

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD



EASTER EXCHANGES: **CALMING TROUBLED HEARTS**

P. 9

YOUNG BRANCHES
It is Finished:
Why Objective
Justification
Matters

P. 14



IT IS WRITTEN:

"Peace be with you." (John 20:19)

The Cross is Serious

Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

Turn it one way and a beautiful woman appears. Turn it another way and a hideous figure is seen. Trick drawings are interesting. They can also illustrate well a key fact: How you look at what is depicted is important. Either the picture elicits joy or it brings on sadness depending on the angle of sight.

Does this happen with the cross of Christ? From one perspective, the account of our Lord's crucifixion serves a terrifying law function. From another, it presents the true beauty and depth of God's love and is the Gospel in all its fullness. Our Lutheran confessors drew attention to this. In discussing the vital distinction between Law and Gospel, they asked rhetorically: "Yea, what more forcible, more terrible declaration and preaching of God's wrath against sin is there than just the suffering and death of Christ, His Son? But as long as all this preaches God's wrath and terrifies men, it is not yet the preaching of the Gospel nor Christ's own preaching, but that of Moses and the Law against the impenitent" (Formula of Concord, V:13).

Viewing the cross from the vantage point of the seriousness of our sin in light of the unyielding justice of the holy God is devastating. If it took the death of God's own Son at the place of the skull to satisfy justice, what does this say about the heinous and damnable nature of even one sin of yours and mine? For any who treat sin lightly – a temptation common for our society and our times – there is stark reality in the stroke of justice piercing the Lord of Glory. This view of the cross has been called "the alien work of Christ." It is not the chief and proper view of Christ's suffering and death where God desires our focus, yet it is one that shakes us from complacency! The hymn writer Thomas Kelly, in his familiar

"Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted," captures the somber mood of the diabolical character of sin:

*Ye who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed,
See who bears the awful load;
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,
Son of Man and Son of God. (ELH 297:3)*

Turn quickly to the proper side of the Golgatha scene. See not only the cross and burial, but the empty tomb! God forbid that we miss the real meaning of the Man on the cross! He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins – for every one of them, no matter how grievous they are or how penetrating for our conscience. His resurrection from the dead gives proof positive that the right view of the cross is always good news and joy for each sinner. *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification* (Romans 4:25).

Sin is serious. God's love in Christ is all the more serious! Rejoice in his forgiveness of every sin and rest assured that eternal life in heaven awaits all who believe this amazing news!

REVEREND
JOHN A. MOLDSTAD
PRESIDENT, ELS
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LUTHERAN SENTINEL

MARCH-APRIL, 2018

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A Passion Devotion

“Hey! Look here!”

What kind of thing(s) might you expect to see after such an appeal: A rarely seen animal? A snow fort just completed by a child or grandchild? Someone taking a picture of you?

“Hey! Look here!” That’s what John the Baptizer boldly announces. And then, he points your eyes and mine and the eyes of the whole sinful world to a Lamb! Not a rare kind of Lamb, though. THE ONLY ONE of its kind! This is THE LAMB sent by God the Father Himself. And why is it so pressing we look at this Lamb? Because our sins – EVERY. LAST. ONE. – are on that Lamb! But they aren’t on the Lamb like they’re on our conscience. On our conscience, they torment and torture us. Of course they do! They’re death!

But we are to “Behold” that Lamb because on that Lamb they are lifted from us. Our sins and all their guilt are hauled away once and for all, never to torture or torment you again. That is a “must-see” to be sure!

Now make no mistake about it, the Devil will drag the stench of these sins back for you to smell and fear. Your own flesh will try to get them back so that you can “offset them,” making everything right. Then John the Baptizer’s words – “Hey! Look here!” – are there to absolve and comfort you anew: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

St. John 1:1-5 (ESV)

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me... And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.’”

Hymn ELH 331: 2

A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth
*This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great Friend,
 The Lamb of God, our Savior;
 Him God the Father chose to send
 To gain for us His favor.
 “Go forth My Son,” The Father saith,
 “And free men from the fear of death,
 From guilt and condemnation.
 The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,
 But by Thy Passion men shall share
 The fruit of Thy salvation.”*

Prayer

Jesus, Lamb of God, my Savior, You take away my sin and death and deliver life and peace in return. Cause my eyes to be fixed on You in my living and my dying. Amen.

REVEREND

KYLE MADSON

EDITOR, *THE LUTHERAN SENTINEL*

NORSELAND LUTHERAN CHURCH

ST. PETER, MN

NORWEGIAN GROVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

GAYLORD, MN

FIGURE 1: ART BY JONATHAN MAYER



www.scapegoatsstudio.com

QUESTION:

I have noticed when I look up the word “hell” in the concordance of my Bible, the word is listed only in the New Testament and not the Old Testament. Why is that?

ANSWER:

A quick peek at the small Concordance in the back of the Lutheran Study Bible (English Standard Version or ESV) confirmed this question. The word “Hell” was listed five times, all in the New Testament. However, a check of Cruden’s Complete Concordance (King James Version or KJV) proved to be different. The word “Hell” was listed in both the Old and New Testaments in several places. Job 11: 8, Psalm 18: 5, and Ezekiel 31:16 are examples confirming this old pastor’s memory.

