

# the REPORter

## Editor's Entry

We have an engaging edition of the *repORter* to add to your summer reading pleasure!

- Alan Czarnetski reviews "Walking Trees", a fascinating article in *Creation Magazine* focused on Mark's account of Jesus' healing a blind man—*why did He do it in two steps?*
- Elizabeth Petersen submits Part 2 of her excellent series on Luther: *Birth, Childhood, Education*.
- Larry Bricker shares a guest column: *My Grace is Sufficient for You*.
- Matt Kenitzer pens: *Elders Safeguard our Spiritual Welfare*.

**A Blessed Season of Pentecost to All!**

-Greg Gerjerts

## Also In This Issue:

*Reflections on Pentecost* by Pr Knox

Informative LWML articles by J Fink:

*IDE Fall Retreat*

*Fleece Tie Quilts for Valley Grads*

*Waterloo Zone Spring Rally*

*Issues, Etc.* Website Review by J Knox

A welcome dinner for Vicar Grills!

**Plus lots more:**

*Word Cloud Puzzle; Event Calendars; Upcoming Hymns & Readings; Attendance a & Contribution Graphs*



## Pastor's Post

### Reflections on Pentecost: What's Wrong With Gathering Wood?

By Pastor Michael Knox

Did you know that some of the earliest editions of the Small Catechism, first published in 1529, had pictures? Each section of the Catechism was accompanied by pictures printed to aid the people who were studying it. The picture accompanying the Third Commandment depicted a congregation listening intently to a pastor while, through the window, a man is seen gathering wood.



This image gets at the heart of what the Third Commandment is really all about. The problem wasn't merely that the man was gathering wood on a Sunday. The problem was that, by doing so, he was neglecting to gather with God's people to hear the Word. By including this picture alongside Luther's explanation to the Third Commandment, we see quite clearly what it means to "despise preaching and His Word."

Gathering wood wasn't the man's sin. His sin was neglecting to receive the Lord's gifts, delivered through the mouth of his pastor. Jesus' disciples were once caught red-handed plucking grain on the Sabbath. The Pharisees accused the disciples of violating the Third Commandment. In response to their accusation, Jesus says, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28).

The opposite of the Son's being the Lord of the Sabbath is your trying to "lord" over the Sabbath for yourself. You try to be "lords" of your own faith, thinking that you've received enough Jesus and will do just fine on your own—at least for a little while. Maybe a week, maybe just a few Sundays, maybe a month. Unfortunately, your "little while" often becomes a "longer while" and then even "for good."

If this illustration pictures you, what would you be seen doing through the window? Probably not gathering sticks, but it really doesn't matter. No matter what you are doing instead of gathering with the flock at the appointed time and in the appointed place is despising God's Word. It is not holding God's Word



# Web Gem: Issues, Etc.

<http://issuesetc.org/>

By Jennifer Knox

The screenshot shows the website's navigation and promotional elements. At the top, it says "LISTEN ON-DEMAND" and provides links to download the app on the App Store, Google Play, and iTunes. Below that, there are options to subscribe via XML. A "DONATE TO ISSUES, ETC." section features a "Donate" button and logos for various payment methods. A note states "Issues, Etc. is listener-supported." At the bottom, there is a "BECOME A FAN OF ISSUES, ETC." section with a Facebook link and a "Like" button, along with a photo gallery of people who like the page.

While you can, you really should take time to listen to “Double-Edged Sword”. It’s simple to do: just go to Our Redeemer’s webpage, *theforgivenessplace.org*, where you will find the most recent broadcast from KXEL radio, as well as archived broadcasts.

But there is another, different approach to Lutheran theology you also should check out: “Issues, Etc.” Issues, Etc. is best known for its first-class radio programming, which features great topics and a variety of talented hosts and guests.

If you go to the Issues, Etc. website, you’ll find a variety of ways to access and stream their content. You can stream a wide variety of archives online right from the website—just click on the LISTEN menu and ON DEMAND ARCHIVES link. There are also live radio stations that carry Issues, Etc. programming, although none of the stations is in our area. If you are traveling, you may be fortunate to find yourself in range of a station that carries their programming.

In case you were wondering whether “there is an app for that,” the answer is yes. Apple, Android and a whole bunch of other devices have an app, or a way to access the ability to stream Issues, Etc. The app is nice because it also includes a place to find a church, among other things.

I prefer not to stream things while I’m using cellular data (aka not on a Wi-Fi network) and for people like me

there is yet another option: individual podcasts can be downloaded from the iTunes store for free. By going this route you can select topics that are of interest to you and take your Issues with you whether you have internet access or not.



