



# Steadfast

## In the Word and Faith



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Office: 7 Graham Street, Kingaroy, Q. 4610.  
Postal Address: Box 692, Kingaroy, Q. 4610.

Editor: Pastor G L Winter – [glwelcr@bigpond.net.au](mailto:glwelcr@bigpond.net.au)

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## What Luther Says About — Divine Love



**Love Greatest of All Virtues, Also in God.** God, who is infinite and indescribable, also gives in a manner immeasurable. For what He gives He does not give as a deserved and fair payment for services rendered but, as the words read, out of love. Therefore He is a Giver who gives from the heart and out of unfathomable and divine love, as Christ says: ‘God so loved the world’ (John 3:16). Now, as we see, among all virtues none is greater than love. A person is glad and willing to risk and hazard everything he has for the sake of the object of his love. Patience, chasteness, moderation, etc., are fine virtues, too; but they are trivial when compared with love, which includes all other virtues and brings them in its train. Thus the man who is pious and just is unjust to no one and gives every man his due. But where there is love, a man gives his entire self and is willing and eager to do anything for which he may be needed. Our heart should expand, and all sadness should disappear, when we look at this unfathomable love of God's heart and sincerely believe that God is the supreme and greatest Giver and that His giving flows out of love, that sublimest of virtues.—SL 13a,

**God Loves the Unlovely into Loveliness.** Sinners are lovely because they are loved; they are not loved because they are lovely. That is why the love of man avoids sinners and evil persons. But Christ says: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners (Matt, 9:13). And this is the love of the cross, born of the cross, which betakes itself, not where it may find something good to enjoy but where it may confer good upon the poor and the needy; for it is more blessed to give than to receive, says the apostle (Acts 20:35), —SL 18, 55)

**Redeeming Love Its Own Reason.** What is the reason for His giving, and what moves Him to give? Nothing but inexpressible love. For He does not give because He is in duty bound to do so or because someone has asked and begged Him to give; but He gives because He is moved by His own goodness, as a Lord who is glad to give and whose love and delight is in giving, entirely for nothing, without any petition. And just as there is no greater giver than God, so there is no greater virtue (either in God or in man) than love. For to what a person loves he gives and devotes everything, even body and life.—SL 11, 1097

**‘The Love of Christ Passeth Knowledge’ (Eph. 3:19)** Our heart is much too limited to be able to grasp the scope of this great blessing. For such is its magnitude that if anyone were able to comprehend it . . . if we had a full understanding of this love of God for men, a joy so great would come to us from this recognition that we would promptly die because of it. From this we see how great our feebleness is, how great our torpor [lethargy, dullness], since few taste, I do not say, this ocean, but scarcely a few drops of this immense joy.—SL 6, 178)

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## Devotion — John 16:23, 24

The prayer that never fails:

<sup>v. 23.</sup> *And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.* <sup>v. 24.</sup> *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*



here is a right and a wrong use of the Name of the Lord. The Second Commandment says: ‘Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.’

Luther describes the wrong use of God’s Name as ‘cursing, swearing, using witchcraft, lying or deceiving by God’s Name.’ But he then describes the right use of God’s Name: ‘but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.’

What a wonderful privilege we, as true Christians, have! The right to be able to pray to the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus!

But let us never forget that we owe this royal privilege to Lord Jesus Christ alone. He, our elder brother, reconciled us to God when we were yet sinners. He alone has secured for us the right confidently to approach the just and holy God with the prayer, ‘Our Father.’ ‘No man cometh to the Father but by Me.’ So no non-Christian can call upon the Lord’s Name. He may say it, but he cannot pray it. ‘For he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.’ Let us ever remember to approach our Heavenly Father in faith through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to pray in the Name of Christ?

The Greek word ‘name’ did not just mean a label, so that one person might be distinguished from another; it was believed that it was really part of the personality of the one who bears it. Think of the name ‘Jesus’, Saviour, Redeemer, Helper. Peter, ‘Rock man’, because of his rock like faith.

To bear the name of someone, particularly to bear the Name of Jesus, therefore means: ‘acknowledging and appropriating what the name involves, as a confession of faith and allegiance.’

2 Timothy 2:19: ‘Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’ Everyone who names the Name of Christ, everyone who bears the Name of Christ, is to depart from iniquity. Everyone who confesses the Name of Christ, who claims allegiance to Him. Everyone in Whom Christ lives.

What does it mean to pray in the Name of Jesus? It means not to rely on our goodness and worthiness, not even on our fervency when praying, but in simple faith to trust in the all-sufficient and saving merit of Jesus Christ. By nature we are sinners, and the just and holy God cannot and will not hear the prayers of unforgiven sinners. Nevertheless, when we believe in Jesus as our Saviour, we have found forgiveness in Him, and for His sake we have at all times access to the Throne of Mercy. For His sake God always hears our prayers.

