.com](http://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](mailto:d_rnensing@hotmail.com)

On the Web at

*[StMarksEvLutheran.com](http://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](mailto:robertjlietz@gmail.com)

On the Web at

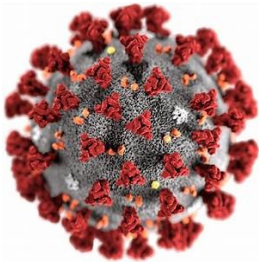
*[TrinityEvLutheran.com](http://TrinityEvLutheran.com)*

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 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.



*In brief. . .*

## **OBJECTIVE (or GENERAL) JUSTIFICATION**

In view of Christ's perfect, all-sufficient *vicarious atonement* (Isaiah 53; II Corinthians 5:21) for the sins of **ALL** (John 1:29; II Corinthians 5:15; II Peter 2:1), the sacrifice rendered to God already *in eternity* (Revelation 13:8; II Timothy 1:9b) and completed *in time* (John 17:4; 19:30), the ransom-price which satisfied divine justice with respect to "*the whole world*" (I John 2:2), **God completely and fully forgave the sins of all mankind**, no longer charging ("*imputing*") them to the "*guilty*" (Romans 3:19) but *justifying* the "*ungodly*" (Romans 4:5) and declaring them reconciled to Him and righteous in His sight (II Corinthians 5:19).

[This was a *forensic act* —a *legal act*— on God's part, much like when a president or governor pardons a criminal who committed a *capital offense* (worthy of *death*), was duly *charged* and *indicted* under the law, was *tried* and *found guilty*, and was *sentenced to death*.]