Aside from all of the streaming and podcasts that Issues, Etc. has to offer, you can also access their PUBLICATIONS menu (click on the link), which has issues of their quarterly journal.

If you are fluent in Spanish, or know someone who is, you can access several different LCMS authors whose writings have been transcribed into Spanish. At the bottom of this page is a large number of links to books on CPH’s website, making it easy for you to find even more to read.

So, if you haven’t checked out Issues, Etc., take some time to do so. Listen to a podcast on your drive to and from work, while you are out running errands, out for a walk, or as you’re cleaning your house. If you prefer to read instead of listen, there are the quarterly publications to explore as well.

*Enjoy!*



**Issues, Etc.**<sup>TM</sup>  
Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio

A *hint* to help you solve this edition’s Word Cloud puzzle:

Luther is reported to have said:

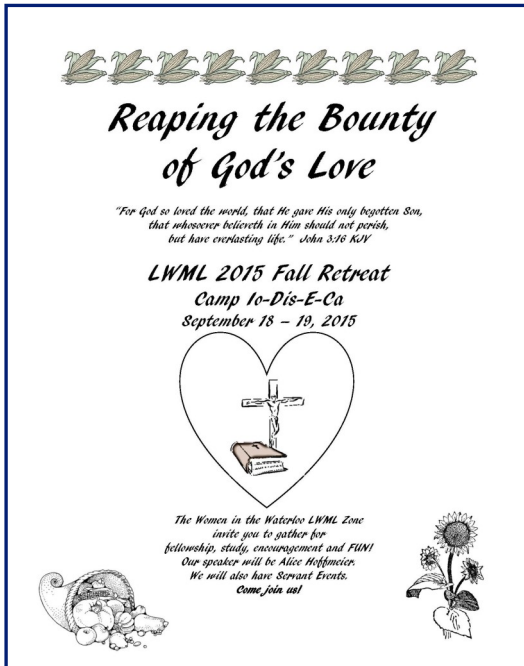
*Works are necessary for salvation but they do not cause salvation; for faith alone gives life.*

Appropriately, our puzzle was generated from Luther's introduction to **which** of St. Paul's New Testament letters?

( refers to page 11) → → → →



## Iowa District East LWML Fall Retreat



“Reaping the Bounty of God's Love” (from John 3:16) is the theme for the Iowa District East's LWML Fall Retreat to be held on Friday, September 18, and Saturday, September 19, at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca near Solon, IA.

The women of the Waterloo Zone invite you to continue “reaping the bounty of God's love” at the Fall Retreat and to learn the abundance of God's love through Bible study, fun, and fellowship. We will serve the Lord with gladness in our servant events which will extend our mission into the district.

Bring your Bible and prepare to be filled to overflowing. Other suggested items to bring are snacks and comfortable clothes. Towels and/or twin bedding linens can be requested on the registration form for a fee, or you may bring your own.

Check in time is 1:00 p.m., followed by servant events, camp tours and a hayride, with supper and opening devotions beginning at 5:30 p.m. Saturday check in time begins at 7:30 a.m., with breakfast at 8 a.m., followed by devotions and Bible study.

We will collect “gifts from the heart” for Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca—the gifts to include postage stamps, binder clips, plastic recycle bins, surge protection power strips, file boxes for record storage, 33-gallon trash can liners, brooms, double bed sheets (flat and fitted), large-size bandages, and hand sanitizer. Check the Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca website for other needed items.

Please join your sisters in Christ from all over Iowa East in attending the Fall Retreat for Bible study, singing, servant events, making new friends, laughter, fellowship, and just having a relaxing time away from the busyness of our daily lives.

If you are unable to attend both days, consider attending either the Friday or Saturday session. Please register by September 4. Registration forms are in the Alive Newsletter, the LWML website, and also on the table in our Parish Hall. Cost of this event, including meals, is \$60 for both Friday and Saturday, \$25 for Friday only, or \$35 for Saturday only.

The Waterloo Zone looks forward to seeing you on September 18 and 19!

## Fleece Tie Quilts for Valley Lutheran School Graduates

Members of LWML's Waterloo Zone took on the project of making 16 fleece tie quilts to be given to the graduates of Valley Lutheran High School.

The project of making jean quilts for the graduates was started a number of years ago by several ladies who had grandchildren attending Valley. This year these ladies decided they could no longer make the jean quilts due to various reasons, so a couple of ladies in the Waterloo Zone thought making the fleece tie quilts might be easier and quicker.