But when we thus pray in the name of Jesus, we must also pray according to the will of Jesus, that is, we must subject our will to the holy will of Jesus, that is, we must subject our will to His holy will in all things that we ask for. That includes that we deny ourselves as He demands, that we live in no conscious sin, that we take our cross upon ourselves and follow the example He has set us. Anyone living in disobedience to His holy will, in love of this world, in works of the flesh, cannot acceptably pray to God. He who would call on the Name of the Lord must depart from all iniquity.

Finally, to pray in the Name of Jesus means to pray in firm confidence, never doubting that we are heard. ‘Verily, Verily, I say unto you,

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father for in My Name, He will give it you.' John 16:23.

Note: Everything that the believers ask of God in the name of Jesus, by faith in His merit, He will give to them. For they pray as the children of God, that have the nature and manner of their Father. It is self-evident, therefore, that they pray

only for such things as please the Father, 1 John 5, 14. That includes, above all, that they leave both the time and the manner of the hearing to His fatherly wisdom.

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. —TJW.

## The Lutheran Church in Its Relationship and Position Towards Other Church Bodies

By Pastor Peters<sup>1</sup>. 1890

(Continuation of *Thesis Three* from *Steadfast* November - December 2018)



**Thesis 3: That the true Lutheran Church belongs to the One Holy Christian Church we recognise from this: that it teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity and administers the Sacraments according to Christ's institution unadulterated.**

### WORKS OF LOVE ARE NOT A DISTINGUISHING MARK OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

It will become still clearer to us, if we, for example, have a close look at true faith by which a person becomes a believer in Christ, a member of the body of Christ. Faith is certainly invisible to the human eye, but it becomes *discernable*, perceptible<sup>2</sup> in true works of love<sup>3</sup>. However faith never becomes visible by true works of love, but nevertheless remains invisible to the human eye because true works of love do not belong to the essence of faith, for otherwise we would also be justified by works. This is why our Lutheran Confessions (together with the Bible, BLW) correctly say that faith

<sup>1</sup> **Pastor Peters** (1850-1925) studied at Hermannsburg, Germany and was ordained in 1877. He was at Murtoa from 1878 until 1904 and was also the founder and principal of the college there. He was the editor of the *Kirchenbote* from 1893 until 1894 and president of the Victorian and New South Wales District from 1893 until 1904. He too **became a very faithful 'Missourian' in doctrine and practice** as his excellent commentary on Revelation, *'The Judge Is At The Door'* shows. He was a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (ELSA) [which later changed its name to Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (ELCA)]. **This essay was published in 1890.**

<sup>2</sup> **Dr. Walther** explains: 'Insofar as the people gathered at various places are Christians, they are indeed invisible; but **insofar as one looks at the outward assembly in which they are found, because of which it is called "Church", it is visible.** One must also carefully keep in mind the difference between the sentence: "The church is visible." which means as much as "**perceivable**", and: "The visible church", which means as much as the visible group that deserves the name "church" because the children of God are hidden in it." (*Essays For The Church*, Vol. 1, page 99. Emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> **Dr. Walther** explains this point in an excellent manner: 'The only infallible signs are the Word and the holy sacraments. Some indeed think mutual brotherly love is obviously a sign of Christians and therefore of the church, since our Lord expressly says: "**Thereby everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another**" [John 13:35]. This mutual love is indeed a necessary sign of Christians, so that a person who does not have such love is not a Christian, **but it is not an infallible sign, since someone can pretend love.**

'**The Word, on the other hand, is an infallible sign.** Where the Word is preached there must be children of God, according to the divine promise: "**The Word shall not return to Me empty**", that is, without fruit.' (*Essays For The Church*, Vol.1, page 101. Emphasis added).

alone without works justifies (saves)<sup>4</sup>. Yet true faith always produces works of love and can never exist without showing works of love<sup>5</sup>. Hence also the visibility of its members does not belong to the essence of the Church, but the community (congregation, assembly, totality) of the true believers constitutes the Church, which however, cannot be anywhere else here on earth than among visible people<sup>6</sup>. That is why the words which we confess remain: ‘I believe in one holy, Christian Church.’

But still no-one should be worried about asking: ‘How can I then find it (the true Christian Church, BLW)? How can I know where it is, when I cannot see it?’ But God be praised! It has distinguishing marks where we know it exists, in fact these are much more sure and certain (for us) than faith (which is invisible to the human eye). Just as faith becomes *discernable*, perceptible through love that flows from faith, so also we recognize **where** the Church exists, but *not by what*



*comes from it, but by the presence of what has brought it about* [God's Word, especially the Gospel], BLW)<sup>7</sup>.

