

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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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.

Why Was It Necessary for Our Savior to Be True GOD?

*“Without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness:
God was manifest in the flesh.” — I Timothy 3:16*

It is indeed a great *mystery* — a fact that defies human reason and exceeds the ability of human understanding to comprehend it — that the eternal “*Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16), without beginning and without end, could have (and would have deigned to have) been “*manifest in the flesh*,” to have *taken upon Him the form of a servant* and to have been *made in the likeness of men* (Philippians 2:7). Nevertheless, on the basis of clear and unmistakable Scripture, we recognize and profess the sacred truth that, for our redemption and salvation, **the eternal Son of God**, the “*only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*” (John 1:14b), “*the Word*,” as John calls Him by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, “*became flesh and dwelt among us*” (v. 14a). It is the holy incarnation of the **Son of God** that we celebrate on Christmas Day, a “*mystery*” that is indeed “*great*” and yet “*without controversy*,” a fact not to be disputed, denied or even argued about. Sadly, however, as we pointed out in our article in the previous issue, all too many who celebrate Christmas either miss the “*mystery*” altogether or outright deny it and regard Christmas merely as the commemoration of the birth of “the baby Jesus” who would grow up to be a great teacher, a spiritually-gifted healer, a social activist reaching out to the poor and disadvantaged, a preacher of love among human beings struggling to achieve peace in their lives, a philosopher whose ideas were far ahead of His time, and “providentially” a martyr to His own cause when political opponents mistakenly resented His influence among the people, rejected His testimony that He was the long-promised *Messiah*, and “*killed the Prince of Life*” (Acts 3:15). Thus we recognize the great tragedy, even among nominal “Christians” who are acquainted with the Scriptures, that many have bought into the so-called “social gospel” of modernism and deny that “*the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger*” (Luke 2:12) was truly “*the Son of God*” (Luke 1:35), “*God manifest in the flesh*” (I Timothy 3:16), “*very God of very God ...being of one substance with the Father*” (Nicene Creed), and regard Him merely as a fellow human being.

But the question “Why did our Savior **have to be True GOD?**” and the reasons why this is a primary fundamental doctrine of our faith is absolutely **critical** to our *redemption* and *justification*, and is therefore a fitting focus of our meditation in this holy season of Lent.

The question is asked certainly by those who find themselves in “*controversy*” regarding “*the mystery of Godliness*” and muse about whether the incarnation of God was even possible in the first place, but then also by those who speculate as to whether God could have reconciled sinful man to Himself without a Savior who was “*Christ, the Lord*” (Luke 2:11). Let us first of all, to set aside any “*controversy*,” settle on the fact clearly set forth in Scripture that, “*when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman*” (Galatians 4:4). The “*mystery of Godliness*” became a **fact of record** when “*God was manifest in the flesh*.”

In the **Old Testament** Scriptures, the promised Savior and anointed Redeemer or *Messiah*, the “*Seed*” of the woman (Genesis 3:15), Abraham’s “*Seed*” (Genesis 22:18; cf. Galatians 3:16), “*Shiloh*” (Genesis 49:10), “*the Prince of Peace*” (Isaiah 9:6), was consistently identified as **True God**, “*the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior*” (Isaiah 43:3), “*the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father*” (Isaiah 9:6), “*my Lord*” (Psalm 110:1; cf. Matthew 22:43-45), David’s “*righteous Branch*” and “*a King*” whose name should be called, “*The Lord, our Righteousness*” (Jeremiah 23:5-6), etc. Those were “*the Holy Scriptures*” specifically identified by St. Paul as having been known by Timothy since childhood, as having been “*given by inspiration of God*” (II Timothy 3:15-16), and as being “*able to make [Timothy] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*,” **Jesus the Messiah**. “*To Him [“Jesus Christ...Lord of all” (Acts 10:36)] give all the [Old Testament] prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins*” (v. 43).

And the **New Testament** Scriptures throughout continue to identify God's *Anointed One*, the Redeemer, "*the Christ*" [Hebrew: "*Messiah*"] as **True God**, "*The [Eternal] Word*" and the **Creator** of "*all things*" (John 1:1-5), the "*only begotten of the Father*" (v. 14); and the same Scriptures positively identify Jesus of Nazareth, born of the Virgin Mary, as "*the Son of God*" (Luke 1:35); they confirm it time after time in His teaching and in His miracles, at His baptism and transfiguration in the voice of God the Father from heaven, in the confession of His disciples, in His own unequivocal testimony (in passages too numerous to cite here), and in His sworn testimony in court which was used by His enemies as "evidence" of His "*blasphemy*" (Matthew 26:63-66; Mark 14:61-64; Luke 22:70-71; John 10:33-39; 19:7). Those who dare to claim that "Jesus never said that He was the Son of God" are manifestly (and willingly) ignorant of the Scriptures! We can rightly ask them (as Jesus asked the Pharisees in Matthew 19:3), "*Have ye not read??*"

The Scriptural evidence, both in the Old and New Testaments, is overwhelming that Jesus of Nazareth IS in fact "**true God** begotten of the Father from eternity and also **true man** born of the Virgin Mary," our Lord and our Redeemer (Luther, *Second Article*, "What does this mean?"). The evidence is incontrovertible that establishes, supports and sustains as **true** "*the mystery of Godliness*," namely, that "**God was manifest in the flesh**" (I Timothy 3:16), the mystery that is necessary to be believed for our salvation.