Notices were sent to all the Waterloo Zone LCMS congregations to see if there might be any interest in helping with this project—and there was! A grant of \$250 from Thrivent Action Teams was applied for and helped to fund the project. Donations for the purchase of the fleece were also received. Fleece of various designs appropriate for eight boys and eight girls was purchased. Two work sessions were set up and the ladies from the Waterloo Zone churches were invited to come to Our Redeemer to work on the quilts.

The first session was held on Saturday, April 11, from 9 to 12. Fourteen ladies from various congregations, including members of Our Redeemer, attended the first session and completed nine quilts. The second session was held on Thursday evening, April 23, with eight ladies attending and completing four quilts. Two quilts were completed ahead of time by a member of Our Redeemer, and a group of six ladies from the Waverly area completed another quilt.

The quilts were presented to the graduates of Valley Lutheran School at their graduation ceremony on May 16, 2015. The graduates were very appreciative to receive these great gifts.

All the ladies who worked on the project enjoyed the time spent together working on the quilts, visiting with one another, getting to know fellow quilters from other congregations, laughing and chattering, and helping with a mission project.

We were certainly blessed through this project and, not surprisingly, made the decision to repeat it next year!

# Relevant Review

## *Walking Trees . . . Modern science helps us understand a puzzling miracle*

by Russell Grigg in *Creation* magazine, September 1999, <http://creation.com/walking-trees>

Article by Alan Czarnetski

I have always been very near-sighted. A vivid childhood memory is when I emerged from the optometrist's office sporting my first-ever pair of eyeglasses: I never knew a person was supposed to be able to see things so clearly! Eyesight is a great blessing that I try not to take for granted. Perhaps this is one of the reasons I wanted to write this review of Russell Grigg's article in *Creation* magazine.

Jesus healed many blind persons. Though I have not done a thorough check, it is my understanding that healing of the blind is only reported in the New Testament and, therefore, is likely a miracle that only occurred during and shortly after Jesus' earthly ministry. One instance of Jesus healing a blind man seems rather peculiar. It's a brief account and, therefore, is easily passed over . . . perhaps eliciting a "Hmmm, that's odd" reaction from the reader:

"And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when



he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, 'Do you see anything?' And he looked up and said, 'I see men, but they look like trees, walking.' Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly" (Mark 8: 22-25).

That's it, short and sweet, but . . . puzzling. This is the only account of Jesus' healing a blind person in *two steps*. Why the second step? We don't know the answer to this question, but in the article I'm reviewing, Russell Grigg suggests that, by doing this, Jesus ". . . has given a built-in stamp of authority to the authenticity of the account." Grigg points us to a medical condition known as agnosia. A quick check on WebMD.com defines this as "a rare neurological disorder characterized by the total or partial loss of the ability to recognize and identify familiar

objects and/or people by sight. This occurs without loss of the ability to actually see the object or person."

We have only known about agnosia in modern times—that is, since we learned how to surgically restore sight to people who became blind at a very young age. What we now know is that "seeing" involves more than just our eyes. The images our eyes receive have to be transferred as electrical signals to our brain, along healthy nerves, and then interpreted by our brain. It's the interpretation part we take for granted, since we assume we've always been able to make sense of what our eyes receive.

What I've learned is that this interpretation is an ability that sighted-persons develop over time at a very young age. In the article, Grigg shares the story of 50-year-old Virgil who was blind from childhood until his sight was restored in 1991 after cataract surgery. Though Virgil could once again "see", he did not understand what the images meant because his brain hadn't learned how to make sense of them during childhood.

Grigg writes, "Virgil could read the third line on a standard Snellan eye chart, equivalent to a visual acuity of about 20/100 (with a best of 20/80). However, he could not distinguish words, even though he could read Braille fluently, as well as raised or inscribed letters; he could easily read the inscribed letters on tombstones by touch. A cat was particularly puzzling, as he could see parts clearly—a paw, the nose, the tail—but the cat as a whole was only a blur, as were human faces. At the zoo, Virgil found it difficult to identify animals, and did so either by their motion or by a single feature: e.g., a kangaroo because it hopped, a giraffe because of its height, a zebra because of its stripes, and lions because of their roar. A few days after his operation, Virgil said that 'trees didn't look like anything on earth,' but a month later he finally put a tree together and realized that the trunk and leaves formed a complete unit."