For this reason, also, this distinguishing mark is a much more certain one (for us) than faith in Christ. Because the works of love flow from faith only, then I can only recognize this much, that there *cannot* be true faith, where works of love are missing, as therefore James also says: ‘**Faith without works is dead also.**’ (James 2:26). ‘**Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works**’ (James 2:18). ‘**Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble**’ (James 2:19). Read James 2:17-19. But because the distinguishing mark of faith is something that must first flow from faith and man must show his faith in

<sup>4</sup> Eph.2:8,9.

<sup>5</sup> James 2:21, ‘**Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**’ The Greek word for ‘justified’ is aorist **passive** indicative. A better translation reflecting the Greek, the context and the Analogy of Faith reads: ‘Was not Abraham our father shown to be justified by works of love (that faith had produced) **when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**’ Therefore, instead of: ‘**For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,**’ a better translation of James 2:26 is: ‘**For as the (human) body without the spirit (soul) shows that it is dead, so a “faith” that does not show itself in works of love, reveals that it is dead also.**’ The Bible clearly teaches: **FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE = Salvation. FAITH IN CHRIST produces and shows itself in WORKS OF LOVE.**

<sup>6</sup> Again Dr. Walther brings this out so clearly: ‘When it says that the **Church is a spiritual kingdom, hidden in the world**, it is thereby clearly confessed that the **Church is invisible**. I can indeed notice that and where a rational spirit, that and where a soul is, from their working. But I cannot therefore see spirit and soul; similarly **I can indeed become aware of and notice where Christians are, but the Christians themselves, i.e., that which makes them Christians, I cannot see**. The Church, you see, is a Kingdom Christ has raised up **in the souls of men**. But I do not see Him sitting on His throne; neither do I see His subjects, for the **faith through which they are bound to Christ is hidden**. For example, there are two people who give alms to a poor [person], but I do not know which one does it in the obedience of Christ, in true faith as a Christian, and which one not.’ (*Essays For The Church*, Vol. 1, page 95. Bolded emphasis added).

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Walther states: ‘The Means of Grace (the Word and the Sacraments, BLW) are only the **means through which the church comes into existence and endures.**’ (*Essays For The Church*, Vol. 1, page 93. Emphasis added).

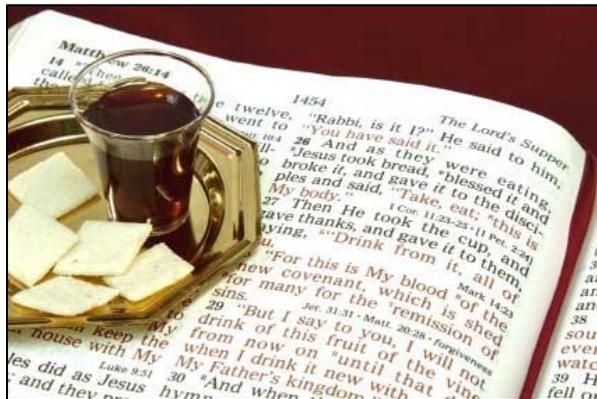
Again he states: ‘In the cited passage in the Apology it is indicated **wherein the Church consists** (only true believers in Christ, BLW); then the **marks** (pure Word and the Sacraments, BLW) are given by which one can recognize, not *what* the church is but **where it is** (Wherever God's Word is taught in its truth and purity and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution there exists at least some true believers in Christ, BLW). **The clearest and indeed the unmistakable marks of the Church** are given—signs by which a person can certainly not miss the church.’ (*Essays For The Church*, Vol. 1, page 93. Bolded emphasis added).

works of love<sup>8</sup>, then I still cannot conclude **with certainty** that where I see the works (of others) also already *true* faith exists (because people can pretend that they have faith, BLW). For I know well that the works must flow from faith, because faith, as Luther says<sup>9</sup>, is always active, and also there is no faith where they are absent. But where the works are, I still do not always know if they **are really a fruit of faith**. For since a person can only show me the marks of faith, he can deceive me and only hold up before me hypocritical works; for I cannot see the *source* of the works. If they have not flowed from faith, they are just false marks.

## THE DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH ARE THE PURE TEACHING OF GOD'S WORD AND THE RIGHT ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

But the distinguishing marks of the Church are something else. No person by nature can show this to me, nor can they lead me to the light of this knowledge, but the true God Himself shows me and at the same time tells me (in His Word) that the distinguishing marks are the source from which the Church originates, from which and through which the Church is brought into existence. So where there is a source, there is and must be water: where, then, these distinguishing marks are in existence to which the Church owes its origin, there **certainly must be the Church**.

Now **what are these distinguishing marks of the Church?** They are nothing else than **God's pure Word and the unadulterated Sacraments**. For God's Word also says about the members of the Christian Church, about the true Children of God: **'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever'** (1 Peter 1:23)<sup>10</sup>.