Having then conclusively demonstrated who our Savior **was** from all eternity and indeed still **IS** to all eternity, we now ask, as we asked in our previous article (January-February 2023) concerning the Savior's true humanity, **WHY** was it *necessary* that He be also **true God**??

We reiterate in consideration of that question that, according to His eternal, holy, perfect, impartial and uncompromising **JUSTICE**, God demands **perfection** of every human being (Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7; Matthew 5:48; etc.), including **perfect obedience** to His **holy Law** (Luke 10:28; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12), a demand which He is perfectly entitled to make of those whom He created "*in righteousness and true holiness*" after His own image (Genesis 1:26-27, 31; Ephesians 4:24; etc.). Indeed, God's **perfect JUSTICE** demands **perfect RIGHTEOUSNESS** on the part of every soul of man for entrance into His heavenly kingdom (Psalm 1:5-6; Matthew 13:43; 25:46b; Luke 10:28; etc.).

Tragically, through the fall of man into sin (Genesis 3:1 ff.) and Adam's disobedience (Romans 5:19a), "*[the (Greek)] many were made sinners.*" "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). "*There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God; there are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one*" (vv. 10-12). "*There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not*" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). "*Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin*" (Romans 3:20). No human being is **capable** of the righteousness demanded by God for reconciliation, for forgiveness, for justification, for eternal salvation. Therefore the Psalmist writes by inspiration of God: "*None of them* [sinful human beings] *can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious*" (Psalm 49:7-8a).

In order to avert the **dire consequence** of sin upon all mankind, namely, that since "*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23), since "*there is none righteous, no, not one*" (Romans 3:10; cf. Ecclesiastes 7:20), and since "*no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God*" (Galatians 3:11) and therefore **no man** is worthy of eternal life, — the dire consequence that all men be **DAMNED** as "*the wages of [their] sin*" (Romans 6:23a) — God devised a way in which He could **justly, rightly, and legitimately IMPUTE** righteousness to the unrighteous (Romans 4:5) that they might be saved. In order to reconcile the entire world of the ungodly unto Himself (II Corinthians 5:19) without partiality (Acts 10:34), He had to insist that the demands of His divine justice were satisfied without reducing its legislative requirements; and He had to demonstrate the extent of His divine mercy without requiring works as a partial payment for the exercise of His favor.

Thus it was *necessary* that God "anoint" as His *Messiah*, as His *Christ*, as the Redeemer of mankind (I Peter 1:20), "**His Son**" (Galatians 4:4a), "*the Lord our Righteousness*" (Jeremiah 23:6b), to **take our place** under the Law and to **do for us**, in **our stead**, what we, as totally depraved sinners, are *incapable* of doing, namely, to "**keep the whole**

Law and **[NOT]** offend in one point” (James 2:10), “so [that] **by the obedience of One** [namely, “the Holy One of Israel,” (Isaiah 43:3)] shall **[the] many** [the ‘all [who] have sinned and come short of the glory of God’] **be MADE righteous**” (Romans 5:19). “The redemption of their soul is **precious**” (Psalm 49:8a), and only **the Son of God** Himself was capable of **perfect compliance** with the Law and capable of offering to His heavenly Father His **active obedience** so that **His righteousness** could be imputed to sinful mankind as God’s free gift to cover all their iniquities and transgressions (Psalm 32:1-2; 85:2-3; Romans 4:6-8) and to remove those sins from His holy sight and even from His *remembrance* (Isaiah 38:17; Hebrews 8:12).

Moreover, **God’s perfect JUSTICE** also demands **full retribution** and **unremitting punishment** for sin upon every soul of man and for any and every transgression of the Law in thoughts, desires, words and deeds (Ezekiel 18:4b), as well as for the guilt incurred because of Adam’s transgression, including man’s inability because of “original sin” to be perfect and holy (Romans 5:18, 19a). It was therefore **necessary** that our Savior be **true God**, so that His **passive obedience** as He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows (Isaiah 53:4), His **suffering and death** in which He endured “the wages of sin,” the agony of the damned (Matthew 27:46), as our *Substitute*, would be **sufficient punishment** according to God’s justice to pay the penalty of **our** guilt and the guilt of **all mankind**. Thus it **had to be** that “**Christ also hath once suffered** for sins, **the Just** for the unjust, **that He might bring us to God**” (I Peter 3:18). Thus it **had to be** that Christ as “**true God** begotten of the Father from eternity” (Luther), the “*Lamb without blemish and without spot*” (I Peter 1:19), “*slain from the foundation of the world*” (Revelation 13:8b) according to the eternal decree of redemption, became “the **Propitiation** for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:2). **What a price** was **necessary** for our redemption, justification and salvation — the fact that **GOD** **had to die**, in the person of Jesus Christ!!

Finally, it was **necessary** that our Savior be **true God** so that He could **destroy death and the devil** for us. The writer to the Hebrews tells us by inspiration of the Holy Ghost that we human beings, since the fall of Adam and Eve, have, by virtue of sin and the fear of sin’s “wages” (Romans 6:23), been “*subject to bondage*,” bondage to “*him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (Hebrews 2:14-15). It was **hell**, the place of “*everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matthew 25:41), that had been the abode of Satan since he and his evil angels rebelled against God shortly after their creation. Hell is quite literally a “prison house” of confinement in “*chains of darkness*” (II Peter 2:4), “*everlasting chains under darkness*” (Jude 6), a place of permanent abandonment by God in which all unbelievers share the fate of their father, the devil, upon temporal death (Luke 16:22b-23) and continuing into eternity after the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:41 and 46). **Eternal death** in hell is “the wages of sin” (Romans 6:23), what each and every sinner has earned and well deserves because of his transgression of God’s Law; and to that punishment he is in “*bondage*” by nature according to God’s justice (Galatians 3:10).