The Hebrew or Old Testament transliteration of the word is Sheol. It has many meanings, such as the grave, the abode of the dead (righteous or unrighteous), or the pit. It is the place to which all people went at death.

The Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) consistently translated Sheol as Hades. Hades was also the underground abode of the dead in Greek mythology and the word New Testament writings often used for the place of suffering for unbelievers.

Those working on the King James Version chose to translate these words as “hell.” This may have been at least partially because King James translators didn’t have the wealth of ancient manuscripts at their disposal that we have. Modern translations often simply transliterate both words. When the context indicated, they also translated these words as “grave” or “abode of the dead.”

The Old Testament also referred to a place of punishment after death with other words and phrases. *To You I will cry, O Lord my Rock: Do not be silent to me, lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You, when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary. Do not take me away with the wicked and with the workers of iniquity, who speak peace to their neighbors, but evil is in their hearts. Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors; give them according to the work of their hands; render to them what they deserve.*

Because they do not regard the works of the Lord, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them and not build them up (Psalm 28:1-5).

Later Judaism understood the Old Testament word Gehenna as Sheol or “hell.” *“And go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom [Gehenna], which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents (they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter” (Jeremiah 19:2-6).*

Hell [Sheol] and Destruction [Abaddon] are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied (Proverbs 27:20).

God’s Word in the New Testament helps us understand the meaning of His Word in the Old Testament. God is always the same. His wrath is revealed against all the unrighteousness of man. Those who reject His love earn for themselves the eternal suffering of hell. God revealed His heart through His Son. Because of Jesus, we do not fear the fires of hell. Upon the cross, He endured hell in our place. By faith in Him, we are children of the Kingdom of heaven. We are forgiven and justified. Thanks be to God.

REVEREND
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✠ SYNODSYNOPSIS

ANNOUNCING

**the Centennial
Convention**
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

**the 62nd
Annual Meeting**
of
Bethany Lutheran College Inc.

**the 3rd
Annual Meeting**
of the
**Lutheran Schools
of America, Inc.**

“Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done: His Enduring Grace”

JUNE 17-21, 2018 | MANKATO, MINNESOTA

SYNOD SUNDAY | JUNE 17

4:30p SYNOD SUNDAY SERVICE
with Choral Union Choir

SPEAKERS:

Rev. John Moldstad
President, ELS

Rev. Craig Ferkenstad
Secretary, ELS

LITURGISTS:

Rev. Adolph Harstad
Mankato, Minnesota

Rev. Shawn Stafford
Hartland, Minnesota

6:00p DINNER

MONDAY | JUNE 18

9:00a OPENING SERVICE

CHAPLAIN:

Rev. Bernt Tweit
Madison, Wisconsin

1:00 DEATHS NOTED:

Mildred Gullixson (1923-2017)
Carolyn Wosje (1934-2017)

TUESDAY | JUNE 19

9:00a DEVOTION:

Rev. Egil Edvardsen
Lutheran Confessional Church,
Norway

1:00p ANNIVERSARIES OBSERVED:

Timothy Erickson - 40 years
Gaylin Schmeling - 40 years

1:30p CONVENTION ESSAY:

*“Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done:
His Enduring Grace”*

ESSAYIST:

Rev. Peter Faugstad
Lawler, Iowa

5:00p CENTENNIAL PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY | JUNE 20

8:00a DEVOTION:

Rev. Jaime Cortez
Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru

**10:30a OBSERVANCE OF 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF MISSION WORK
IN PERU**

1:30p CONVENTION ESSAY:

*“Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done:
His Enduring Grace”*

7:30p COMMUNION SERVICE

PREACHER:

Rev. Glenn Obenberger
Vice President, ELS

LITURGIST:

Rev. Joshua Mayer
Rogers, Minnesota

THURSDAY | JUNE 21

8:00a DEVOTION:

Rev. Kenneth Mellon
West Bend, Wisconsin

**8:30a CONVENTION BUSINESS
CONTINUES**



The Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society

invites you to celebrate
the Centennial of the
Evangelical Lutheran Synod



“Still Under the Oaks”

SATURDAY | JUNE 16

3:30p
Revisiting the 1918 Convention
Our Savior’s Lutheran Church
Albert Lea, Minnesota

5:00p
Catered lunch served by the Our
Savior’s Ladies’ Aid

6:00p
Travel to Lime Creek Lutheran Church
(sixteen miles south on Highway 69)

6:30p
Devotion service at Lime Creek
Lutheran Church

REGISTER:
\$15 registration by June 1, 2018.
(includes lunch at Our Savior’s Lutheran
Church)

Send payment to:
ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

Nominees for Professorship at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

The Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, announces that the following have been placed in nomination for Professor of New Testament at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota.

Nominee:

Nominated by

Joseph Abrahamson

King of Grace, Golden Valley, MN
Mt. Olive, Mankato, MN

Mark DeGarmeaux

Saude, Lawler, IA
Jerico, New Hampton, IA
Parkland, Tacoma, WA

Christian Eisenbeis

St. Timothy, Lombard, IL
Holy Scripture, Midland, MI
Mt. Olive, Mankato, MN
Peace, North Mankato, MN
Divine Mercy, Hudson Oaks, TX
Holy Trinity, Okauchee, WI

Peter Faugstad

Parkland, Tacoma, WA

Jerome Gernander

Parkland, Tacoma, WA

Aaron Hamilton

King of Grace, Golden Valley, MN

Timothy Hartwig

Peace, Kissimmee, FL
Grace, Vero Beach, FL
Holy Scripture, Midland, MI
Gloria Dei, Cold Spring, MN
Abiding Word, Bowling Green, OH
Hope, Leander, TX

Thomas Heyn

Board of Regents

Bradley Kerkow

Peace, North Mankato, MN

Phillip Lepak

Our Saviour, Lake Havasu City, AZ

Jeffery Luplow

King of Grace, Golden Valley, MN

John Moldstad, Jr.

King of Grace, Golden Valley, MN

Matthew Moldstad

Peace, Kissimmee, FL

Nathan Nass

Peace, Kissimmee, FL

Nicholas Proksch

Grace, Vero Beach, FL
Abiding Word, Bowling Green, OH
Peace, Deshler, OH
Holy Scripture, Midland, MI
Gloria Dei, Cold Spring, MN
Mt. Olive, Mankato, MN
Peace, North Mankato, MN
Zion, Tracy, MN
Divine Mercy, Hudson Oaks, TX
Holy Trinity, Okauchee, WI

Thomas Rank

Redeemer, Scottsdale, AZ

St. Timothy, Lombard, IL
Scarville, Scarville, IA
Trinity, Brewster, MA
Norwegian Grove, Gaylord, MN
Redeeming Grace, Rogers, MN
Bethany, Princeton, MN
Norseland, St. Peter, MN
Faith, San Antonio, TX
Hope, West Jordan, UT
Parkland, Tacoma, WA
Faith, Oregon, WI

Alexander Ring

Parkland, Tacoma, WA

Steven Sparley

Redeemer, Scottsdale, AZ
St. Timothy, Lombard, IL
Saude, Lawler, IA
Jerico, New Hampton, IA
Trinity, Brewster, MA
Bethany, Princeton, MN
Mt. Olive, Mankato, MN
Norseland, St. Peter, MN
Hope, West Jordan, UT

Bernt Tweit

King of Grace, Golden Valley, MN

S. Piet Van Kampen

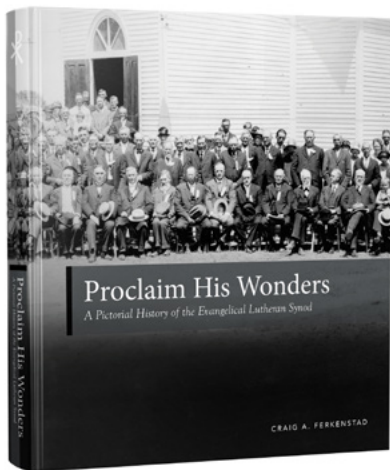
Grace, Vero Beach, FL
Holy Scripture, Midland, MI
Gloria Dei, Cold Spring, MN
Holy Trinity, Okauchee, WI

David Jay Webber

Parkland, Tacoma, WA

Keith Wessel

Peace, North Mankato, MN



A pictorial history

has been published in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the reorganization of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

This 312 page volume includes more than 400 photographs from the history of the synod. This is who we are. This is what we look like. Here are the wonders which God has done.

A sample of the book may be viewed on the synod's website at: els.org/els-100

Anniversary Medallions

The ELS Historical Society has produced commemorative medallions for the dual anniversaries of 2017 (quincentennial of the Lutheran Reformation) and 2018 (reorganization of the ELS). The medallions are just over 2 inches in diameter with a wider ribbon at the bottom as shown in the illustration.

Cost is \$15, or \$10 with a subscription to **Oak Leaves** (els-history.org/membership).

To order, send a check to:

ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

Please include \$2 more per medallion for shipping and handling. Medallions will also be available for purchase at the ELS Synod Convention in June.



Orders:

\$20 plus \$5 shipping

Send payment to:

Bethany Bookstore
700 Luther Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

800-944-1722

bookstore@blc.edu

A Building Project and Outreach



Our building desperately needed to be remodeled. The interior was dated. Sections of the ceiling were caving in. Chancel carpeting was stained. Sanctuary flooring was worn to the foundation. We developed plans to renovate our building.

The ceiling would be raised and recessed lighting installed. Stone would replace the flimsy wood paneling behind the altar. A Santa Barbara finish would be plastered over the sanctuary's cinder block walls. A commercial laminate flooring resembling wood would be laid throughout the worship space. Most importantly, a new layout would create a main entrance in the front of our building, increase seating capacity, and create a dedicated nursery space.