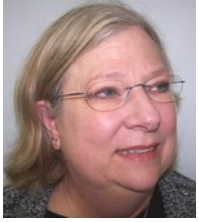
In the first step of the miracle described in Mark 8, Jesus restores the physical function of the man's eyes. But the man's brain doesn't understand what his eyes were telling him. So, in the second step, Jesus instantly bestows understanding to his brain. *The man now can see.*

Many in the world claim the Bible is poetic, inspirational, and perhaps describes a few things from real history, but in no case does it describe anything miraculous. After all, miracles aren't possible. Well, they're wrong. The Gospel of Mark, thought by many Biblical scholars to be the earliest of the Gospels, was written well before the medical community could surgically restore sight. As Grigg notes, ". . . the author [of Mark] could not have known about the problem of agnosia in the newly sighted . . ." because the ". . . surgical correction of congenital blindness was not being done then." Though Jesus could have healed this man in one step, perhaps he used two steps to reveal the authenticity of the account in a way "that is discernible only to modern-day readers."



# What was Martin Luther Really Like?

By Elizabeth Peterson



Martin Luther was born on November 10 in either 1482 or 1483. He was baptized the day following his birth and given the name “Martin” because St. Martin’s saint’s day was on the 11th. The year 1483 is the year more commonly given, but Luther himself was not sure, and the earlier year makes more sense regarding the history of his education. Luther achieved several educational milestones at an unusually young age. While he was clearly quite bright, making him one year older is another likely explanation.

The town of his birth, Eisleben, was also the town where he died. This occurred quite accidentally: he happened to be passing through Eisleben when he became ill and died there in 1546. Luther maintained no relationship with Eisleben because his family moved from there when Luther was quite young—probably in 1484—relocating to the smaller, nearby mining community of Mansfield. Luther’s father was a copper miner as a younger man, but he fairly quickly became a copper ore smelter, a business owner. The success of his business varied over the years, with times of severe indebtedness and also times of prosperity. The Luthers were never part of the upper class in Mansfield, but Luther’s father held some official city positions at times and seems to have been respected.



*Mansfield at Time of Luther*

The Luther family had been rural peasants in previous generations. Luther sometimes spoke of his family background as peasants and his father as a miner. Luther’s father could neither read nor write, but his mother probably could since Luther later gave her books.

Luther lived in towns and cities all his life. He was an urban man, and his urban surroundings contributed to the future course of his life and to his achievements. Cities and towns were by modern standards quite small in the medieval period. Eisleben had roughly 4,000 people, and Mansfield had

about 2,000. To us, these populations seem tiny, but they were not considered so at the time. Luther considered Mansfield his early hometown, and his parents lived the remainder of their lives there.



*View from Birth House Window*

Martin probably had four sisters and three brothers. Out of these children “one daughter and two or three sons” died at early ages. Martin was the oldest child. His father was named Hans, and his mother was named Margarete. Luther later named his first son Hans and his third daughter Margarete.

Luther was fairly close to his parents; he visited them as an adult, and they visited his home in their later years. He did, however, unhappily recall being disciplined strictly and harshly by whippings for minor misbehavior both at home and in school. That kind of child rearing was entirely normal for the period. When Luther was a father himself, however, he was quite affectionate with



*Mansfield “Old Town” Today*

his own children and avoided physically punishing them.

Luther’s childhood appears to have been normal by medieval standards. But one feature stands out: his father made certain that he received a rigorous (and expensive) education, sending him to Latin school, which allowed him later to enter university. University classes in the medieval period were taught entirely in Latin. Boys whose fathers expected them to go into business more commonly attended German school. Hans Luther expected much more of his first son. (It should

# Part 2: Birth, Childhood, and Early Education

be noted that schools in Luther's time were for boys only. Girls were educated at home, or occasionally in convent schools if they lived near enough to one.)

Luther's memories of his early education were quite negative. Latin was relentlessly drilled into the students; the schoolmasters carried sticks, and they frequently struck the students both for minor misbehaviors and for failing to answer questions correctly.

School for younger students offered a very harsh environment. Luther remembered being struck 15 times in one morning for failing to learn a lesson that had not even been assigned. Schoolboys also provided the choirs for the local churches; consequently, Luther learned liturgical music as a youngster.

Hans Luther's set-in-stone plan for Martin was to complete university and then complete law school. The business of smelting ore was often litigious, and Hans may have been looking forward to eventual legal help from his son. His second son, Jacob, took up the smelting trade and so probably was sent to German school.