Redemption from “the curse of the Law” (Galatians 3:13), redemption from the curse of *eternal* death, is not possible for **man** to achieve, as the Psalmist declared by inspiration of God, “None of **them** [human beings] *can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious*” (Psalm 49:7-8a). Therefore our Redeemer **had to be true God** in order to purchase our release from the “*bondage*” to which God justly curses all sinful mankind, from the “*bondage*” that Christ, as **true man**, took upon Himself as our Substitute when He was “*made under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4; cf. Isaiah 53:8; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:24; Galatians 3:13), and from which He, as **true God**, “*redeemed*” us (I Peter 1:18) with the price that His Father’s justice demanded, the price that no mere man could render, the price not valued in terms of cold, hard cash, the price not payable “*with corruptible things as silver and gold*” (v. 18a), “*but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot*” (v. 19). Thus the **God-Man**, Jesus Christ, the only truly-precious One, by **His** innocent **suffering** and **death**, won “the victory” over sin, “the sting of death,” as Paul calls it in I Corinthians 15:56a, and from the curse of the Law in its wages, which he calls “the strength of sin” (v. 56b), so that the “*bondage*” to which we and all human beings were subject by nature is now **broken**. We have been “*delivered*” by Him from the “*fear of death*” and the threat of the prison house of hell, and Satan is now defeated and has no power rightfully to accuse us before God (Romans 8:33-34). As prophesied of old (Genesis 3:15), Christ, *the woman’s Seed*, “**God...manifest in the flesh**” (I Timothy 3:16), “*accomplished*” [τετέλεσται – John 19:30 (cf. John 17:4)] the bruising of Satan’s head (which man could never do), as the propitiation of God’s justice for man’s reconciliation (I John 2:2; Romans 5:10; II Corinthians 5:19; etc.), the very *purpose* for which Christ was “*manifested*” or made known in the fulness of time: “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of*

the devil” (I John 3:8), “*that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16b), no longer living in “*fear of death*,” no longer “*all [his] lifetime subject to bondage*” (Hebrews 2:15). Instead he will have for His very own, by faith in God’s mercy for Christ’s sake, “*peace with God*” (Romans 5:1), the “*righteousness*” that Christ earned for every soul of man (Romans 5:18) imputed to him by faith (Romans 3:22; 4:3; Isaiah 61:10; etc.), and all the blessings of redemption purchased and won **for all** by His innocent suffering and death (John 1:29; II Corinthians 5:15a; I John 2:2) and received by faith in His merits alone (Acts 10:43; 26:18; Galatians 3:14; James 1:12; etc.): **Forgiveness of sins, life and salvation!**

Since Christ hath full atonement made
and brought to us salvation,
each Christian therefore should be glad
and rest on this foundation:
“Thy grace alone, dear Lord, I plead;
Thy death is now my life indeed,
for Thou hast paid my ransom.”

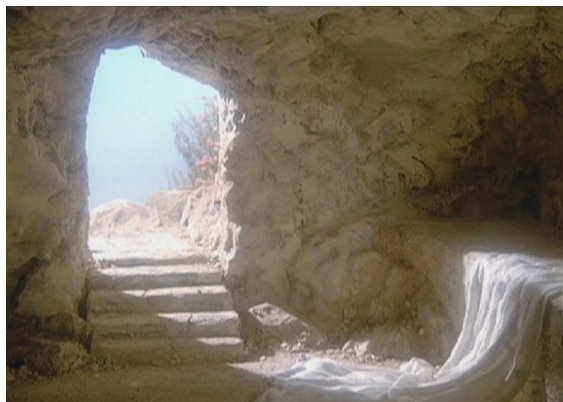
(TLH 377, 6)

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!!” (I Corinthians 15:55-57). That victory was **won** by “*His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord*,” who was “*declared to be **the Son of God** with power...by the resurrection from the dead*” (Romans 1:3-4). That “*victory*” was **manifested** when “*our Lord Jesus Christ*,” quickened from the dead on Easter morning according to His Word (John 2:19 and 22; Matthew 17:9b, 20:19; Mark 8:31, 9:9 and 31, 10:34; Luke 18:33; 24:7, 46), descended into hell, not to suffer but to declare His victory over His enemies! That “*victory*” was **demonstrated** “*by many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3) when He visibly rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples as *chosen witnesses* (Acts 10:40-41) to the fact that God “*for our justification*” (Romans 4:25) had accepted the sacrifice of His Son for the reconciliation of the world (II Corinthians 5:19; I John 2:2; cf. *Catechism Q/A 152C*). That “*victory*” is **assured** personally to all believers by Him “*who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body*” (Philippians 3:21), like unto Him who is “*the Firstfruits [the Prototype] of them that slept*” (I Corinthians 15:20), those who died confiding only in the merits of Christ as the payment for their sins. It is *because* Jesus Christ is truly **the Son of God**, who won for us the victory over sin, death and the devil, that all true believers shall on the Last Day rise with glorified bodies to everlasting life in heaven!

Jesus lives! The victory’s won!
Death no longer can appal me.
Jesus lives! Death’s reign is done!
From the grave Christ will recall me.
God is faithful! Doubting hence!
This shall be my confidence!