I was eager for work to begin. However, when it did, the project began to consume our congregation's time and energy. It also began to consume me. This concerned me. I felt like I was spending time on the job site that could have been spent canvassing neighborhoods, visiting prospects, and meeting with new members. I was worried our congregation would be more focused on the building project than outreach projects. But I never should have worried. The building project facilitated more opportunities for sharing the good news than we ever could have imagined!

First, the project allowed long-time members, new members, and prospective members to work alongside one another. More importantly, it connected these individuals to God's Word. Each work day included a morning and afternoon devotion, opportunities to reach out with the message of eternal life in Christ.

Second, the project helped us develop a variety of relationships with city officials, public works employees, trash removal crews, and contractors. One example are the relationships we formed with our electricians. They joined us for lunch and a devotion each day. One of these electricians experienced a personal tragedy during our time working together. We did our best to reach him with a message of hope.

Third, the project communicated to our community that we are an active entity. People who thought the church had been closed for years stopped by and asked about the activity. People invited themselves inside to see the progress. During the project, we had three outdoor worship services. I'll never forget one of our neighbors sweeping the alleyway outside her home for the duration of our service. She later attended one of our Christmas events and we continue to reach out to her.

Since the project, we have used our building as a center for new outreach initiatives. At Christmas, we hosted a traditional Mexican posada. Over seventy-five members of the community processed through our remodeled sanctuary, holding candles while being led in song by mariachi. In February, our pews will be filled with people witnessing the adult confirmation of a new member and the baptisms of her two sons. In the fall, we will use our remodeled space to host a Mornings with Mommy program.

The Anniversary Offering helped fund our building project, a project that facilitated many outreach opportunities and will allow us to continue to reach out with the Gospel message. Thank you for your support.

REVEREND
MATTHEW BEHMER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER
CRISTO REY LUTHERAN CHURCH
BELL GARDENS, CA

A NOTE FROM THE ANNIVERSARY OFFERING COMMITTEE:

Our home missions work is an integral part of our ELS. Be sure to support the Anniversary Offering by giving generously.

Visit els.org/offering to learn more and support our students and missions online.

SEND YOUR GIFT TO:

ELS Anniversary Offering
6 Browns Ct.
Mankato, MN 56001

CALMING TROUBLED HEARTS:

The empty tomb of Easter Sunday is the axis on which the whole Christian faith turns. Jesus is the Christ whom God had promised, whom the prophets had pointed to, who Jesus Himself claimed to be. The empty tomb means Jesus is forgiveness and life in the midst of trouble and death! And the balm of this empty tomb wastes no time in calming raw, wounded, and misbelieving hearts. Listen in, for these calming and comforting words are for you too...

CALMING TROUBLED HEARTS: EASTER EXCHANGE 1

THE ANGEL & MOROSE MARY

“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said” (Matthew 28:5-6).

Dear Fred,

In the name of Jesus, who, at the tomb of His friend Lazarus, sanctified all who mourn,

It has been two weeks since the passing of your beloved wife, Barb. After the blur of activity, now the family has all left. Their words and looks of sympathy have all packed up and returned to their normal lives. Meanwhile, you're left alone, wondering, “How can life go on? Can it ever return to normal?” Someone who has been a part of your life for over 66 years is now missing. And the pain is real. Yes, you know Barb is in heaven and that you'll see her again, but it's hard noticing all the places Barb is not: The seat at the table, the armchair in the living room, beside you in bed...

In the Easter account, we find one case where someone “not being there” was good news: The women who had befriended Jesus in his ministry were feeling the shock of His loss—in the space of only a few hours, Jesus was arrested, condemned, and executed, but because of the Sabbath, they were not able to properly bury him. Seeking closure, they came to the tomb, expecting to find their friend. Instead, they found the tomb open, the bed empty, and an angel who asked, “*Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here!*” (Luke 24:5b-6a).

They were looking for Jesus in all the wrong places—they weren't going to find him in the grave. Jesus is alive from the dead, the One with all authority, “ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:10). Our salvation through Jesus is so complete, Paul says, “*He also raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 2:6).

So where is Barb? While our senses scream, “she is not here,” we know she is with her Risen Savior in heaven. For, “*He is not the God of the dead, but of the living*” (Matthew 22:32). Even when you visit the ground where Barb's sacred body is resting, the words of the angel ring true, “*Why are you looking for the living among the dead?*” Though the distance between you may seem great, Jesus is still the stairway between heaven and earth (John 1:51). Even as you hear the Word, she is in our Savior's presence. When your lips touch his true body and blood, so Barb is enjoying the wedding feast of the Lamb.

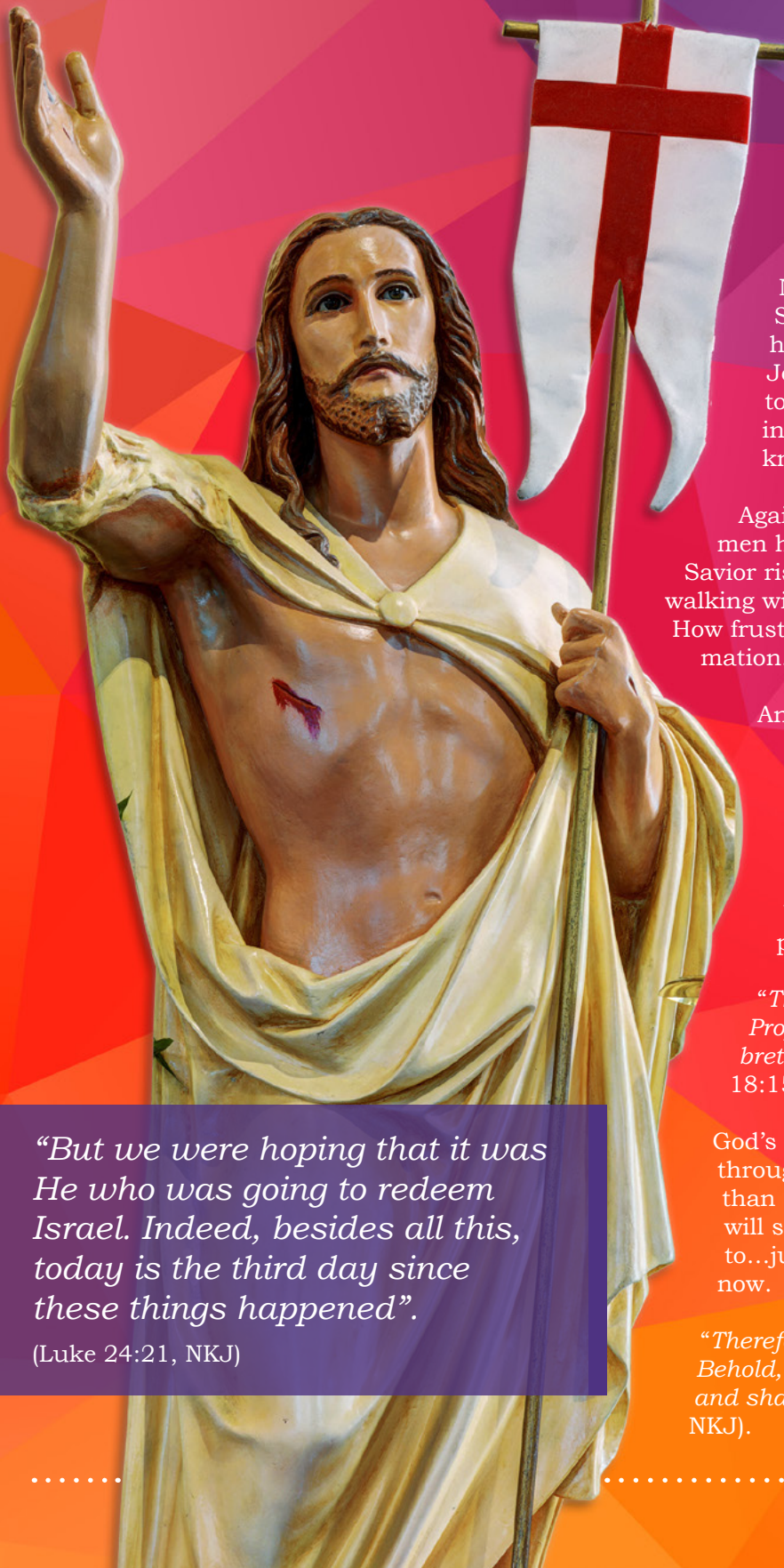
Though it seems everything has changed, the one constant remains: The same Savior who began, blessed, and concluded your marriage, is still the One who unites you. Though the places in your life that she used to occupy seem empty, within that space, Jesus promises, “*I will never leave you, I will never forsake you*” (Hebrews 13:5).

Today, Jesus comforts those who mourn. His grave was left empty, so that your life will never be.

REVEREND
JOSHUA MAYER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER
REDEEMING GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
ROGERS, MN

CALMING TROUBLED HEARTS: EASTER EXCHANGE 2

JESUS & THE EMMAUS DISCIPLES



“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened”.

(Luke 24:21, NKJ)

When you don't have all the information, it can be very frustrating, and I imagine that the Emmaus disciples did not have all the information.

These men had just seen their Savior crucified. They had witnessed what they thought was the end. They knew what they saw and what they saw was not the prettiest of sights.

Now, after witnessing the death of their Savior, they are beginning the walk “back home.” They had lingered for three days in Jerusalem, but now they were going back to their own lives. And as they are walking, they are met by Jesus, but they do not know it.

Again, imagine the frustration. Here these men had been waiting three days to see their Savior rise...and they didn't see it. Now they are walking with Him and they do not recognize Him. How frustrating it can be to not have all the information.

And so, instead of allowing the disciples to recognize Him, Jesus instead walks them through the Scriptures. At this time, the Scriptures available were the Old Testament books, so Jesus shows who the Savior truly is through these verses.

We can imagine Jesus taking the disciples through such passages as:

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear” (Deuteronomy 18:15, NKJ).

God's promise to the Israelites, which is spoken through Moses, is that He will send one greater than Moses to the people to lead them. God will send them a Prophet that they will listen to...just like these disciples are doing right now.

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14, NKJ).

God promised to send the one greater than Moses, and in so doing, He would send Him as the child of a Virgin. And when this Virgin conceived and gave birth, she was to call the name of the child Immanuel, which means “God with us.” Yes, God would be with us on this earth. He would walk and talk with us...but He would also do so much more.

For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:2-5, NKJ).

There was no beauty in Jesus that people should be drawn to Him, and in fact, many were not. Yet when Jesus came into this world, He came to live, die, and rise again for all people. He came to be despised and rejected by men. He came so that He would be stricken, smitten, and afflicted...not you. Jesus came and through His stripes we are healed.

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning... But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed. But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, “He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!” But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother’s breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother’s womb You have been My God. Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a pot-

sherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! (Psalm 22:1-19, NKJ).

Already foretold in the words of David, Christ could have shown His disciples what awaited Him. And though many horrible things were foretold, still what is the hope? “But You, O Lord, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me!” God the Father would be there for His Son, Jesus Christ. Yes, the punishment was great, but much greater was the love of God. For though God the Son suffered for us on the cross, we know that this punishment is one that brought us peace...it is one that brought us the assurance of heaven.

And as the Scriptures are opened up to those disciples, they begin to feel the “burning” in their hearts. They know that something special is happening. And when Jesus finally reveals Himself, the disciples are beyond happy. But then Jesus disappears. Does the fear and moping set back in? Of course not! They now know, as they were taught by Christ, beginning with Moses the Scriptures spoke about Christ and all that He must suffer and do for our salvation.

And while it can be difficult for us to go through the season of Lent knowing that our Savior is going to willingly lay down His life, you can rejoice knowing that He chose to do so for you. Jesus lived, died, and rose again for you. Through faith in Him, you can be assured that your future is in heaven. And should you ever need to have Jesus tell you this same message, open your Bibles and read the Old Testament, the very same books that He opened to the disciples. These will tell you about your Savior and all that He has done to assure you of heaven.

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CALMING TROUBLED HEARTS: EASTER EXCHANGE 3

JESUS & THE TERRIFIED 10

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you” (John 20:19).

In the morning, Mary’s beside herself. She’s convinced Jesus’ body has fallen prey to grave robbers. No more hope for a peaceful resting place...

In the afternoon, the Emmaus disciples are hopeless and despairing. The one they’d been hoping was “the one” died two days ago...

In the evening of Easter Sunday, ten disciples (the Twelve sans Judas and Thomas) are huddled in an upper room and their terror has circled right back to themselves. They are afraid “of the Jews.” It’s dawned on them that the fury that drove the mob to kill Jesus two days ago may also rekindle itself upon them – Jesus’ known followers and friends.

What kind of solace and assurance does Resurrected Jesus bring to these terrified 10? Does He swallow up that angry mob in a Red Sea-like miracle? Does He give them Magnificent 7 superpowers to defend themselves against a potentially life-threatening mob? What does He give them for comfort and security?

He gives them Himself – His presence with them. “Peace BE with you,” Jesus calmly declares. From anyone else, this would resound as an unhelpful platitude – an easy way to dismiss an urgent situation. But this, THIS is the One crucified and now alive from the dead – just as He announced days earlier. His words aren’t merely good ideas or helpful encouragement. His words achieve the very thing they announce. Jesus’ words do the work they declare.

Peace IS with the terrified 10, just as Jesus announced. The angels said as much to the unsuspecting shepherds in the field. The Son of God

born in human flesh is “*Peace on earth - (God’s) good will toward men*” (Luke 2:11).

Sentimental songs of humanity opine for “peace on earth,” but then look inside “me” for that peace to “begin.” That well-meaning sentimentality delivers nothing but hopelessness. It is deaf to the declaration of John the Baptist as he says, “*Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). Sin – our evil doings and our deafness to God’s doings for us – SIN is the absence of peace that plagues our moments and our days and the days of all those around us, too. So, however and wherever God is “taking sin away,” THAT is peace. Dear Christians, Jesus being present with His sin-and-death laden people, that is the “how” of Peace.

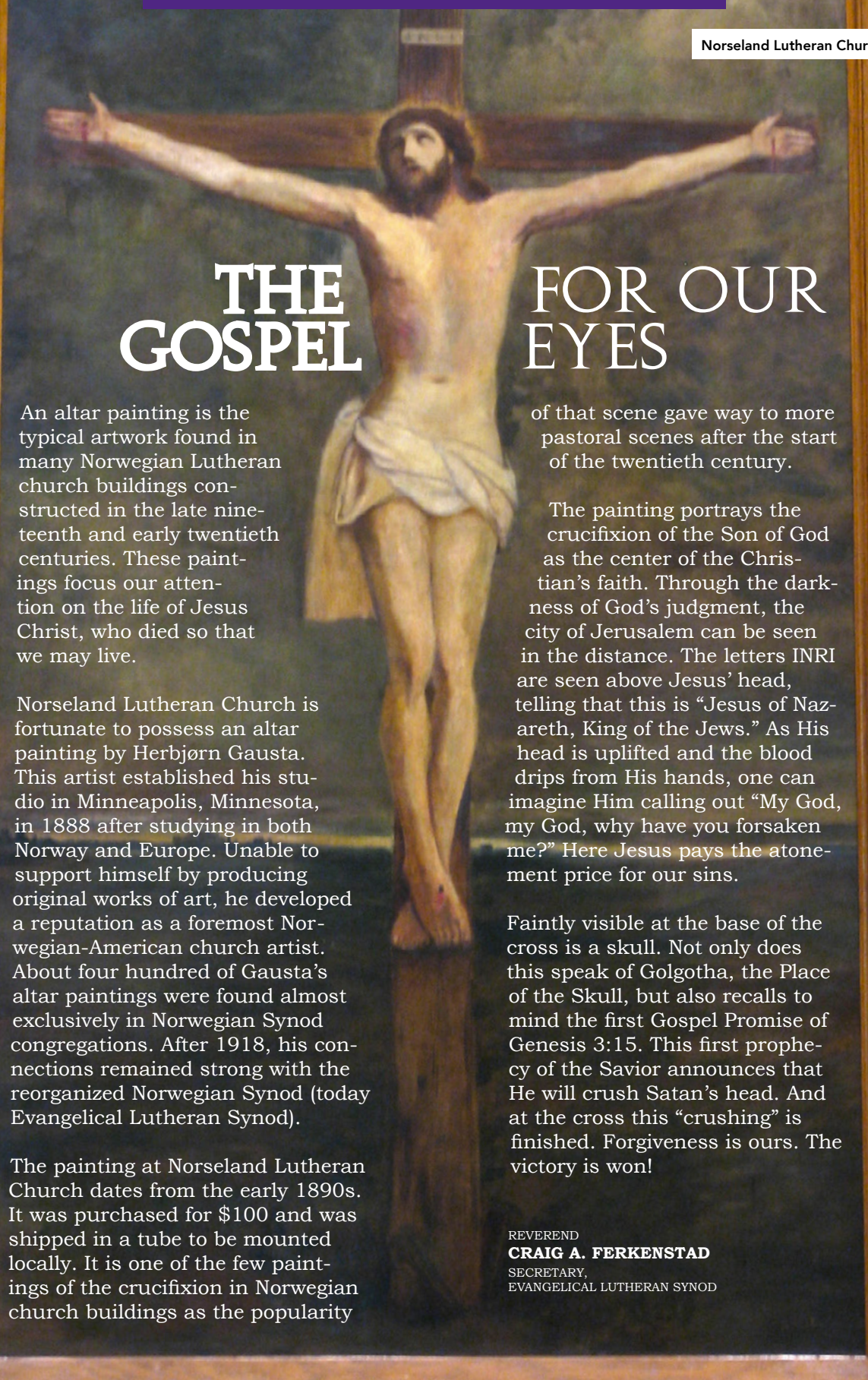
What about the “where?” Where is Jesus “being present” for us – for our peace? The Lord’s Supper and its liturgy take our noses right to a most obvious reality of Jesus’ presence.

Jesus’ instituting words declare that He IS the sacrament: His body under bread and His blood under the wine. And that He is present there “*for the remission (the taking away) of sins*” (Matthew 26:26-28). So we, the gathered Christians, address the present Jesus: “*O Christ, Lamb of God, YOU take away the sins of the world.*” And we pray for the benefit of present Jesus – sins taken away – to fall upon us: “*Grant us Your peace*” (The Agnus Dei).

And then what happens? Jesus – THE REAL AND PRESENT JESUS – is present for you. “Take and eat – Take and drink – the forgiveness of your sins” (distribution liturgy). Finally, the Lord, through the mouth of the servant He’s given you, assures you that you have what He, the Lord, has most certainly given to you: “*The body of our Lord Jesus Christ and His precious blood to strengthen and preserve you... Depart IN PEACE.*”

Peace BE with you, indeed!

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THE GOSPEL FOR OUR EYES

An altar painting is the typical artwork found in many Norwegian Lutheran church buildings constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These paintings focus our attention on the life of Jesus Christ, who died so that we may live.

Norseland Lutheran Church is fortunate to possess an altar painting by Herbjørn Gausta. This artist established his studio in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1888 after studying in both Norway and Europe. Unable to support himself by producing original works of art, he developed a reputation as a foremost Norwegian-American church artist. About four hundred of Gausta's altar paintings were found almost exclusively in Norwegian Synod congregations. After 1918, his connections remained strong with the reorganized Norwegian Synod (today Evangelical Lutheran Synod).

The painting at Norseland Lutheran Church dates from the early 1890s. It was purchased for \$100 and was shipped in a tube to be mounted locally. It is one of the few paintings of the crucifixion in Norwegian church buildings as the popularity

of that scene gave way to more pastoral scenes after the start of the twentieth century.

The painting portrays the crucifixion of the Son of God as the center of the Christian's faith. Through the darkness of God's judgment, the city of Jerusalem can be seen in the distance. The letters INRI are seen above Jesus' head, telling that this is "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." As His head is uplifted and the blood drips from His hands, one can imagine Him calling out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Here Jesus pays the atonement price for our sins.

Faintly visible at the base of the cross is a skull. Not only does this speak of Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, but also recalls to mind the first Gospel Promise of Genesis 3:15. This first prophecy of the Savior announces that He will crush Satan's head. And at the cross this "crushing" is finished. Forgiveness is ours. The victory is won!

REVEREND
CRAIG A. FERKENSTAD
SECRETARY,
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

IT

IS

FINISHED

W H Y
O B J E C -
T I V E
J U S T I F I -
C A T I O N
M A T T E R S

God has given us a way to know for sure whether we are saved. You can be absolutely, positively certain that you are saved. But how do you know?

In this collection of books we call the Bible, also rightly known as God’s Word, there are four separate accounts of an important event: *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit* (Matthew 27:50); *And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last* (Mark 15:38); *Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”* (Luke 23:46); *When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit* (John 19:30).

What a strange thing, that the death of one individual is so significant for us to have it recorded four times. But we have the meaning of this explained: [Jesus Christ] entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). All those Old Testament animal sacrifices, goats and calves and others, were done so that the sins of the people wouldn’t stay on the people’s heads, but would be removed. God is a just God, and therefore he has to punish sin. The sacrifices of animals pointed out how the sin of a person would be removed and punished in another.

But those animal sacrifices were not perfect and therefore had to be offered day after day, year after year. But when we see Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only perfectly innocent man, dying on the cross and saying, “It is finished,” then we may realize just what it is that is finished: *We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all* (Hebrews 10:10). He justified the entire world.

Of course, there are those who reject that justification and therefore individually are not justified. But St. Paul writes that “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). By faith, you are personally justified.

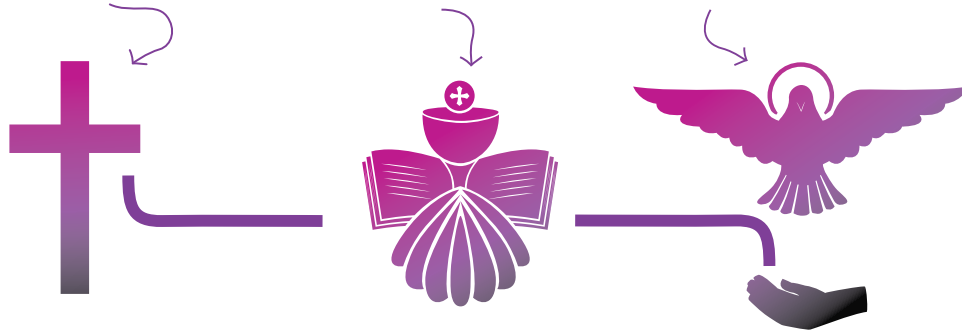
HERE’S HOW IT WORKS: SALVATION WAS WON FOR EVERYONE ON THE CROSS. THAT SALVATION IS OFFERED TO YOU IN THE MEANS OF GRACE (THE WORD, BAPTISM, AND THE LORD’S SUPPER). THAT SALVATION IS RECEIVED BY FAITH.

SALVATION IS...

WON FOR THE WORLD ON THE CROSS

BROUGHT TO YOU IN THE MEANS OF GRACE

RECEIVED BY FAITH WORKED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT



So, you know that Jesus died, right? Then the objective justification of the whole world is assured! And further, you know that God doesn’t lie, right? Then you can trust his Word that says that your sins were laid on Christ. And finally, knowing that that was for you, you are justified. ***That’s how you know you’re saved.***

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In your blest body let me be / Een as the branch is to the tree / Thy life my life supplying
P. NICOLAI

BIOGRAPHY BRIEFS: **The ELS of 1918**

MARCH-APRIL

We continue with a series of biographies of the pastors who attended the reorganization convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1918. There is evidence for the presence of at least thirteen pastors along with two hundred guests at this convention.



Holden Olsen

In 1918, **Holden Olsen** was living in Madison, Wisconsin where he was the pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. He was one of only four men who boldly testified against the merger of the three Norwegian Lutheran church bodies during the final session of the Norwegian Synod in 1917. In 1925, he became the president of Bethany Ladies' College in Mankato, Minnesota, and his presence there was important to the synod's acquisition of the school in 1927. He married Guida Winden. He died in 1931.



John A. Moldstad

In 1918, **John A. Moldstad** was the pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Chicago, Illinois, where he served his entire ministry. One year earlier, he preached the sermon when the minority of the Norwegian Synod gathered at Fairview Lutheran Church. He was the synod's vice-president, 1917-22, and for six years also was the editor of the synod's Norwegian language newspaper, the *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende*. He represented the synod on the Board for Colored Missions of the Lutheran Synodical Conference, 1922-45. After the synod acquired Bethany Lutheran College, he became a member of the Board of Regents and for many years was its chairman. He married Ethelyn Holverson. He died in 1946.