Therefore wherever *this* seed, namely, the unadulterated Word of God, is spread in its truth and purity, **there the Church must also certainly exist**, because this seed never remains entirely without fruit, as Jesus not only says in the Parable of the Sower: **'But other (seed) fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit'** (Matthew 13:8), but as the Holy Spirit just as clearly testifies by His Words: **'So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return**

<sup>8</sup> While **only faith in Christ saves and good works do not save**, yet for the individual true Christian, as Pieper states: 'Good works have **great value for all Christians** because they serve as *testimonia Spiritus Sancti externa* (the external testimony of the Holy Spirit, BLW) for their state of grace (Luke 7:47; 1 John 3:14).' [*Christian Dogmatics* Vol.III, 61].

<sup>9</sup> Luther describes the power of the divinely wrought faith thus: 'Faith is a divine work in us that changes us and regenerates us of God (John 1:13) and puts to death the old Adam and makes us entirely different men in heart, spirit, mind, and all powers and brings with it the Holy Ghost. Oh, **it is a living, busy, active, powerful thing that we have in faith so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing. Nor does it ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has wrought them and is always engaged in doing them.... Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace**, so certain that a man would die a thousand times for it. And this trust and knowledge of divine grace renders joyful, fearless, and cheerful towards God and all creatures, which [joy or cheerfulness] the Holy Ghost works through faith. And on account of this, **man becomes ready and cheerful, without coercion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, and to suffer everything for love and praise to God**, who has conferred this grace on him, so that it is impossible to separate works from faith, yea, just as impossible as it is for heat and light to be separated from fire.' (St. L. XIV:99 f. *Trigl.* 941, F. C., Sol. Decl., IV, 10 ff.) (*Christian Dogmatics*, Pieper, Vol. III, 11. Emphasis added.)

<sup>10</sup> Kretzmann: 'The apostle states that **this new birth in our hearts** is not the result of perishable, corruptible seed, as the growth of earthly plants would be, but of an **incorruptible, imperishable seed, the Word of God, the Gospel of the Savior Jesus Christ. This Word of God is in itself living, full of life and of life-giving power.**'



unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it' (Isaiah 55:11)<sup>11</sup>.

The same power and effect is attributed to the Holy Sacraments, when, for example, Paul says that God saved us 'by the washing of regeneration'<sup>12</sup> (Titus 3:5). Also the Lord Jesus says: 'Verily, verily (oath, BLW) , I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit (Greek: water to which the Holy Spirit is connected), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (Pastor Peters: That is

Christ's Church)' (John 3:5). Once again concerning the **Holy Lord's Supper** it stands written: '16 **The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?** 17 **For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread**' 1 Cor.10:16,17). Referring both to Baptism and the Lord's Supper we learn in 1 Cor.12:13: 'For by one Spirit are we all *baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*'

Therefore wherever this seed is scattered: **the pure Word of God is taught**; therefore wherever this bath of regeneration: **Holy Baptism**, and this heavenly drink: **the Holy Supper**, are present unadulterated, there are and must surely be *His fruit, that is, Children of God, members of Christ's Church, there is Christ's Body, His Kingdom, His Congregation, His beloved Church.*

(Pages 19-21. Italicised emphasis is Pastor Peters. Bolded emphasis added.) Next time Pastor's Peters gives quotes from Luther to show that this is also the position of the orthodox Lutheran Church.

To be Continued. BLW.

## Lord's Prayer, Part 6 – Fifth Petition

**T**he fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer instructs us to pray, 'And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us'. Having prayed in the fourth petition for the needs of our body, we now consider the welfare of our soul. The fourth and fifth petitions are closely related, being joined together by the conjunction 'and'. 'Give us this day our daily bread *and* forgive us our trespasses.' The petition for bread is directly connected to the petition for the forgiveness of sins. As we pray each day for

our daily bread, so we pray each day that our trespasses be forgiven. Our earthly blessings should teach us to desire and care for those things that concern the eternal salvation of our souls. The nobleman from Capernaum with all of his family was brought to believe in Christ by the outward healing of his son (John 4:53). 'The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance' (Rom. 2:4). As Luther said, 'We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor on their account deny our prayer; for we are worthy of

<sup>11</sup> An excellent translation of the Hebrew of Isaiah 55:10,11 reads: '<sup>10</sup>. **For as the winter rain is accustomed to fall and keeps falling and as the season progresses this rain often turns into snow, and the snow keeps falling, and does not return there without watering (saturating) the earth, making it fruitful and productive, providing seed to the sower and bread to the eater,** <sup>11</sup>. **so will My Word be which constantly goes out of My mouth; it will not return to Me without fruit. On the contrary, it shall accomplish what I desire and delight in, and it shall be prosperous in the matter for which I sent it.**'