(TLH 201, 1 and 2, adapted)

— D. T. M.



Remembering the Lord's Death in His Holy Supper

*“As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup,
ye do show the Lord's death till He come.”*

— I Corinthians 11:26

Maundy Thursday evening is, historically speaking, the very night on which the Lord Jesus instituted His Holy Supper, “*the same night in which He was betrayed,*” the Bible tells us (I Corinthians 11:23). He and His twelve disciples had gathered together in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover for the last time. We say for the last time because, as we know, that Passover, with its sacrifice of an unblemished male lamb, was a **type** or **picture** of the **REAL PASSOVER LAMB, Jesus Himself**, whose one sacrifice on the tree of the cross would forever deliver men from bondage to sin and from fear of everlasting death. Now that the **real “Lamb of God”** was ready to be offered, the Old Testament ritual was no longer needed; and God's mighty deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt was to pale into insignificance when compared to the deliverance that Christ was about to accomplish for all mankind!

But, just as the Passover *seder* had been intended not only as a **type** or foreshadowing of what was prophesied to come but also as a feast of remembrance of what great things God had already done for His people of old, just so is Christ's Holy Supper of the **New Testament** to be a feast of remembrance for US; for He told His disciples in the plainest of terms: “*This do in remembrance of Me*” (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:24). While this is by no means the **ONLY** purpose of the blessed Sacrament, as the Reformed teach that it is, nevertheless it is **ONE** of the reasons for which our Savior instituted this holy feast, as His words clearly indicate. It is therefore meet and right that, during this holy Lenten season, and very particularly on *Maundy Thursday* evening, the very night in which our Lord Jesus began His Great Passion and was “*brought as a lamb to the slaughter*” (Isaiah 53:7) to buy us back from bondage to sin, death, and the devil, we pause to reflect upon His immense sacrifice and to **remember** His death *in His Holy Supper*.



In I Corinthians 11:26-28, of which the first words serve as the title-text of this article, the Apostle Paul lays out for us a **threefold “remembrance”** of our Savior in His Supper: We are, first of all, remembering to **DECLARE His death** for poor sinners as the very heart of His saving Gospel; secondly, we are remembering to **VALUE His death** as the ransom-price of our redemption; and thirdly, we are remembering to **PARTAKE of His death** and its precious benefits by faith in His gracious promise.

After quoting the Savior's own words of institution in verses 23–25, St. Paul says: “*For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do **show** the Lord's death till He come.*” The word “*show*” is really better translated “*declare*” or “*proclaim*.” Whenever we Christians partake of the blessed Sacrament of our Savior's body and blood — “*given and shed for [us] for the remission of sins,*” as Jesus Himself assures us and as we confess in our Catechism— we **proclaim**, as a bold testimony to all the world, the **death** of our Savior.

Now what exactly does that mean? Is our partaking of this Holy Sacrament merely a declaration of the FACT of Jesus' death?? No indeed; for the objective fact of His death is disputed by no one —not even by unbelievers, not

even by the so-called “modernists” who deny, together with the Jews, that Jesus of Nazareth is the very Son of God! No, the mere **death** of Jesus needs no confirmation or declaration; but what His death **MEANS**, and what it **ACCOMPLISHED** for poor sinful human beings, **THAT** *needs to be and is declared* every time we partake of this Holy Supper. It is the **GOSPEL declaration** of the **CROSS OF CHRIST** and of His **VICARIOUS ATONEMENT**, “*unto the Jews a stumblingblock and unto the Greeks foolishness*” (I Corinthians 1:23), but nevertheless “*the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*” (Romans 1:16).

And when we Christians partake of this Holy Sacrament **together**, we don’t only declare the precious value of Jesus’ death in an **objective** way, but we show plainly by “*eat[ing] this bread and drink[ing] this cup*” that **we ourselves BELIEVE** the Gospel of Christ crucified and **TRUST** in it with all our heart; that we by God’s grace, by the effectual working of His Holy Spirit through that Gospel, “**GLORY in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;**” and that we **RELY** solely upon His merits for salvation. What a blessed **privilege** is ours to make this declaration, this proclamation of the Lord’s death in His Holy Supper, “*till He come*”!

“*Wherefore,*” the Apostle continues in verse 27, “*whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*” Partaking of this Holy Sacrament is not an act of “*remembrance*” only of the intellect. It is not merely a *symbolic* remembrance, as the Reformed churches teach, in which the bread and wine are only pictures of the body and blood of the Savior. For Paul tells us that whoever partakes of those visible elements “*unworthily*”— that is, without being **truly sorry** for his sins, without **truly confiding** in Jesus as his Savior, without **really believing** Jesus’ words about the nature, power and benefit of this holy Sacrament, and without **sincerely intending** to amend his sinful life — such a person is “*guilty*” not merely of bread and wine but “*of the body and blood of the Lord.*” The Lord Jesus did NOT say of those earthly elements: “*This represents My body; this merely represents My blood;*” but He said in unmistakable language: “*This IS My body; this IS My blood.*” Thus we Lutheran Christians believe according to clear Scripture in the **Real Presence** of our Savior’s **TRUE** body and blood in the Sacrament, namely, that **in, with, and under** the bread and wine (which also are present in the Sacrament, as Paul indicates in verse 27), we receive the **TRUE BODY** and the **TRUE BLOOD** of our Savior in a **REAL** but **MIRACULOUS** way — *because He said so*.