In either 1496 or 1497, Martin was sent to a different town to attend school. The town was Magdeberg, with a population of about 25,000, which must have required quite an adjustment for a 13- or 14-year-old young man. (Boys as young as 7, however, were earning their own living at that time.) Martin probably attended the Cathedral School in Magdeberg. He lodged with a religious group called the Brethren of the Common Life, which provided homes for students. While not a formal religious order, Brethren was run similarly to a monastery, with strict rules and schedules for the students



Eisleben Today



they supervised.

After a year, Martin was sent to a new school in the town of Eisenach, a smaller town with a population of approximately 4,000. He had many relatives in Eisenach, and he attended the school there for three or four years. He attended a church school which he considered to be the best school he had been in up to that time and recounted good memories of his studies there. Martin was considered old enough to lodge privately with a family in Eisenach, which he did. It is not clear why he did not live with some of his relatives. In later years, Martin looked back at Eisenach as his later hometown.



Back to a large city once more, Luther entered the University of Erfurt in 1501. The city of Erfurt had about 20,000 people and was home to 25 churches and 11 monasteries. Erfurt was a large and distinguished university. During the period that Luther attend-

ed, it was the largest in Germany with about 1,000 students. University professors and students were all male, and all classes were taught in Latin. Students had to begin their studies with liberal arts, and once a liberal arts degree was completed they could continue in theology, jurisprudence (Hans' choice for Martin), or medicine.

Eisenach

Luther was positively impressed with the educational environment at the university. Finally, he believed himself to be in a true learning environment.



**Next Installment (Part 3):  
University and the Monastery**

# Hymn Cycle

## Pentecost Season Readings and Hymns

### SUNDAY, 5 JUL 2015, 6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Ezekiel 2:1-5, II Corinthians 12:1-10, Mark 6:1-13

Hymn of Invocation: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name ..... 549

Hymn of the Day: Preach You the Word..... 586

Dist Hymn: Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared ..... 622

Dist Hymn: O Holy Spirit, Grant Us Grace ..... 693

### SUNDAY, 12 JUL 2015, 7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Amos 7:7-15, Ephesians 1:3-14, Mark 6:14-29

Hymn of Invocation: O Holy Spirit, Enter In ..... 913

Hymn of the Day: By All Your Saints in Warfare.....518 (1, 24, 3)

Dist Hymn: Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness ..... 563

Dist Hymn: Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won ..... 490

### THURSDAY, 19 JUL 2015, 8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Jeremiah 23:1-6, Ephesians 2:11-22, Mark 6:30-44

Hymn of Invocation: Father Most Holy ..... 504

Hymn of the Day: The Church's One Foundation.....644

Dist Hymn: Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread ..... 625

Dist Hymn: Jesus, Thy Boundless Love To Me..... 683

### SUNDAY, 26 JUL 2015, 9TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Genesis 9:8-17, Ephesians 3:14-21, Mark 6:45-56

Hymn of Invocation: O Day of Rest and Gladness ..... 906

Hymn of the Day: In the Very Midst of Life ..... 755

Dist Hymn: Praise The One Who Breaks The Darkness ..... 849

Dist Hymn: Eternal Father Strong To Save ..... 717

### SUNDAY, 2 AUG 2015, 10TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Exodus 16:2-15, Ephesians 4:1-16, John 6:22-35

Hymn of Invocation: Father Most Holy ..... 504

Hymn of the Day: I Know My Faith Is Founded ..... 587

Dist Hymn: Soul, Adorn Thyself with Gladness ..... 636

Dist Hymn: O Living Bread From Heaven.....642

### SUNDAY, 9 AUG 2015, 11TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Genesis 3:8-15, II Corinthians 4:13-5:1, Mark 3:20-35

Hymn of Invocation: Thy Strong Word ..... 578

Hymn of the Day: Lord, Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor ..... 534

Dist Hymn: Draw Near And Take The Body Of The Lord ..... 637

Dist Hymn: Christ, The Word Of God Incarnate ..... 540

### SUNDAY, 16 AUG 2015, FEAST OF ST. MARY, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Isaiah 61:7-11, Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 1:39-55

Hymn of Invocation: For All the Faithful Women..... 855

Gradual Hymn: Magnificat ..... 248-249

Hymn of the Day: By All Your Saints in Warfare.....518 (1, 22, 3)

Dist Hymn: The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord ..... 634



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## LWML Waterloo Zone Spring Rally

The Waterloo Zone LWML Spring Rally was held on April 18 at Grace Lutheran Church, Waterloo. It was hosted by the Dorcas Society and Women's Guild of Immanuel Lutheran Church under the Theme, "He who has ears, let him hear" (Matthew 13:9).