<sup>12</sup> Baptism is here described first as the washing (the bath = Baptism is here described according to what it brings about; Compare: Eph.5:26; 1 Cor.6:11; John 3:5). This is further explained by calling it the washing of regeneration ([1] Bengel: 'the washing of regeneration, which is a *periphrasis* for Baptism into Christ.' A *periphrasis* is a figure of speech where a number of words are used to describe something rather than its expressed term: here baptism is, for emphasis sake, described by what it brings about, namely, **regeneration**') [2] Baptism is **the bath or washing** that *brings about* or *effects regeneration* (Stoeckhardt, Wessel).

none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; but that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. So will we also heartily forgive, and readily do good to, those who sin against us.' (Luther's *Small Catechism*, 1943, p. 162).

In the Lord's Prayer we pray, 'Forgive us our *trespasses*'. Matthew 6:12 says, 'forgive us our *debts* (Gk. *ophelemata*)', while Luke 11:4 says, 'forgive us our *sins* (Gk. *hamartias*)'. So where do we get the word '*trespasses*' from? Though not used in the fifth petition itself, the word '*trespasses*' is used by the Lord in His explanation of the petition when He says, 'For if ye forgive men their *trespasses* (Gk. *paraptomata*), your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their *trespasses*, neither will your Father forgive your *trespasses*.' (Matt. 6:14-15). All three words (*debts*, *sins*, *trespasses*) are used as synonyms by our Lord, although each has a slightly different shade of meaning. In Old English the word '*trespasses*' was substituted into the standard English form of the Lord's Prayer as it was regarded at that time to be the more commonly understood term. However, any of the three words can be used in the Lord's Prayer correctly and without error. When we say '*debts*' we are emphasizing the justice that is owed to God because of our sins. When we say '*sins*' we are acknowledging that we have fallen short of God's holy standards revealed in His Law. When we say '*trespasses*' we are emphasizing that we have unlawfully transgressed the boundaries that God has prescribed.

In this fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer we first acknowledge our guilt before God. No one can truly pray 'forgive us our trespasses' who does not penitently acknowledge his own guilt. We say '*our trespasses*', confessing these sins to be our own and taking full responsibility for them. We do not hide our sins from God, nor excuse them by blaming them upon others (Gen. 3:12-13). Rather, like the prodigal we openly confess, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' (Luke 15:21). Like the publican we say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' (Luke 18:13). 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.' (Psa. 51:17). 'Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith

the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD Thy God' (Jer. 13:12-13). David testified, 'I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' (Psa. 32:5).

Secondly, we pray for our heavenly Father's *forgiveness*. One might ask why we need to pray for forgiveness when we are already forgiven for all of our sins in Christ through His atoning work on the cross. Did not Jesus say, 'It is finished'? Did He not die for all sins – past, present, and future? Could it not be considered unbelief to pray for something that God has already declared as given? Luther answers, '[It is] not as though He did not forgive sin without and even before our prayer (for He has given us the Gospel, in which is pure forgiveness before we prayed or ever thought about it). But this is to the intent that we may recognize and accept such forgiveness. For since the flesh in which we daily live is of such a nature that it neither trusts nor believes God, and is ever active in evil lusts and devices, so that we sin daily in word and deed, by commission and omission, by which the conscience is thrown into unrest, so that it is afraid of the wrath and displeasure of God, and thus loses the comfort and confidence derived from the Gospel; therefore it is ceaselessly necessary that we run hither and obtain consolation to comfort the conscience again.' (*Concordia Triglotta, The Large Catechism*, p. 723). Though we are forgiven all sin already, we ask for forgiveness again because of the weakness of our faith and the need to be reassured anew of God's gracious disposition towards us.

Finally, in this petition we promise to forgive others who have sinned against us. We pray that our Father would 'forgive us our trespasses *as* we forgive those who trespass against us'. We are not praying that God should forgive us *because* we forgive others. That would be basing our forgiveness on our own works, and not on the work of Christ. Nor are we praying that God should forgive us *when* we forgive others, or *as much as* we forgive others. That would be prescribing terms to God as to the timing and measure of His forgiveness. Rather, in saying '*as we forgive others*', we are promising God that we, out of gratitude for His forgiveness, will in kind do to others what He

has done for us. It is the nature of one who has received forgiveness to want to show forgiveness to others likewise. Love begets love. 'We love Him, because He first loved us.' (1 John 4:19). 'For if ye forgive men their trespasses, [it is evidence that] your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, [it is evidence that] neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' (Matt. 6:14-15).