Thus, when we partake of the Holy Supper, the Sacrament of our Savior’s **TRUE BODY** and **TRUE BLOOD**, we are remembering His death in a special way: **By valuing it as the price of our redemption**. “*Forasmuch as ye know,*” writes Peter in his first Epistle, “*that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot*” (1:18-19). When, therefore, we receive this Sacrament as **worthy** (penitent and believing) communicants, we do it “*in remembrance of [our Savior],*” receiving the **SEAL** of forgiveness, life, and salvation in His very own body and blood, “*given and shed for [us] for the remission of sins,*” the ransom-price far beyond any human valuation!

But merely valuing this Sacrament highly and thereby remembering to value also the sacrifice on which it is based, is **not enough**. For, as St. Paul also shows us in the third place, remembering the Lord’s death in His Holy Supper also means **remembering to partake of it often with proper preparation**. He writes in verse 28: “*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.*” Self-examination requires that we take a hard, close look into the mirror of God’s holy Law to see there our sins in all their ugliness and filthiness before God; that we sincerely repent of them with true Godly sorrow at having offended our Lord Jesus (and one another, where such is the case); that we trust with confident faith in Jesus’ merits alone for forgiveness and salvation (and trust as well His words concerning this blessed Sacrament); and that we have the sincere and earnest **desire and intention**, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit, to amend our sinful lives, living ever better unto Him who died for us and rose again (Cf. *Exposition of the Small Catechism*, 1943, Q/A 324). “**SO** let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup,” Paul tells us; for then we truly receive the *benefits* of the Holy Supper: **Forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation**. Then and only then do we **PARTAKE OF** Christ’s death, as the best and everlasting way of remembering it— remembering it with profit for our *souls*, so that we receive from it the strength to lead a holier life *in proof of our faith* and *to the glory and praise of Him* whose holy, precious blood “*cleanseth us from all sin*” (I John 1:7b).

“**This do in remembrance of Me,**” the Savior exhorts us. Let us then come to His Holy Table, not only on Maundy Thursday evening but “*as often as [we] eat this bread and drink this cup,*” **remembering**, as we partake of the

Sacrament, to **DECLARE** His death to all the world and to CONFESS our *faith* in His wounds as the price of our own redemption — **remembering** to **VALUE** the sacrifice of our Savior's body and blood on the tree of the cross as the *payment-in-full* for all our transgressions, and the gift of His true body and blood in this Sacrament as the *seal* of our redemption — and remembering to **PARTAKE** of His death by receiving His body and blood as truly worthy and well-prepared communicants. For then we receive the Sacrament, this precious Means of Grace, "*for the remission of sins,*" first of all, but then also for the strength, not only to remain steadfast in Christ's Word and faith unto our end, not only to amend our sinful lives in grateful evidence of our faith, but also to overcome the temptations of the devil, the world, and our flesh and cheerfully to face whatever trials lie ahead for us in this present life, knowing that they are the evidence of God's love to us, His dear children (Hebrews 12:6), and trusting that He will turn them all into good for us according to His promise (Romans 8:28).

*Approach we then, with faithful hearts sincere,
to take the pledges of salvation here.
O Lamb of God, our only Savior Thou,
in this, Thy Feast of Love, be with us now! Amen.*

— D. T. M.

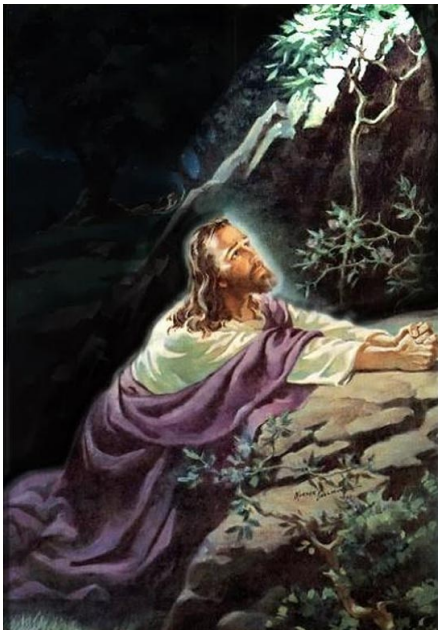


“THE LAMB OF GOD” WILLINGLY BORE OUR GUILT

*“Father, if Thou be willing, **remove** this cup from Me; nevertheless, not **My** will but **Thine** be done.” —Luke 22:42*

On Ash Wednesday, we began a period of six weeks on our Christian church calendar, the holy Lenten season, during which we give focused and in-depth attention to the suffering and death of Jesus, our Savior. And particularly in those congregations which hold special midweek Lenten services, our people are afforded a special, cherished opportunity, not only to hear once again with their **ears** the *Passion History* of our Lord and Savior, but to fix their **hearts** upon its message, to ponder it devoutly in their **minds**, and to learn to appreciate ever more fully just what Jesus’ great passion really means to them as individuals, deep down in the innermost recesses of their **souls**. Where special services are not customary, the same message and focus is delivered by Christian pastors in their regular Sunday sermons.

On Maundy Thursday evening, Jesus and His disciples had shortly before left the upper room where the dear Savior had instituted the Holy Supper of His body and blood, and they had just entered that garden “of the olive press” outside of Jerusalem at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where they often took refuge for some quiet time together (John 18:2). Here Jesus was to begin His **great suffering** [*passio magna*] for the sins of the world; and here we see the very **Son of God Himself**, true God from all eternity, who had been sent by His Father down to this world of sin to redeem lost and fallen mankind (John 3:16; Galatians 4:4-5), yes, here we see in Luke’s Gospel account of His prayer in the garden the Lord of heaven and earth, **on His knees** in the **depths of humiliation**, in prayer to His heavenly Father.