Registration and Brunch began at 8:15 a.m., with devotions beginning at 9 a.m.. Pastor Gerald Kapanka, Immanuel, led the opening devotions and Bible Study based on the Parable of the Sower from Matthew 13. He compared us to the sower, who was doing what he was meant to do; so we, too, are to do what we are meant to do—be a witness for God. We are called to sow seed everywhere, not just in the "good" soil. We are to trust God with the growing and harvesting. Sharon Limbeck from Immanuel led us in singing.

Laura Woebbeking of St. John, Reinbeck, Creative Enhancement Director for the 2015 National Convention in Des Moines, shared updates in the planning and preparations for the convention to be held June 25-28.

A Servant Event workshop was held in order to work on projects for the convention. We worked on finishing the table decorations by cutting and making burlap ribbons, and by unwrapping and forming green raffia paper to make "husks" for the corn centerpieces. We also ironed decals onto the doilies, and filled the "Bountiful Bags" favors with candy. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship of working together. A short business meeting followed.

Pastor Edward Killian, Zone Counselor, lead closing devotions using Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel." We closed with the singing of Hymn 921, "On What Has Now Been Sown."

A total of 45 ladies, two guests, and three Pastors attended the Spring Rally.



Lutheran Cemetery Fence  
Dennison, MN



# What's Wrong With Gathering Wood?

Continued from Page 1

sacred and gladly hearing and learning it. This is "despising His Word" because it loses sight of His Word as a sacred gift, freely given and received in faith by which your forgiveness, life, and eternal salvation are received.

Every Sunday you hear the Lord's Word read. After each reading you hear me say, "This is the Word/Gospel of the Lord." When you respond with "Thanks be to God" or "Praise Be to Thee, O Christ," this thanks and praise acknowledge that you have received His gifts: forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Your "Amen" following the words of the Invocation, the sermon, the prayers, and the Benediction, acknowledges that the Lord's words have not returned to Him "void" but have delivered the gifts they promise.

Don't be deceived by the lies of Satan! Yes, God really did say, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." The Old Adam in you, who would rather listen to the voice of Satan, likes to try to become "lord" of his own Sabbath. But our gracious giver, Jesus, delivers all of Himself to you each Sunday and, as is His way, keeps giving you more of the truth of His Word. To that there is only one thing to say: "Amen."

## The Third Commandment

*What is the 3rd Commandment?*

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.  
(Thou shalt sanctify the holy day.)

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Have a blessed Season of Pentecost!

—Pastor Knox



# Hymn Cycle

Continued from Page 8

SUNDAY, 23 AUG 2015, 13TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Isaiah 29:11-19, Ephesians 5:22-33, Mark 7:1-13

Hymn of Invocation: Lord, Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word .....654

Hymn of the Day: Salvation Unto Us Has Come .....555

Dist Hymn: Lord Jesus Christ With Us Abide .....585

Dist Hymn: Preserve Your Word, O Savior .....658

SUNDAY, 30 AUG 2015, 14TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; Ephesians 6:10-20; Mark 7:14-23

Hymn of Invocation: By Grace I'm Saved .....566

Hymn of the Day: If Your Beloved Son, O God .....568

Dist Hymn: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God .....657

Dist Hymn: How Can I Thank You, Lord .....703

## Welcome Dinner Planned for Vicar Grills & Family

By Judy Fink

Willie Grills will be installed as Vicar for Our Redeemer, Christ, and Peace Lutheran Churches on Sunday, August 2, at the 9:30 a.m. Divine Service at Our Redeemer.



A welcome dinner is being planned immediately following the Service, and members from all three congregations are invited to attend. Members of Christ will provide scalloped potatoes and ham; Peace, deserts; and Our Redeemer, salads and a few more desserts.

Volunteer help is needed in setting up for the meal, serving, and cleaning up. Two sign-up sheets will be in the Our Redeemer parish hall: one for salads and desserts, and one for helping to get ready for the meal. Otherwise, simply contact Judy Fink or Elizabeth Peterson with the needed information.

To welcome Vicar Grills and his family we will hold a "grocery shower". **Suggested items for the shower include nonperishable items such as canned fruits and vegetables, paper products, diapers, and gift cards to discount stores and grocery stores.** You may bring donation items to the parish hall anytime between now and Sunday, July 26. A table will be set up for the donations.

Vicar Grills and family plan to be here the week of the 26th and we would like to have the shower items at the house when they arrive. Monetary donations can also be made to purchase gift cards for them to make purchases for other items they may need.