*Lord, all our trespasses forgive,  
That they our hearts no more may grieve,  
As we forgive their trespasses  
Who unto us have done amiss;  
Thus let us dwell in charity,  
And serve each other willingly.*  
(M. Luther, 1539)

S Wood

## *Frederick Ruegele — An Autobiography*

I was born April 18, 1846, in the village of Columbiana, Columbiana County, Ohio. My parents were Frederick Kuegele and his wife, Elizabeth Dorothea, nee Ziegler. They had emigrated to this county from Besigheim, Wuerttemberg, Germany, landing at Baltimore in 1834.

I was baptized, catechized, and confirmed in Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is located in the village of my birth, but I was reared three miles to the west of the village, where the town of Leetonia now stands. The advantage of attending a Christian Parish school was denied me, but I had a good district school about a mile away. One morning, as we were on the way to school, a younger brother and I teased our older brother till he became very angry and chased me up to the schoolhouse. When I entered the teacher immediately called on me to read, which I could not do, being out of breath. This was such a shock to me that I felt its effects till I was beyond middle age. Often, when obliged to read in public, I would become extremely nervous.

My father was a reader of a mission paper published by the Basel Mission Society in Switzerland. Reading this paper awakened in me the desire of preaching the Gospel to the heathen, but I dared not express this wish till one Sunday, when walking home from church with my father, he asked me what trade I would prefer to learn, and then, finally, whether I wished to be a preacher. To this I replied, 'No, but a missionary to the heathen.' He answered that if it was God's will, it should be so.

A few years later I entered the Proseminary at St Louis, Mo., in which I remained two years. During this time I began to study the Chippewa Language with the idea of entering the Indian Mission which the Missouri Synod was then carrying on in Michigan. But after two years I went to the College at Fort Wayne and entered Tertia (Sophomore). So it came to pass that I was five years at the Seminary and only three years at the College.

When I was graduated from the Seminary, the mission among the Chippewas had been abandoned, and this obliged me to enter the regular ministry, which had not been my original purpose. I was ordained at Omaha, Nebr., in August, 1870, by the Rev. E.J. Frese. A call had been sent me, signed with seven names, three of women and four of men, but there was no organization, and no salary was promised. Yet when I applied to the Mission Board, the Chairman declared that I was a called pastor, and as such could get no support from the Mission Treasury.

Here was an unfortunate misunderstanding, as a result of which I was left without support, except that one man, John Rometch, allowed me free room and board. Still I went briskly to work. I managed to gather funds to travel through the central part of the State, along the Platte River, and I founded preaching stations at Shell Creek, Olive Branch, Salt Creek and Long Island.

About the holidays I wrote to Prof. C.F.W. Walther stating that I had no overcoat, and asking him to do something for me. He sent me \$25 from the fund for 'retired ministers', and wrote me that I seemed to have quite an apostolic office up there, and that he wished me apostolic success. I had both, but I was also running more and more into debt. Several times the Mission Board sent me small sums to pay travelling expenses, but finally the chairman wrote me that I could get nothing more, and that, if I could not exist there, I should accept another call. Just then a call came to

me from Trinity Congregation at Cumberland, Md. This call I accepted, and thus my life was turned into a very different channel.

After being installed as pastor of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in the spring of 1871, I served that congregation for eight and a half years, part of the time also teaching the parish school. The first two years I also preached to two small congregations in the Georges Creek mines, at Barton and at Lonaconing, going there every third Sunday.

Later, when those congregations had called a pastor of their own, I took charge of a small German congregation in Buck Valley, Pa., visiting it once a month. Seeing that the German language must very soon die out in that little valley, and that the Lutheran Church was likely to die with it, I began to hold services in the English language in the afternoon, and I very soon had a crowded church at each English service. To the best of my knowledge this was the first regular English preaching in the Missouri Synod. I also catechized and confirmed quite a number of young people in English. This was likewise my first practise in teaching and preaching in English.

April 20, 1873, I was married to Meta A.C. Reichenbach, the daughter of a poor widow belonging to Holy Cross Church at St Louis, Mo. We reared nine children, six daughters and three sons.

In the spring of the year 1879, I received a call from Coyner's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, worshipping at Koiner's (now Trinity) and Bethany Churches, in Augusta County, Va. This was one congregation, but the people had built two churches because they lived widely scattered, all being farmers. The churches are six miles apart, the former situated near Koine's Store, the latter two miles north of Waynesboro. Not wishing to become an English pastor, I declined this call, but when it was renewed I at last found myself bound in conscience to accept.

Arriving in Virginia on the 24th April, I was installed on the following Sunday at Bethany Church by the Rev G.W. Lose. At that time this congregation belonged to the Concordia English District of the Joint Synod of Ohio, and so I became a member of the Ohio Synod, in accordance with a rule that a pastor must connect with the synod to which the congregation calling him belonged.

My new surroundings and new relations brought me hard and trying work because I had had no training in the English church language. But everything went well until about New Year, 1880, when the first number of *Altes und Neues [Old and New, GLW]*, the pamphlet published by Prof. F.A.Schmidt, came into my hands. I at once saw that this man was wrong, and that a controversy was coming, but I paid little attention to the matter till the *Lutheran Standard* began to side with him. As I was now a member of the Ohio Synod, this obliged me to show my colours. I

therefore wrote an article on the doctrine of predestination, sent it to the *Standard*, of which paper I had before been a contributor, and asked the editor to publish it. This article was returned with an expression of regret that it could not be allowed to appear in the *Lutheran Standard*.

Hence, to bring my doctrine before my own people, I preached four sermons on election and predestination, had them printed, and gave them into the hands of the people, requesting them to compare the doctrine contained therein with the Book of Concord. This they, or at least many of them, did, and so they convinced themselves that this was the doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions.

When the division came in 1881, at Wheeling, W. Va., I placed before my congregation the alternative that they must either dismiss me as their pastor, or must likewise withdraw from the Ohio Synod. They chose the latter, and now we were without a Synodical home. With others, who had likewise withdrawn from Ohio, I helped to organize the Concordia Synod of Pittsburgh and vicinity. As this body was, however, entirely German, my congregation did not join it, and when the Concordia Synod disbanded, I, too, remained without synodical connection, until, in 1888, a more general English body, was organised in the Synodical Conference.

In the meantime I had become a standing contributor to the *LUTHERAN WITNESS*. In this paper I published a full defence of my action in withdrawing from the Ohio Synod, and to it I contributed a full series of sermons on the Gospels and Epistle of the church-year. Seeing the need of English Lutheran literature, I composed and published a volume of them under the title of *Country Sermons*. These sermons sold unexpectedly well, and when the investment had returned, another volume was published. In this way I published 5 volumes of sermons

under that title. I also published *Your Confirmation Vow* and the book entitled *Experimental Religion or Christophoros*. These, my own publications, were later handed over to Concordia Publishing House at St Louis, the books which were on hand at the time at cost price, the copyright and the plates as a free present. Only the plates of *Christophoros* were reserved. At the request of Synod I also composed the *Book of Devotion*.

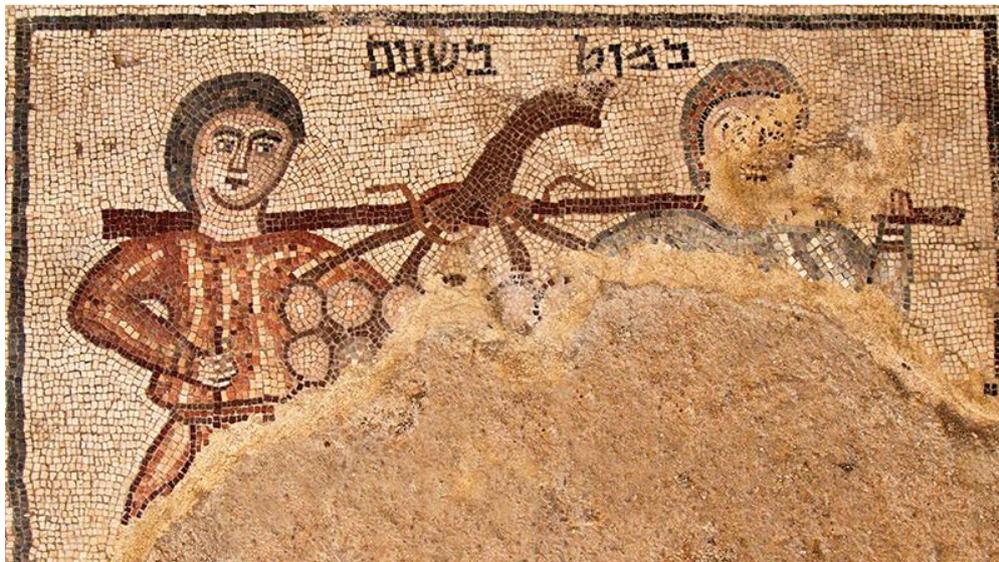
It was my intention in this present year, 1916, to publish a volume on the distinctive doctrines of our Evangelical Lutheran Church. This was to have been my contribution to the celebration of the four hundredth

anniversary of the Reformation, and the major part of the manuscript is on hand, but sickness will render its completion impossible. Be it according to the will of my God. He has guided and governed my life graciously, and I am confident that His grace in Jesus Christ, His Son, will not forsake me at my latter end.

March, 1916. FREDERICK KUEGELE.  
(*The Lutheran Witness*, 1916, pp 142-143.)

## Jewish Mosaic depicts Cluster of Grapes

An archaeological site in Israel continues to turn up stunning and colourful mosaics from the Roman Empire... The latest mosaic discovery from a synagogue at Huqoq, near the Sea of



Galilee, Israel, depicts the spies of Moses carrying clusters of grapes from their exploration of Canaan as described in Numbers 13:23.... [MW1] In most cases, the

identification of the Biblical episode in a mosaic panel is obvious — a pairs of animals in the Noah's ark; Samson carrying the gate of Gaza on his shoulders; Jonah's feet dangling out of the mouth of a large fish — but the latest are different in that each one is labelled in Hebrew with the relevant Biblical passage that identifies it (eg the spies panel is labelled with the phrase "A pole between two" from Numbers 13).

(Taken From: *Archaeological Diggings*, Newsletter No. 26, October 2018).

## Archaeology: Possible Seal of the Prophet Isaiah Found

A bulla (impression of a seal in clay) discovered by archaeologists in Jerusalem has been identified as referencing the name of "Isaiah the Prophet." In a recent article, author and archaeologist Eilat Mazar argues that the broken piece of pottery bearing the seal may be the first known reference to the Prophet Isaiah outside the Bible. The artefact was discovered with 34 other bullae in a 2009 excavation between the Temple Mount and the City of David in Jerusalem. Another bulla, found only ten feet away, contained a clear reference to King Hezekiah, a

contemporary of Isaiah. Mazar, Eilat. "Is This the Prophet Isaiah's Signature?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 44.2 (2018): 64-73,92. Taken from: *Lutheran Spokesman*, June 2018, p 16.

## 2000-Yr-Old Ring May Have Belonged to Pontius Pilate

A copper ring unearthed in an archaeological dig in Herodium, about three miles southeast of Bethlehem, seems to bear the name of Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect who ruled the province of Judaea from around A.D. 26-36. If the identification is correct, it would be among only a very few references, outside the Bible, to the ruler who condemned Jesus to death. The only other physical artifact bearing the name of Pilate is a building block, the so-called 'Pilate Stone', uncovered at Caesarea in 1961. Borschel-Dan, Amanda. "2,000-year old 'Pilate' ring just might have belonged to the notorious Jesus judge." *Archaeology*. TimesofIsrael.com, 29 November 2018. Web. 12 December 2018. (Taken from *Lutheran Spokesman*, 2019, No 8, p 16)

## "Neo-Paganism" Among Europe's Fastest Growing Religions

For the first time in over a thousand years, a new pagan temple is being built in Iceland. It is the HofAsatruarfelagsin in Reykjavik, named for the ancient Norse religion of Asatru. This coincides with a rapid rise in the number of Europeans who identify as belonging to 'pagan' religions, including Asatru, Wicca, Odinism, Druidism, and others. The UK is currently seeking seven pagan 'chaplains' to serve prison inmates, and Scotland's health service has had pagan chaplains since 2007. Christian scholars have speculated about the reasons behind the rise in pagan religions. One attraction is the 'minimum commitment' of paganism, which requires little in the way of obedience or lifestyle change, especially as compared with historic Christianity. Also, says author Roger Buck, 'Paganism much more easily allows for libertinism in our massively secularized society.' Turley, K.V. 'Playing With Fire? The Rise of the Neo-Pagans.' *World*. Nregister.com, 31 October 2018. Web. 12 December 2018. (Taken from *Lutheran Spokesman*, 2019, N 8, p 15)

## Notes and News

**Hospital:** Since the last *Steadfast*

have spent some time in hospital. May they find comfort in the words of comfort below.

### Read First Corinthians I: 1-13

VERSE 9 — *God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

O GOD, Thou faithful, changeless heavenly Friend, why do we ever doubt Thy wisdom, or Thy might or Thy love, or Thy constancy? Among all Thy promises given to the children of men there is not one Thou hast ever failed to keep, even though it had been given to the least of Thy children. Among all Thy prophecies, there is not one which, when its time came; was not fulfilled, even to the very letter. Thou art true, but we are often false. Thou art a constant Friend, but we are often inconstant. Thou dost not change, but we are variable as the vagrant Winds. Blessed be Thy great name, that Thou, although no other abideth firm, art forever faithful. To Thee we commit ourselves wholly, unreservedly, in earthly and in heavenly things. In Thy tender bosom we repose all our cares. Under Thy firm shepherding we go in and out, secure from dangers; supplied in all our wants. When Thou didst call us into the fellowship of Jesus, Thou

didst not deceive us. In Him we have found whatever our deepest longings desired. The wealth of His grace is boundless, the resources of His power to bless us can never be exhausted. O God of Truth, so fill us with Thy Spirit that we may never waver in our allegiance to Him who died for us. Strengthen our wills, that we may prove constant in every time of storm or stress. We pray this in His name alone. Amen.