Considering first of all who this Savior **IS**, what is the **reason** for this striking pose? In order to accomplish His vital task, the task He was anointed to fulfill, Jesus was “conceived by the Holy Ghost” and was “born of the Virgin Mary.” He took upon Himself human flesh and blood, so that, from the time of His incarnation, He was (and still **IS**) **both God and man**, of divine and human natures, in one inseparable and indivisible person. And yet, just having a human body and soul was **not enough**; for Paul writes to the Philippians (2:8) that He also “**humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**”

When our dear Lord Jesus “*humbled Himself*” to be our Savior, He did not always and fully use the divine attributes (the qualities and powers) which as true God He possessed in all their fulness, also according to His human nature. In other words, Jesus **did NOTHING** to get Himself out of suffering and dying for the sins of the world, even though He could have! Instead, with the full knowledge of what lay ahead for Him, He humbly prayed: “*Father, if Thou be willing, **remove** this cup from Me; nevertheless, not **My** will but **Thine** be done.*” It wasn’t that Jesus’ will was different from that of His Father; for that would have indicated a contradiction in God. No, it was just that, in His *State of Humiliation*, Jesus dreaded in His true human

body and soul the thought of suffering and dying, just like any man, just like US. And yet, He **conformed** His human will to that of His Father in *humble obedience* (Philippians 2:8) to the divine decree, God’s plan of salvation, the decree in which He Himself had, of course, participated in eternity; and He prayed “***Thy will be done,***” thus demonstrating His **humiliation**, first of all, and also leaving us His **perfect example** of how we should pray.

“*And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him.*” Immediately His heavenly Father **answered** His prayer—not by **relieving** Him of the suffering that He was even now enduring, but by **strengthening** Him to **bear it**, as bear it He must to atone for the sins of the world. But notice that Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of all lords, was not using His **own** almighty power for the battle ahead, but He humbly permitted one of His own creatures, a holy angel, created by Him in the beginning (Colossians 1:16) to strengthen Him!

*“And being in an agony, He prayed **more earnestly**.”* What a powerful example for us, that when “the going gets rough” in our lives, and we haven’t received the answer to our prayer that we think we should receive, we don’t just **give up** on prayer to our heavenly Father, but pray even “**more earnestly**,” as did our Lord Jesus, adding in all humility, in confidence of His best way, “**Not MY will but THINE be done.**”

But as we “*behold the Lamb of God,*” we want to examine not only the nature of Jesus’ humiliation and why He was willing to suffer according to the will of His heavenly Father, but also the nature of the **agony itself**, which was becoming increasingly intense with every passing moment. “*His sweat was, as it were, great **drops of blood** falling down to the ground,*” Luke tells us. Talk about **intensity of suffering**! And this was only the beginning!! —What was making that agony so intense for Jesus? The real answer to that question lies in the **nature** of the agony: You see, Jesus was experiencing the **torture** of a **guilty conscience**, a sin-laden soul, laden not with His own sins, but with the sin, guilt, and shame of every person who ever lived in this world and who ever will yet live on the face of the earth! The Bible tells us that “[*God the Father*] made Him who **knew no sin**,” Jesus, His **HOLY**, only-begotten Son, “**to be SIN for US**, that we might be made the **righteousness of God in Him**” (II Corinthians 5:21).

Our conscience is **used to** dealing with guilt; for guilt is with us every day and compounds itself with every moment we live and breathe; “for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment” (Luther: 5th Petition). God’s holy Law **accuses** us, His justice **convicts** us, and we stand **guilty** in His sight. Without forgiveness, we would all surely reap “*the **wages of sin**,*” **everlasting punishment, eternal death** in the damnation of hell! And so, in order to find relief from our guilty conscience, we have to lay all **our** sins in true repentance on **Jesus**, for whose sake God in heaven has already forgiven them! But **Jesus’** conscience, which had been completely clear and innocent, now suddenly found itself burdened with the sins of the **world**! Now, for the first time, Jesus was feeling the **anguish of sin’s guilt**, multiplied by all the souls, all the consciences, of sinful men —multiplied by **YOUR sins** and **MINE**!

“*Surely **He** hath borne **OUR** griefs and carried **OUR** sorrows,*” Isaiah prophesies of Jesus, the “*Lamb of God,*” in his 53rd chapter. “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way,*” the way of sin, depravity, and guilt before God; “*and the Lord hath laid upon **HIM** the iniquity of **US ALL**!*” Is it any wonder, then, that the Savior broke out into a **sweat**, the sweat of a **guilty conscience**, —an intense **sweat of agony and anguish** so **overwhelmingly great** that it was “*as it were **great drops of blood** falling down to the ground?!*”

“*Behold the Lamb of God,*” the **sacrificial Lamb** upon whom the sins of the world were laid! See Him there in Gethsemane’s Garden, kneeling in humble prayer to His heavenly Father, begging relief from His suffering, drenched with bloody sweat, and heart pounding in bitter pangs of guilty anguish! And let us remember, dear fellow-sinners, **WHY He is there!** Remember **for WHOM He is there!** Remember **WHOSE GUILT He is bearing** and **WHOSE PANGS OF CONSCIENCE He is enduring!** And then let us come to Him **with contrite hearts**, freely confessing our many sins and our utter unworthiness of His mercy and grace; and fall down humbly and gratefully **to OUR knees of faith** beside Him there in the garden, and pray with the hymnwriter this holy Lenten season:

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

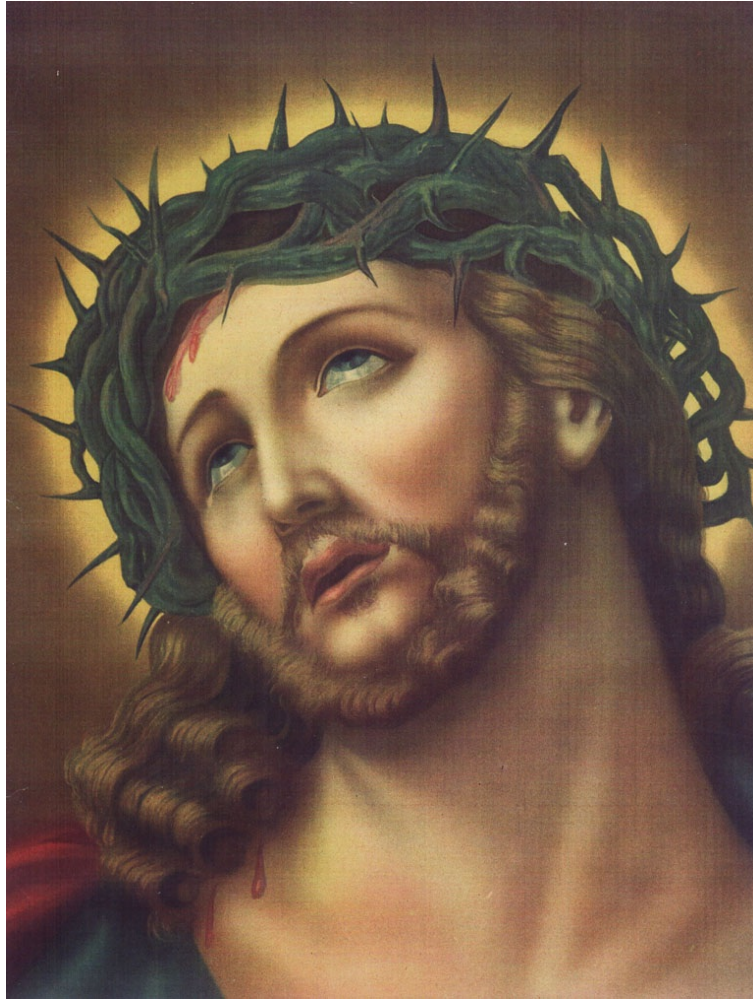
*There was no spot in me by sin **untainted**;
Sick with sin’s poison, all my heart had fainted!
My heavy guilt was laid on **Thee**, to languish for **ME** in anguish!*

*I’ll think upon Thy mercy without ceasing
in penitence for sin which caused Thy woe increasing!
I trust Thy merit! Humble thanks I render, Savior so tender!*

(TLH 143, 3, 6,12 adapted)

—D. T. M.

“Ecce homo!” - “Behold the man!”



O Sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns Thine only crown!
O Sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine!

(THL 172, 1)

The Marks of Christ's Crucifixion Testify to His Resurrection

“Behold My hands and My feet that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.’ And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet” (Luke 24:39-40).

“The other disciples therefore said unto [Thomas], ‘We have seen the Lord!’ But he said unto them, ‘Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ ...Then saith [Jesus] to Thomas, ‘Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said unto Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ (John 20:25-28).

The narratives of Christ's resurrection from the dead are so comforting and so reassuring to us Christians that we sometimes lose sight of the fact that, both to the women and to the apostles, on the very day of His resurrection and even a week later, the event was met with fear (Matthew 28:5, 10; Mark 16:5, 8; Luke 24:5, 37) and doubt (Matthew 28:17; Mark 16:11 and 13; Luke 24:11, 37 and 41; John 20:25), in spite of the physical evidence, and the personal appearances of the Lord Jesus to the women returning from the sepulchre, and to Mary Magdalene, and to Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus. His bodily resurrection was “too good to be true” in spite of the Scriptures that prophesied it (Luke 24:25, 27, 32, 44-46; John 20:9) and Jesus' promise on several occasions even before His passion (Matthew 17:9; 20:19; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Luke 18:33; 24:7; John 2:22) that on the third day after His death on the cross He would rise again.

But the Savior sealed the fact of His bodily resurrection to His apostles for their own surety and for their positive report in the Holy Gospels, “to whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days” before His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:3). In fact, the Apostle Paul, after Jesus ascension, recounted a special list of appearances (including to himself on the road to Damascus) in I Corinthians 15:5-8.

Of particular note among all of these appearances is one to which all of US, because of the weakness of our depraved flesh, can easily relate. By the grace of God, we have come to *believe* in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead from the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, while the apostles and Jesus' contemporaries were convinced of it by **seeing Him** in person. It wasn't just “Thomas, called Didymus” to whom the Savior could have said, “Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed” (John 20:29), since ALL of them who witnessed the “many infallible proofs” did so **with their own eyes**, including St. Paul on the road to Damascus — “who was *seen of me also*” (I Corinthians 15:8).

“Seeing is believing” is the old adage to which most people hold who are unwilling to trust the testimony of someone else as being reliable. From that adage comes the most recent one: “Trust the **SCIENCE**,” that is, trust that which you can SEE, that which you can TEST, that which you can PROVE according to the “scientific method.” And it is that adage which militates against FAITH and feeds the unbelief of *RATIONALISM*, which attacks the testimony of Holy Scripture and ridicules true believers as fools for believing them as infallible, inerrant, authoritative, clear, and all-sufficient for spiritual knowledge unto salvation and unto a Godly life here in this world (II Timothy 3:15ff.).

And yet, the sinful flesh, in the service of Satan — the father of lies and the adversary of God and man — relies upon the **eyes** for the validation of the truth. Jesus, as the omniscient Son of God, knows that all too well and, in mercy

to our weakness, often provides **visible evidence** in support of His truth, as, for example, in His many miracles. And yet, as He declared to Thomas, “*Blessed are they that have NOT seen and yet have believed*” (John 20:29), which include you and me and all true believers who, by God’s grace, confide in the Holy Scriptures (Luke 11:28, etc.).

In the case of **Thomas** (and the others to whom He showed His hands, feet and side, Luke 24:40; John 20:20), Jesus condescended to them in their weakness and provided the **visible evidence** of the marks of His crucifixion — established by the Messiah Himself through the Psalmist David as traceable proof of Christ’s sacrifice (“*They pierced My hands and My feet,*” Psalm 22:16) — as testimony of the resurrection of the very body that was crucified and slain for sinners.



“What happened to Your hand?”

Notice that Thomas didn’t doubt that his fellow apostles saw what they *thought* they saw, but he wanted to be sure that what they saw was truly the crucified and risen Savior, “*the Lord.*” The fact that He had “*flesh and bones*” as they saw Him have wasn’t in any doubt according to Thomas’s own words, but it was the **identification** of who this “*flesh and bones*” person really was: “*We have seen the Lord!*” And so, **seeing** the nail-prints in His hands and feet and the scar left by the spear-strike in His side, and even **examining** those scars in a physical way was critical in Thomas’s thinking to His ultimate confession, “*My Lord and my God!*” And Jesus so condescended to Thomas’s perceived need for that physical evidence that, the week after His resurrection, He singled out Thomas to examine it for himself and to become convinced that what his fellow-apostles had reported to him was really true.

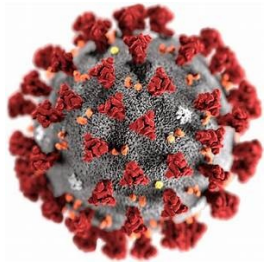
“*Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.*” This is, of course, the critical statement for you and for me, who have **Scriptural** evidence for the crucifixion and death of the Savior in the reports of the nail-prints in His hands and feet and of the spear-wound in His side, “[*who*] was wounded for our transgressions [*and*] was bruised for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53), and the Spirit-inspired reports of His resurrection from the dead on the third day. The fact that Jesus unilaterally showed *the others* His hands and His feet without their suggestion or insistence indicates that He Himself considered those physical evidences to be of great significance.

Likewise, when we teach our children about the Savior’s *passive obedience*, which culminated in His death on the cross, the nail-prints in His hands and feet and the scar in His side are not only **physical evidence** of what He **endured** for us to earn for “*His enemies*” (Romans 5:10) reconciliation with God, but they are also the **physical evidence** of why God raised Him from the dead on the third day, namely, because His Father was fully satisfied with His *propitiation* of divine justice for the world’s justification (Romans 4:25b). Thus we have in Harry Anderson’s painting reproduced above the artist’s concept of how we should “*teach [those things] diligently unto [our] children*” (Deuteronomy 6:7), so that they understand what Jesus “*accomplished*” [*finished*] for their salvation by His innocent suffering and death, and that His resurrection was not part of the *payment* for our sins but was, as it were, the *receipt* of that payment by God, our divine creditor, who declared our debt “*paid in full*” for our salvation.

— D. T. M.



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 the elderly, the frail, and the immunocompromised among us. Even as we exercise prudent measures to deal with this virus, keep us from anxiety, depression and despair; and cause us rather, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to let our requests come before Thy throne of grace, commending ourselves to Thy special fatherly goodness for Jesus' our Savior's sake. May it please Thee in Thine own best time and way to relieve 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.



Churches in Fellowship

ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG

Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 27

620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: Schurganoff@mail.ru

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Idama, Nigeria

The Rev. Innocent Karibo, Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

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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

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ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface, Pastor

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E-Mail: njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk

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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: (541) 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.

Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

On the Web at
StLukes-CLC.com

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

Pastor's Cell: (541) 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_mensing@hotmail.com

On the Web at
StMarksEvLutheran.com

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

Pastor's Cell: (708) 556-1892

(During the current conditions,, please call the respective pastors regarding **assembled** or alternative "**virtual**" services.)

The 70th Annual Convention

of the

Concordia Lutheran Conference

June 23, 24 and 25, 2023

at

Peace Ev. Lutheran Church

Central Avenue at 171st Place

Oak Forest, Illinois 60452-4913

The Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor

with the

Plenary Pastoral Conference on June 21st

and the

Board of Directors Meeting on June 22nd

Convention Motto:

Proper Christian Prayer



The **Convention Essay** will be delivered by Pastor David J. Mensing
of Sauk Village, Illinois

The **Friday Sermon** on **Philippians 4:6-7** will be preached by President David T. Mensing

The **Sunday Sermon** on **John 16:23-24** will be preached by Pastor Paul Bloedel
of Lebanon, Oregon and Seattle, Washington