We would also like to provide some meals for them when they move in. If you would like to help provide a meal, please contact Judy Fink or Elizabeth Peterson.

We greatly look forward to having Vicar Grills and his family with us during this coming year.

# Georgia!

Your humble editor was fortunate enough to visit Georgia in late May to attend a wedding. While there, our tour guide for the week took our group to see much of this beautiful country, including a number of Georgian Orthodox churches and monasteries. Look for an article on the trip in the September-October edition of *the repORter*. For now, here are a couple of photos to give you a taste of what's to come.



## Begging Your Attendance

(All locations @ ORLC unless noted otherwise.)

### July

- 13-15 Reed Lessing speaks at College Hill Lutheran Church (Isaiah 1-39)
- 14-17 2015 Higher Things Conference at Univ of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV
- 19-25 ORLC Vacation Bible School at Faith Lutheran, Waterloo
- 21-24 2015 Higher Things Conference at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI
- 27-31 2015 Higher Things Conference at Concordia University, Seward, NE

### September

- 18-19 LWML Zone Fall Retreat at Camp



## Updated Data

**New Contact Data**  
[None this period.]

**New Addresses**  
[None this period.]



## Mary-Martha Quilt Group

(All Meetings at ORLC)

### July

- 02, 6 p.m.
- 06, 9 a.m.
- 11, 9 a.m.
- 16, 6 p.m.

### August

- 03, 9 a.m.
- 08, 9 a.m.
- 13, 6 p.m.
- 17, 9 a.m.

# My Grace is Sufficient for You

By Larry Bricker

*Editor's Note: Larry is a member of Zion LCMS, Hiawatha, IA. His daughter is Gretchen Lewis, wife of Adam. Larry is the proud grandfather of Reagan, Avery, and Kennedy Lewis. You likely have seen Larry and his wife, Toni, sitting with the Lewises on random Sundays throughout the year. Larry likes to write for Zion's newsletter, and he was kind enough to share a number of his columns with us. Today we reprint a column that we hope you find inspirational.*

As we move through our everyday lives, we can become focused on our hardships, challenges, aches, and pains. When this happens to me, I am reminded of St. Paul's words from 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (ESV): "a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Could this be how God is refining us, as gold is refined? Does He use adversity to temper us and thus pull us closer to our Lord? I can say absolutely YES!

Was this the path that I planned to walk when I planned my future? Absolutely NO! BUT am I in a better place spiritually now than before my health began to be impacted? Oh, I was doing OK as a Christian. I attended church regularly, was active and involved, chaired committees, and regularly attended Bible study. But in hindsight, I would describe what I was doing as "getting by". In some small way, as He did with Paul, Christ knocked me off my high horse and changed my life.

There were four years that I was simply lost after becoming disabled. I call them my "dark years". The pain that I was experiencing was horrific. I was ultimately placed on extremely high doses of morphine in an attempt to control my pain. Then in 2010, I spent almost five weeks at the Mayo Clinic. I relearned how to live life without narcotics. I suffered through withdrawal from those narcotics and then finally emerged on the other side of the opioid fog in which I had been living. The pain is still with me, but God gave me my brain back. Since this time, I have been deeply involved in the Scriptures. Now I have a thirst for His Word.

When I was at Mayo, I wrote this out on one of our classroom white boards (and it didn't really resonate with much of the class, which was about one fourth Jewish):

"More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to

shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Romans 5:3-5).

With Paul's writing, I have found Hope in every meaningful thing that I do. Where would we be without Hope? Hope in a better tomorrow. Hope that tomorrow will hold less pain. The Hope that parents have for their children. The Hope we have for world peace. But for Christians, our Hope turns into Certainty, for the triumphant return of Christ Jesus and the Resurrection. What would we have without our Hope and Him, who provides streams of Living Water that floats our Hope?

I know that every one of us has his own pain, anguish, hurt, emptiness, and suffering. A dear doctor friend put it best. He said "You have learned to live within your pain. You have also learned that you will never live without pain as it was before the injury."

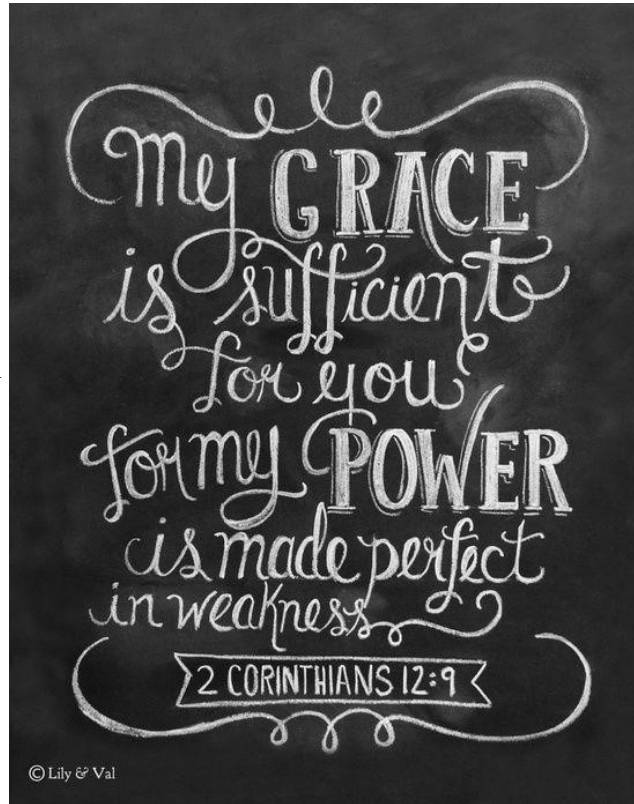
Each of us carries his own burdens every day. None of these "thorns" is easier or harder than the next. Each of us has probably asked God to remove our "thorns". Please be encouraged by knowing that God is working to refine us into the Christians that he desires us to be. When I am feeling overwhelmed, I think back upon Job. His pains and sufferings were the result of Satan's trying as hard as he could to get Job to curse God. Job never did, and God restored everything he lost and more.

It is sometimes very hard to see how God is using adversity to mold us—lumps of clay—into what he desires us to be. It can be even harder to accept the challenges that will come our way as we live Christian lives. Our Lord and Savior Jesus the

Christ had a much harder road to walk than we do. When we stop and reflect on what He has given us through his sacrifice, perhaps then our road will be just a little easier to walk.

Be encouraged: our God loves us. Someday we will walk with Him side by side. At most, we will have only fleeting memories of our present challenges, pains, and heartaches. At best, when Christ Jesus wipes away our tears, he will wipe away those memories as well.

Remember, if God brings you to it, he will also bring you through it! God's richest and deepest blessings to all.



# ORLC Elders: Safeguarding Our Spiritual Welfare

By Matthew R. Kenitzer



From unlocking the church doors to changing the hymn boards, and greeting visitors to assisting with distribution of the Holy Supper, the elders of Our Redeemer serve in God's House every Lord's Day.

But the role of elder is so much more than that of sacristan or "helper". Broadly, the term "elder" can be defined in a

number of ways, including as one who is advanced in age and valued for his wisdom or expertise. In Holy Scripture, however, elders are often described as those placed in positions of authority in the church.

Out of this Apostolic example grew the leadership structure of the early church, as evidenced by Paul's appointment of elders in many of the cities he visited. These elders were to be shepherds of a local "flock" of Christians, caring for, teaching, guiding, and spiritually feeding them. As confessional Lutherans, we are careful to locate certain duties and obligations of these early church elders in the Office of the Holy Ministry; thus, "elder" in the LCMS today is a position of *lay* leadership.

It is here, then, that we find the greatest contribution of elders reflected in the overarching goals for the elders of Our Redeemer—namely, to safeguard the spiritual welfare and doctrinal integrity of our congregation and to care for the spiritual and temporal welfare of her members. This is an important duty and obligation and is one that we elders take very seriously. As

such, it is also our sincere desire that the liturgical, confessional, and Biblical witness of Our Redeemer continue and flourish.

We would, therefore, like to encourage you to renew your commitment as a member of the evangelical Lutheran church to be a faithful witness and regular participant in the spiritual life of the church. First and foremost is the opportunity you have each Lord's Day to hear the Word spoken in all its

truth and purity, with a proper distinction between Law and Gospel, and to receive the promise of salvation in the Holy Supper of Christ's body and blood.

There are further opportunities throughout the week to be a faithful student of the Word, including Bible class after Divine Service each Sunday, as well as on Wednesday evenings. Additionally, Pastor Knox leads a study of the Lutheran Confessions on the last Monday evening of each month. Finally, you have the opportunity on the third Monday evening of each month to flee to Christ and receive the assurance of your salvation through the sacrament of Holy Absolution.

Please understand this is not meant to be an admonishment for missing Divine Service or Bible class—although the Elders would

certainly encourage your faithful participation in them! Rather, it is an encouragement for you to take seriously your calling as a Christian.



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**Our Redeemer** 904 Bluff Street



To: