

# Forward in Christ

A LUTHERAN VOICE

## Lessons from a plane

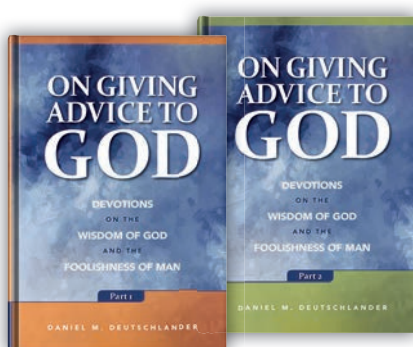
God is with you no matter what you encounter  
when you travel. *Pages 10 & 30*



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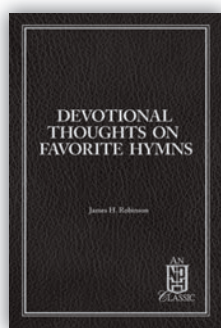
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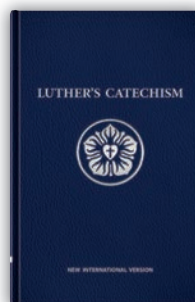
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Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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*May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor forsake us. — 1 KINGS 8:57*

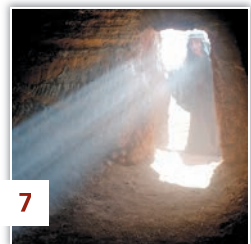
## WHAT'S INSIDE

I fly fairly often. When I was young, it was exciting and new. Now it is just a way to get from one place to another quickly.

Two articles talk about flying this month, both sharing insights on topics that might scare us. The first discusses talking to the person sitting next to you on the plane. While we may try to avoid these interactions, you never know what opportunities the Lord can provide when we engage in conversation—on the plane and elsewhere too (p. 10). The second tells the harrowing story of Flight 1380 and what went through a WELS pastor's mind when it looked like the airplane he and his wife were on was going to crash (p. 30). What do these events have in common? Both can give us an opportunity to live our faith—through our words and our actions.

A special addition to our pages this month are photos of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College 2018 graduates and listings of their first assignments into ministry (pp. 20-28). We thank God for these young men and women who will be sharing God's Word as called workers in our schools, churches, and mission fields.

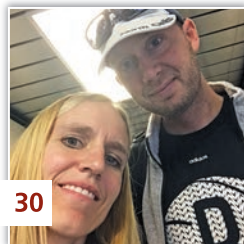
Julie Wietzke



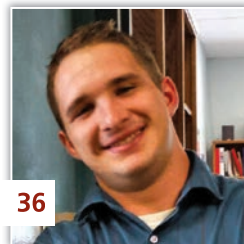
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"Catch any?"



## OUR TREASURE: THE GOSPEL

John Braun's article, "Our Treasure: The Gospel" [May] was especially poignant to me. I lived in West Germany during the historical event of the collapse of the Berlin Wall. WELS sends their own chaplains to serve military members overseas, and our chaplains, Pastors Joel Jaeger and Dan Balge, were able to arrange a joint Reformation service with a sister congregation in East Germany. There we heard the Word in two languages, participated in Communion together, and sang those centuries-old hymns that we still sing today.

Although poor in material possessions, the members were rich in the saving grace of the gospel, kept alive for so many decades of Communist rule. It truly was a moving and memorable experience, and proof that God's Word will survive . . . no matter how hard unbelievers try to wipe it out!

Linda Lobeck  
San Antonio, Texas

Send your letters to Feedback, *Forward in Christ*, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Dr, Waukesha WI 53188; [fic@wels.net](mailto:fic@wels.net). Letters between 100 and 200 words are preferred. Include full name and address. Letters are edited for clarity, conciseness, and relevance. Not all letters received can be acknowledged or used. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or *Forward in Christ*.

## CORRECTION:

An editorial change to President Mark Schroeder's article [June] unintentionally altered the meaning of what he originally wrote. In making the point that even church bodies that were once faithful to the Scriptures can stray from the truth, President Schroeder originally wrote: "The Lutheran church body to which these members belong, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was formed *from Lutheran churches that at one time in their history held and proclaimed the truths taught in the Scriptures*." The printed edited version stated: "The Lutheran church body to which these members belong was formed *at a time when members held and proclaimed the truths taught in the Scriptures*." We apologize for the error.

# Through my Bible in 3 years



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2018  
JULY 2018

- |                      |                       |                    |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. 1 Samuel 4:1b-22  | 12. 1 Sa. 17:55-19:24 | 23. Eph. 3         |
| 2. 1 Sa. 5:1-7:2     | 13. 1 Sa. 20:1-21:9   | 24. Eph. 4:1-5:2   |
| 3. 1 Sa. 7:3-8:22    | 14. 1 Sa. 21:10-22:23 | 25. Eph. 5:3-6:9   |
| 4. 1 Sa. 9:1-10:16   | 15. 1 Sa. 23 & 24     | 26. Eph. 6:10-24   |
| 5. 1 Sa. 10:17-11:15 | 16. 1 Sa. 25 & 26     | 27. Job 1-3        |
| 6. 1 Sa. 12          | 17. 1 Sa. 27 & 28     | 28. Job 4 & 5      |
| 7. 1 Sa. 13          | 18. 1 Sa. 29 & 30     | 29. Job 6 & 7      |
| 8. 1 Sa. 14          | 19. 1 Sa. 31          | 30. Job 8:1-9:24   |
| 9. 1 Sa. 15          | 20. Ephesians 1:1-14  | 31. Job 9:25-10:22 |
| 10. 1 Sa. 16         | 21. Eph. 1:15-23      |                    |
| 11. 1 Sa. 17:1-54    | 22. Eph. 2            |                    |

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# When everything seems lost

Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" John 20:10-13

Joel C. Seifert

There was something that seemed desperate in Mary's actions. Jesus—the one she followed as her Lord and Savior—was dead. She went to anoint his body in a tomb she knew she couldn't open. And now that the tomb was empty, she began to search for his corpse. What was she hoping to accomplish?

## FAITH GOES TO JESUS, EVEN WHEN ALL SEEMS LOST

Over the years I've met many people who say, "I used to be a Christian, but . . ." They tell stories of how they were raised to believe in Jesus and the Bible and God's love, but then faith let them down. They lost their job, and with their job their home, and with their home their marriage. So they stopped saying, "I *am* a Christian" and started saying, "I *was* a Christian." Faith did not seem to matter anymore, so they stopped going to Jesus. It's an awful trick of the devil: At the times we need Jesus most, it's hardest to go to him.

I don't know what Mary expected to happen. I think she just remembered what *had* happened. She was a lost soul; Jesus found her. So in his life and now in his death, Mary only wanted one thing: She wanted to be near Jesus, even if all seemed lost.

That's where Jesus finds us. Things may seem pointless. You might not have any idea what kind of help you'll find. Maybe you're just going back to church or your Bible because once upon a time, it gave you hope, even if nothing seems to matter now. But when you're near him, Christ finds you and shows you that he still loves you, lives for you, and calls you by name.



## WHEN FAITH GOES TO JESUS, HE USES US TO REACH THE LOST

God gave Mary one of the most important tasks in the history of the world: She was one of the first people to ever tell anyone that Jesus rose from the dead. That's important! Do

When you're near him,  
Christ finds you and  
shows you that he still  
loves you, lives for you,  
and calls you by name.

you know what she did after that? I don't either. Read through everything the Bible says about this important woman, and all you get is this: She wanted to be where Jesus was. So when he was preaching, she listened. When he was in need, she gave him

her gifts. When she saw her living Savior, she told others about him.

That's the importance you have too. When you're there listening to Jesus' Word, that's important. You're not just strengthening yourself; you're encouraging and strengthening others. When you give your offerings to help keep his message resounding in the world, that's important. People will hear the gospel because of you. When you tell others about Jesus, you become one of the most important people in the world to them.

Most people won't list Mary side by side with Peter and Paul and James and John as one of the most important people in the Bible, and maybe there aren't many people who will look at you that way either. But Jesus does. And no matter where you go with him in faith, he makes you important to others.

*Contributing editor Joel Seifert is pastor at Beautiful Savior, Marietta, Georgia.*





Mark Schweden

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All of us need  
to do our part  
to encourage  
young men  
to consider  
the pastoral  
ministry for  
their life's work.

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## Wise use of pastors

Our synod is experiencing a shortage of called workers. The shortage of pastors is especially a concern. Prior to assignment day in May, there were more than one hundred pastoral vacancies in parish positions. Even with the assignment of graduates, the number of remaining vacancies is higher than it has been in recent years. It's not a crisis, but it is a concern.

We continue to believe that this shortage will be temporary and will end when God in his love and wisdom decides otherwise. In the meantime, while we recognize that God is the one who provides workers for his church, all of us need to do our part to encourage young men to consider the pastoral ministry for their life's work.

Recently, I received a letter from a WELS layman who asked some good questions about how we use our pastors in this time of a pastoral shortage. He noted that we use pastors to fill many roles other than that of parish pastor. He asked if it is necessary for pastors to serve in those non-parish roles and if we had considered using non-pastors for those positions.

For example, many of the tutors who serve as dormitory supervisors and teachers at our ministerial schools are graduates of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and are ordained pastors. We believe that tutors are some of the best recruiters for ministry. So rather than looking at the tutor position as *taking away* pastors, we believe that more young men are *gained* for the ministry precisely because we have pastorally trained tutors interacting every day with students.

At Martin Luther College, over 20 members of the faculty are pastorally trained men. Could non-pastors be used to fill those positions? Since MLC is our college of ministry, where pastoral training takes place on the college level, we believe it is vital that men who have seminary training make up

a good share of the faculty. We do look to use non-pastors in subjects where it is not vital to have a professor who is trained as a pastor. Similarly, pastorally trained faculty members are vital at our prep schools as well.

Could the administrative and other called positions at the synod level be filled with non-pastors? Laymen and teachers do serve in various roles whenever it is appropriate. But in other cases, when the main job involves working with other pastors and congregations in carrying out ministry, pastoral and congregational experience has proven to be indispensable for that work.

What about pastors serving on the faculties of area Lutheran high schools? Most area Lutheran high schools have at least one or two pastors on their faculties, but the overall number of pastors serving in area Lutheran high schools is not large. The high schools have found it important to have pastors serving on their faculties as teachers of religion and languages, as well as pastoral counselors and recruiters for the pastoral ministry.

The Conference of Presidents (COP) is looking for ways to ease the shortage of pastors in the short term. District presidents provide counsel to congregations on how best to provide pastoral staff during a time of shortage. In addition, the COP continues to look for a long-term solution by encouraging efforts to recruit young men to consider the pastoral ministry.

To ask whether pastorally trained men need to fill various roles that take them out of the parish ministry is a good and necessary question. But sanctified human judgment concludes that filling a role with someone pastorally trained is important and is beneficial to the kingdom.



# Light for our path

**In Matthew 22:17-21, Jesus instructs us to pay the taxes due the government. When our government is using tax dollars for the support of wicked and sinful enterprises such as Planned Parenthood (abortion), how are we to look at paying taxes?**

James F. Pope

Christians are rightly troubled when they recognize that roughly \$500 million from the federal budget goes to Planned Parenthood each year. The organization is the leading provider of abortions in our country. The answers to your question will lead us to see our duty, limitations, and privileges when it comes to paying taxes.

## OUR DUTY

Paying taxes is not optional. A coalition of Jesus' enemies tried trapping him with a question about the propriety of paying taxes. Many people, even some outside Christianity, are familiar with Jesus' answer: "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Years later, through the apostle Paul, God expanded on that instruction: "This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor" (Romans 13:6,7). Part of our Fourth Commandment responsibilities is that we support God's representatives in government through the paying of taxes.

## OUR LIMITATIONS

Some representatives of God in government (and the church and the home) represent him well, while others do not. The caesar whose likeness was on the coin presented to Jesus in Matthew chapter 22 was one of those authorities who failed miserably in representing God faithfully as was the caesar who was in power when Paul wrote his letter to the Christians in Rome. But neither our Lord nor his apostle qualified the directive to pay taxes to the Roman government, even though some of their taxes funded idolatrous worship practices involving state-paid priests. Neither our Lord nor his apostle burdened the consciences of Christian taxpayers by leading

them to conclude that they were personally supportive of ungodly activities because their taxes funded those activities. Christians who paid taxes to Caesar could not control how Caesar used their taxes even if there were limitations to how Christians wanted their tax payments used.

Christians in America face similar limitations. Whether it is funding abortion providers, sponsoring questionable research projects, or wasting money on overpriced expenditures, Christians recognize their role and the government's role: Christians provide the revenue, and the government distributes that revenue through budgetary disbursements and appropriations.

But does that mean that Christians simply pay taxes and have no recourse? Not at all. Christians can contact their governmental representatives to express their displeasure when tax revenues fund immoral activities. Christian citizens can vote for candidates who will use tax revenues wisely.

## OUR PRIVILEGE

Christians can do even more. Christians can exercise the privilege they have of speaking to the King of kings in prayer. We can do what God's apostle instructs: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:1,2).

So pray that God leads governmental officials to act wisely and to use resources in ways that benefit human life.

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*Contributing editor James Pope, professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, is a member at St. John, New Ulm.*

James Pope also answers questions online at [wels.net/questions](http://wels.net/questions). Submit your questions there or to [fic@wels.net](mailto:fic@wels.net).

*Your word*  
is a lamp  
for my feet,  
a light on  
my path.

Psalms 119:105





# EVANGELISM

## *lessons from the Savior*

### Engage in conversation.

Donn G. Dobberstein

According to a study by Expedia, 66 percent of people dread sitting next to someone on an airplane who wants to talk the entire trip. Typically, midair etiquette calls for a little small talk, followed by ear buds, book-reading, or looking out the window. People want peace and quiet.

#### IN-FLIGHT CONVERSATIONS

That's where I thought one such flight was headed after an almost two-hour delay. On board, the seat next to me was empty. Tired, I exhaled with satisfaction and stretched out for a little shut-eye. A scant minute before the boarding door closed, the last passenger boarded and rushed to his seat next to me. Exhaling heavily, he said hello. I smiled and wearily asked, "How are you doing?"

What a dangerous question to ask. I've just expressed an interest in a total stranger and opened myself to a conversation that might go well beyond the single word answer of "Good," which I honestly might have desired at that moment.

My flight seatmate happily shared he was on his way to meet his fiancée. It began a casual, friendly conversation. I learned how they met, where she lived, and all their wedding plans. I couldn't have been happier for him as we walked off the plane and said good-bye.

A couple hours later on a connector flight, I'm buckled alongside a dozen passengers from England headed for a week of golf in America. I'm sitting next to 18-year-old Jonathan, who lived just northwest of London. Accents collided as the dangerous question was asked again, "How are you doing?" The ensuing small talk was casual and natural. He asked what I did for a living.

"I'm a pastor," I answered, "... you go to church?"

"No," he said.

"Ever wonder what they're all about?"

"No," was his answer.

"At our church," I replied, "we tell people about Jesus. Ever heard of him?"

"Yes."

"Oh, yeah? Where?"

"At school."

"What'd they tell you about him?"

"That he lived and died. Crucified him, I guess," he responded.

"Did they ever tell you why they crucified him?"

"No," was his answer.

"Did you ever wonder?"

"No," was his answer.

"Would you like to know?"

"No," he said, with a shrug.



In my head, I was already dreaming of the first ever in-flight adult baptism using the little cup of water the flight attendant handed to me. But it didn't happen. I could tell he was visibly uncomfortable. The conversation returned to casual and safe.

Two days later, I'm boarding the return flight, wondering, *Who will I sit next to this time?* She was a well-dressed, sophisticated-looking personal financial manager of accounts exceeding a half-million dollars. After exchanging pleasantries, she initiated the conversation, "What do you do for a living?"

"I'm a pastor," I answered.

"Really?!" she exclaimed with genuine surprise.

It began a conversation that lasted the entire flight from runway to runway. She talked about the last time she went to church and how she had not been back since—she was turned off by the "meat market" of singles. She talked about her friends in troubled marriages. I talked about the joys of marriage. She told me what she's looking for in a church: one that can personally relate to her life, one in which she will leave on a Sunday and be able to take something with her through the week. She talked about her upscale world of fine homes, private jets, and designer stores in New York City and her affluent background and being surrounded by materialistic people. She confessed there was something missing.

## ENGAGE THE WORLD

Jesus too had conversations that engaged an increasingly large world of people who needed more than small talk. We can learn from one conversation with a Samaritan woman in John chapter 4. "Now [Jesus] had to go through Samaria" (4:4). No, he didn't. But in order to engage in conversation with a total stranger, Jesus went through foreign territory for a Samaritan woman.

Their accents were different. Their cultures clashed. Their conversation

was a social no-no (a strange man was not to be talked to in public). She was someone everyone wanted to avoid because she lived an immoral life.

Jesus asked, "Will you give me a drink?" (John 4:7). What a dangerous question! Jesus used it to begin an incredibly casual conversation that would break through all human barriers and obstacles. In a matter of minutes, Jesus engaged in talk that touched every aspect of her life. He exposed her moral failure with men, then proved himself to be the Messiah she most needed: "I am he" (John 4:26).

---

Any conversation is  
an opportunity where  
small talk can turn to  
spiritual talk and where  
human needs can  
encounter gospel power.

---

Jesus models for us conversation that engages the world. It may be true that the more secular our world becomes, the less inclined people are to go to church. But I believe people are still open to conversations with those who genuinely take an interest and care for them. There is an emptiness, a craving for lasting joy, a need to be known and loved, and a desire for greater meaning in our lives.

Why do we struggle in cultivating a normal conversation toward a faith discussion? The barrier isn't an airplane seatmate, a Samaritan stranger, or human deficiencies. It's the Christian afraid to engage in conversation.

Why do we talk so easily and readily about work, our kids, the weather, football, but talking about Jesus does not come easy?

Why can parents discuss schedules and family finances, but engaging in

spiritual conversation and praying together? "Ah, I just don't know how to do that."

How come small talk with the check-out clerk is easier than sitting down with a child and having a conversation about Jesus? "Ah, but that's just not me."

Jesus models conversation worth talking about because the gospel is what it's all about. It doesn't mean the conversation has to begin with the gospel. It begins with you engaging someone in conversation. Say nothing, expect nothing. There are no shortcuts in relationships. It's slow work. It's soul work. But it's so worth it!

The best part is that God strategically formatted the gospel into words so that it can be part of our conversations with friends, family . . . or even with a total stranger. God wants us to talk about the gospel! Three flights and three chats with three strangers may not have ended with life-changing or Pentecost results. But they did happen. That's the point. It proves that even the most casual conversation can turn into an opportunity to talk about Jesus.

"Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord" (2 Timothy 1:8).

Any conversation is an opportunity where small talk can turn to spiritual talk and where human needs can encounter gospel power. It can happen anytime, anywhere, with anyone. It can happen over a cup of coffee, while waiting in line, in the backyard, and even on an airplane.

It can happen with you.

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*Donn Dobberstein, director of discipleship for WELS, is a member at Trinity, Waukesha, Wisconsin.*

This is the first article in a four-part series on evangelism lessons from the account of the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4.

# Our treasure: THE GOSPEL

## THE GOSPEL CHANGES OUR OUTLOOK

**The gospel changes our thinking, our life, our will, and our choices.**

Aaron T. Mueller

The following letter with a sizable amount of cash was placed on my office computer keyboard a few months back: “Pastor, please gift this money to the family who has a past due account. I’m not concerned about the tax deduction, so there is no need to record this anywhere for my purposes. I know the parents have struggles. The husband loves the outdoors and allows it to take him away from worship. It may even be that the couple has the funds and simply prioritizes and spends them on other things. Sadly, I once was like that. It wasn’t until I met my [Christian] wife, came to church here, and got into the Bible that I realized how blessed we are by the sacrifice Jesus made. I like to think it is because of God and our church that I am where I am today. I don’t know if this donation will help this family reconsider the love we have for them as a church, and in turn the love God has for them in Jesus. I like to think it will. Either way, please anonymously gift this to them.”\*

### WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?

Wouldn’t you be humbled to find, open, and read that letter? The giver was selfless and generous. The gift had no strings attached. The funds were offered without any expect-



tation of results. Yet most revealing of all was why it was given.

The donor recognized a major change had taken place in his own life. That change, by his own admission, was his whole outlook. So much had changed: his priorities, life habits, time allocation, financial giving, his attitude toward God and the Word, and even his dealings with other people. How did that happen? Paul wrote, “For Christ’s love compels us” (2 Corinthians 5:14). The cause was the good news about Jesus. The gospel made all the difference by revealing God’s forgiving heart for sinners in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It also created faith, faith that grasped that truth about Jesus.

Without that good news, there is no difference. Paul writes the same: “There is no difference . . . , for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:22,23). When it comes to sin, the whole world has it and is accountable to God for it. Apart from Christ, no sin-debt can ever be met before God. That means generous people without Jesus, in spite of their earthly generosity, are still on the path to hell. Kind letters and actions without the kind of heart God shapes by his gospel still earn God’s wrath. The powerful gospel makes all the difference between sin and grace, hell and heaven, death and life.

It is dangerous to be indifferent to the gospel. Peter modeled that very truth when he stood by the fire as Jesus was on trial. Warming the body at the expense of the soul never turns out well. But warming the soul with the power of the gospel will turn out well, because the gospel makes all the difference.

### THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES

The difference the gospel makes in our daily lives is like night and day. Having a police officer tail you with the lights on is a very different scenario than having a police officer flip the lights on to lead your car safely to the hospital. Having the Lord actively pursue you with the law is very different than having him lovingly lead you

forward in life by the gospel. Knowing by faith how God deals with us in Jesus Christ winsomely changes our day-to-day thinking from worldly to spiritual.

Scripture drives that point home in various ways. While a thief on the cross suffered the punishment he deserved, Jesus led his heart and mind to see what was right in front of him: “Today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). When a paralytic was lowered through the roof and placed before the Teacher, Jesus lifted his soul right up to his heavenly Father’s forgiveness: “Son,

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## The powerful gospel makes all the difference between sin and grace, hell and heaven, death and life.

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your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5). When the Ethiopian eunuch heard the gospel, he wanted more of it. He said, “What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” (Acts 8:36). God’s people crave the gospel. They look forward to heaven, and only the gospel of forgiveness in Jesus keeps that vision before them. Paul placed that same truth in front of the Philippians: “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The night-and-day difference shows itself in a joyful anticipation of heaven. Even more, it shows up on the calendar of events and priorities in our lives.

One of my elderly members frequently quotes her confirmation verses when I visit: “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world

and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:15-17). Those verses are set for her funeral text. It’s Jesus, not the world, who is to be her lasting confession. Even before she dies, she is confident she died to the world! She wants the miracle story told of how the gospel changed her thinking, her life, her will, and her choices. And it did just that. She raised her family in the Word and still daily reads the Bible. She gave one of her sons over to public ministry. Jesus was visible in her life and prioritized on the calendar.

By the gospel, Jesus is writing a very similar life letter to the world through your daily activities. Paul wrote, “You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God” (2 Corinthians 3:2,3). Can you see heaven in your future? Can that vision help you see the handwriting of God in your present? Take a look back over your years. Would your life letter look similar to the earlier one in this article?

We were all born apart from God. We confess with David, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). But the gospel changed us, and because of that, our priorities also changed.

Growth is ongoing. Day after day, God works by his Holy Spirit in the Word to mature us, train us, and shape us for him and for his heavenly home.

And he’s not done. Until God puts his final punctuation on your life, let the gospel mark your life, your thinking, and your entire outlook. Make the gospel the difference.

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*Aaron Mueller is pastor at St. Paul, Howards Grove, Wisconsin.*

This is the third article in a six-part series on the power of the gospel.

\*Permission from the letter’s author was given for this article.

## In our troubles and challenges, God sends us people who help us grow in our faith and live as his children.

Dawn E. Schulz

Every once in a while, God brings someone into our lives who changes us because of how they've been changed by him. They wrap their arms around our shoulders, redirect us to Jesus, and walk with us through the tough times. Through encouragement and consistent reminders to stay focused on Jesus, they help us get a firm footing on God's promises. When we reflect on God's goodness through them, we realize the best way to say thanks is by doing the same for others.

Anne La Salle would say that person was her mother-in-law, Viola La Salle. Viola saw Anne through many difficult times with a loving, encouraging, and generous spirit that always pointed to Jesus.

### HELP IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Anne's parents emigrated from Scotland when she was a baby and settled in the greater Toronto, Ontario, area. Although Anne's mother grew up in the Catholic Church, Anne's father was an agnostic. So the family did not attend church.

This didn't stop Anne. From the age of seven, she remembers having an inter-

est in church. She joined a nearby Anglican church and attended off and on throughout her teenage years. Unfortunately, a Christian lifestyle was difficult to maintain without supportive parents. By the time she went away to a university in Ottawa, she was spiritually drifting.

But while at the university, Anne met her husband, Charles. He was a member of St. Paul in Ottawa. Anne soon became a member and developed a relationship with her mother-in-law, Viola.

From the early days of their relationship, Anne says that Viola saw her through the "curves and bumps" in life and was there to "steer her in the right direction and cheer her on."

What Anne was so graciously referring to are the difficult circumstances she experienced as she entered her adult years. Anne's unbelieving father was a difficult man to live with, and eventually her parents divorced. There was no one in her family to guide her through life's challenges.

While Anne was pregnant with her first child, her brother died. Emotional turmoil continued for Anne as she aged. Her marriage suffered under the stress. Anne considers it one of the most difficult periods of her life.

These devastating heartbreaks can leave a person flat, without hope or direction. Only those experiencing these things know the hard questions

and faith-challenging uncertainties that relentlessly attack a soul.

Only that person and God.

Viola was God's blessing to Anne at just the right time. Viola helped to ground Anne. As a young woman dealing with these difficulties, Anne needed purposeful words that pointed to Jesus and gave peace.

Then her life became even more complicated. Anne became a single working mom with three young children. Viola was there to help with these curves and bumps too. She didn't take sides or judge but instead gave meaningful and authentic support. She shared God's words and encouraged Anne not to dwell on the grief, remorse, or guilt that comes with loss and difficulty. Instead, she helped Anne see that it wasn't about her at all. It wasn't even about the other person. It was about God. "All of life points to Jesus and is part of God's plan."

### ENCOURAGEMENT IN DAILY LIFE

Viola encouraged more people than just Anne. Viola lived her Christian life in a career in health care, but more important was her role as a child of God, then wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. Even if Viola and her husband had done nothing else, their presence in church at every worship opportunity alone was a fine example. There was never a complaint about aches and pains or weather. You could tell that they concurred with David,

# Confessions OF FAITH





“I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD’ ” (Psalm 122:1).

Viola found opportunities to encourage her church family, both locally and abroad. She served on the altar guild and was president of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society (LWMS) and ladies’ aid organizations. She was always a hard worker, often toiling behind the scenes. But even more, she shared her life. She always had time for a conversation or an open invitation for Christmas dinner. She always had the words to encourage a missionary through handwritten letters every week.

Anne tells the story of Viola’s intervention in the domestic issues of a neighbor. The husband across the street was abusing his wife. One day, seeing the neighbor beating his wife on the front lawn, Viola called the police, even though it would have been easier to close the curtains and look the other way. Viola expected the man to be angry. Instead, the husband was appreciative and brought gifts to show this. Over time, Viola was able to be a Christian role model to their family.

### **INSPIRATION FOR HUMBLE SERVICE**

About six years ago Anne was diagnosed with an immune disorder called sarcoidosis and was hospitalized. The disease and a subsequent heart attack damaged her heart,

leaving her with a chronic condition that needs constant monitoring. Anne had to change her lifestyle and diet to avoid further damage. At the time, Viola was in a senior home, living with her own heart failure. As often as she could, Anne would visit Viola, and they would share a diet-controlled meal and talk. Discussing heart health issues, they spoke about the new “normal” they were both living.

Viola encouraged Anne to share open and honest statements of how she was feeling and the fears of uncertainty that plagued her. Anne says that Viola helped her “get a grip on everything and see that my life’s not over. I’m not going to die today. And even if I do, my Savior is going to take care of me.”

Knowing that she could do little to care for Viola’s earthly needs, Anne decided to follow the path her mentor had laid out so many years ago and give to others. Anne got involved with the women’s group at St. Paul’s and the LWMS. She currently spends time volunteering at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, counseling and supporting women dealing with the effects of heart disease. And she tries to be a role model to her children, who know how important her church family is to her.

This is the impact Jesus intends when he said, “You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds



Anne and Viola

and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Viola agreed. She told Anne repeatedly, “You are here to give glory to God. You should remember that in everything you do—as much as you can. And when you fall away, you can repent and come back because you’re saved. It’s all a good story—it’s all good news.”

On Oct. 25, 2013, Viola went to heaven. Anne, family, friends, and members of St. Paul miss her dearly. However, her memory continues to encourage a focus on Jesus. Her stories continue to inspire humble service. And the thought that Viola is perfectly giving glory to God in heaven continues to bring a smile.

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*Dawn Schulz is a member at Divine Savior, Delray Beach, Florida.*



**heart to heart**  
parent conversations

I was considering titling this month's column, "How can I get my kids to bed without screaming (me) and crying (them)?" but that wouldn't fit in the title space. You see, by the time bedtime rolls around, I am done. I enjoy the books and the songs and the prayers—as long as my kids cooperate. And let's be honest. It's bedtime. They're done too. So most nights are not idyllic.

If you're still working on finding the right bedtime routine, consider the ideas shared by our authors this month. And don't be afraid to keep adjusting the routine. What works at one point in your family's life may not work at another. With that in mind, I'm going back to the drawing board.

Nicole Balza

**Join the  
conversation!**

Visit [wels.net/forwardinchrist](http://wels.net/forwardinchrist)  
and look for the  
*Heart to heart* link.

## WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY'S BEDTIME ROUTINE LOOK LIKE?

**When our oldest** child was a baby, we established a bedtime routine of stories, prayers, and hymns.

**We have a set of four prayers that we speak or sing each night.** We speak "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep," sing stanzas two and three of "Now the Light Has Gone Away" (*Christian Worship* [CW] 593), sing a bedtime prayer that has been used by at least two generations in my family, and close with the Lord's Prayer. This was my childhood bedtime routine, and I'm happy that it is being passed down to my own children.

After these nightly prayers, everyone gives good-night hugs and kisses to one another, and then my husband or I tuck our two littlest children into their beds and sing them a hymn. Some favorites have been "Jesus, Shepherd of the Sheep" (CW 436), "Children of the Heavenly Father" (CW 449), and "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" (CW 432).

Sometimes we sing songs that match the seasons of the church year. Last fall, we often sang all four stanzas of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (CW 200 and 201). The

**"Organized chaos"** may be the best way to describe our family's bedtime routine. With six kids ages 2-11 (two girls and four boys), there's bound to be noise. But we have a consistent routine that works for us.

### **The routine**

When we finish supper around 6:15, the kids are dismissed to do their evening jobs. Depending on their age, they tidy the playroom, wash bathroom counters, load the dishwasher, or start a load of laundry. Meanwhile, I clean up the kitchen while nagging—ahem—*encouraging* kids to finish their chores.

Around 6:30, my husband gets our toddler ready for bed and reads him a Bible story from *My First Bible* by Kenneth N. Taylor. After good-night songs and a prayer, our toddler goes to bed.

After the older kids finish their jobs, they change into pajamas, brush their teeth, and gather in the living room for an evening devotion.

We pile on our two couches, and my husband reads the Bible story. Currently we're rereading the excellent book *Family Time*.<sup>\*</sup> After the reading we discuss the story, sing our good-night hymns, say our good-night prayer, and give hugs and kisses. The kids head upstairs.

By this time it's around 7:00 or 7:15 P.M. Our four-year-old goes right to bed. The big kids (ages 6 and up) are allowed



kids quickly memorized the entire hymn, and they joyfully sang along at the Reformation services we attended. At Christmastime, we often sing “Away in a Manger” (CW 68). Our three-year-old daughter loves “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (CW 61), while our five-year-old son’s favorite is “I Know that My Redeemer Lives” (CW 152). Now they request those hymns all year long!

**As our children have gotten older, we’ve added a new tradition after our nightly bedtime prayers.**

**We help the kids to create their own prayers.** We ask them to share things for which they’re thankful and think of people for whom to pray. Then we put their thanks and requests into a prayer. As the children have gotten older, we encourage them to think of and speak their own prayers. Then my husband and I also add our own prayers.

Sometimes the kids’ prayers reflect their age. After a Christmas of *Frozen*-themed gifts, our youngest daughter thanked Jesus for her *Frozen* castle, water bottle, and

suitcase—for three months! But as they’ve grown, we have seen them learn to recognize that people around them need prayers. Our children pray for family members or friends who are hurting and people affected by disasters in the world. They also thank God for blessings big and small.

Busy family schedules sometimes keep all of us from participating in bedtime routines every night. So we try to find a little time to connect with them every evening on a meaningful level before they go to bed. It doesn’t always work, but it is our goal. We hope that the habits we’ve established with our bedtime routine will last throughout our children’s lives, and they will create a bedtime routine for their children that helps them to pass on the faith too.

*Emily Gresens Strey and her husband, Johnold, have four children ranging in age from 3 to 13.*



to read or play quietly in their rooms until 8. After that, it’s lights out.

I suppose the big kids *could* stay downstairs and read or play until 8. But to both preserve my sanity and give me quiet time to work on my at-home business, the early bedtime is a good fit for our family.

### Variations

- On Saturdays, we go around the room as each family member offers a personal prayer.
- When we have a nursing baby, I feed him/her while my husband handles the evening routine himself—unless he’s at a meeting. Then it’s pure chaos while I try to juggle it all.
- At different periods we’ve had two separate Bible story times—one for the big kids and one for the littles. We have found that our two- and three-year-olds don’t do as well with the whole family Bible story because they need more focused attention and a story written at their level.
- When we’re out late at an evening event, we do our Bible story and songs in the car on the way home. Then the kids can go right to bed when we arrive home.
- Currently, instead of singing our regular good-night hymns, the kids take turns choosing from a songbook that I printed. It includes familiar hymns as well as all the hymns they’ll be expected to memorize at school.

### Challenges

Our routine is great on paper, but real life often intrudes. As the kids get ready for bed, the toddler has a meltdown, siblings squabble in the bathroom, or someone remembers that there’s a paper for me to sign for school the next day. During their quiet time, kids argue about whose turn it is with a book, our kindergartner is upset because his older siblings won’t play a game with him, or the older kids come downstairs to tattle . . . one right after the other.

Even in the rough moments, I’m learning to remember that it’s a blessing and privilege to serve the little souls right in my house—to forgive them, love them, and exercise patience with them. I thank God for the joy and privilege of raising his lambs!

*Anna Geiger and her husband, Steve, are raising their six kids in Mequon, Wisconsin. Anna is the creator of The Measured Mom, an education website for parents and teachers. She recommends her family’s favorite Bible story books at [themeasuredmom.com/favorite-childrens-bible-story-books/](http://themeasuredmom.com/favorite-childrens-bible-story-books/).*



\*Available at [nph.net](http://nph.net).

# Unexpected joy

**We may never clearly know why something happened and what purpose it served. But comfort comes from the Lord in his promise of plans that give us hope and a future.**

James D. Roecker

Milestones in life are occasions for celebrations. A couple makes special preparations for their 25th wedding anniversary. Surprise birthday parties are planned and sprung on someone's special day. UW-Stevens Point graduates cap their completion of school with a graduation celebration. Those involved know the moment will come and the experience will most likely be enjoyable. Planned events come with expectations, especially when you know what's coming. Aside from a surprise birthday party, all these milestones have an expected joy attached.

The opposite also can be true. Regardless of how meticulously you plan a celebration, unexpected things may pop up. Your entrée choice at your wedding anniversary restaurant is unavailable. The birthday cake for the surprise party is forgotten. Not enough food was ordered for the graduation party, so some people leave hungry and a tad disappointed. The unexpected threatens to ruin the joy of special celebrations. Uncertainty tends to undermine owning the joy of the moment. Even the encouragement—expect the unexpected—does not really help put the mind at ease.

**Plans we make and the expectations we have for them pale in comparison to the plans the Lord has for his people.** And the Lord's plans always come to be just as he prepared them. The Lord even gives us this promise: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Life brings moments that we do not fully understand. We may never clearly know why something happened and what purpose it served during our earthly journey. But comfort comes from the Lord in his promise of plans that give us hope and a future. We now can live in peace and joy with eyes that look forward to an unknown future that culminates with a life that lasts forever in the glory of heaven.

**Serving as a campus pastor brings with it certain expected joys.** Preparing Bible studies solely with collegians in mind brings joy. Creating an environment that encourages questions and the sharing of personal spiritual struggles is a unique experience. The Holy Spirit is surely at work, strengthening faith and encouraging Christian brothers and sisters in their walk of faith. Each pastor whom collegians encounter during their lifetime will, Lord willing, show them Jesus. God will surely make faith grow through

Word and sacrament. God, through the apostle Paul, tells us: "What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow" (1 Corinthians 3:5-7). Those who share the Word are coworkers in service to God.

Joy in campus ministry can also be unexpected. Texts and phone calls can come at any time of day. Some students struggle with temptation and sin. Others want clarification on how a certain portion of Scripture applies to their life. Certain collegians are coming back to the church after a long absence. In these unexpected conversations, the joy is always in showing them Jesus. He alone gives us an enduring joy, an unexpected joy, because he has given us something we do not deserve—forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

*James Roecker is pastor at St. Andrew, Saint Paul Park, Minnesota.*





## CHANGES IN MINISTRY

### Pastors

**Baur, Martin**, to retirement  
**Beckmann, Raymond**, to retirement  
**Braun, John**, to retirement  
**Casmer, Frederick**, to retirement  
**Chung, Joon Ho**, to Peace, Santa Clara, Calif.  
**Enter, Jonathan**, to St. Croix Lutheran Academy, West Saint Paul, Minn.  
**Golisch, Benjamin**, to St. Paul, Slinger, Wis.  
**Hagen, Peter**, to Resurrection, Maumee, Ohio  
**Halldorson, N.**, to Grace, Scroggins, Texas  
**Helwig, Michael**, to Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Jensen, Robert**, to retirement  
**Johnston, Mark**, to retirement  
**Kratz, Kenneth**, to Immanuel, Kewaunee, Wis.  
**Kruschel, Stephen**, to St. John, Two Rivers, Wis.  
**Luetzow, Mark**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Schwartz, Matthew**, to St. Luke, Oakfield, Wis.  
**Seifert, John**, to retirement  
**Sonntag, Jeffrey**, to Shining Mountains, Bozeman, Mont.

### Teachers

**Alsch, Patricia**, to retirement  
**Bauer, Matthew**, to Great Plains Lutheran High School, Watertown, S.D.  
**Bauer, Sarah**, to St. Martin's, Watertown, S.D.  
**Beilke, Jonathan**, to Grace, Saint Joseph, Mich.  
**Bentz, Beverly**, to Trinity, Belle Plaine, Minn.  
**Bratsch, Lavonne**, to retirement  
**Deering, Nathan**, to Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo.  
**Dunsmoor, Levi**, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Fiecko, Destinee**, to St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.  
**Fletcher, Erika**, to Garden Homes, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Habeck, David**, to retirement  
**Hartzell, J. Lance**, to retirement  
**Heiman, Laura**, to Grace Lutheran Child Learning Center, Sahuarita, Ariz.  
**Horn, Sarah**, to St. Matthew, Iron Ridge, Wis.  
**Hudson-Cousins, Shakirah**, to Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Jensen, Bradley**, to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.  
**Klukas, Larry**, to retirement  
**Kramer, Rachel**, to Emmaus, Phoenix, Ariz.  
**Lauber, Keith**, to retirement  
**Loberger, Elizabeth**, to Mount Olive, Appleton, Wis.  
**Loberger, Kelly**, to First German, Manitowoc, Wis.

**Marohn, Ann**, to St. Paul, Howards Grove, Wis.

**Matter, Karla**, to retirement

**Neumann, Jessica**, to St. John, Mukwonago, Wis.

**Plocher, Emilee**, to Christ, North Saint Paul, Minn.

**Roska, Janeen**, to Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis.

**Rundgren, Dale**, to St. Paul, Beverly Hills, Fla.

**Rydecki, Matthew**, to Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wis.

**Sandwith, Lindsay**, to St. Peter, Weyauwega, Wis.

**Scharp, Greta**, to Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls, Wis.

**Seifert, Barbara**, to retirement

**Tafel, Joyce**, to retirement

**Thiesfeldt, Jeneane**, to retirement

**Tomhave, Kelly**, to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.

**Vilski, Veronica**, to Prince of Peace, Taylorsville, Utah

**Wiechmann, Michael**, to Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis.

**Woebeking, Sandra**, to retirement

### Staff minister

**Horn, Frederick**, to retirement

### ANNIVERSARIES

**Anchorage, Alaska**—Faith (50). Aug. 5. Anniversary worship, 10:30 A.M.; potluck and program to follow. Website, faithalaska.com. 907-563-3499.

**Kaukauna, Wis.**—St. John (150). Aug. 12. Website, stjohnkaukauna.com.

**Hutchinson, Minn.**—Immanuel Lutheran School (100). Aug. 25–26. Aug. 25. Afternoon activities and food truck picnic; evening concert with The Divers. Aug. 26. Worship, 10:30 A.M.; catered meal to follow. Tickets are \$10 adult, \$5 ten and under. 320-587-6138; pastor@immanuelhutch.com.

**Jackson, Wis.**—David's Star (175). Aug. 26. Mission Festival service, 9:30 A.M.; meal to follow. Oct. 14. Worship, 10:15 A.M. at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School; meal to follow at David's Star. 262-677-2412. Website, davisstar.org.

**Prior Lake, Minn.**—Faith (50). Sept. 9. Worship, 3 P.M.; catered dinner, 4:30 P.M. RSVP requested. pastorschmiel@gmail.com.

**Ottawa, Canada**—Divine Word (40). Oct. 20. Banquet, 1–4 P.M.; tickets, \$15. Oct. 21. Special worship service. Website, divinewordottawa.ca.

**Apacheland, Ariz.**—Native American mission work (125). Oct. 26, self-guided reservation tours. Oct. 27, 11 A.M.–4 P.M., crafts, music history; 4 P.M., worship; 5 P.M., dinner. Oct. 28, anniversary worship throughout Apache reservation. Debbie Dietrich, NativeChristians1@gmail.com. Website, nativechristians.org.

## COMING EVENTS

**WELSMEN summer event**—July 21. Baseball game. Kapco Park, Mequon, Wis. Picnic prior to game. Website, welsmen.com.

**WELS Night at Miller Park**—Aug. 3. Miller Park, Milwaukee, Wis. Brewers vs. Rockies. Order tickets at reduced rates at brewers.com/wels.

**Christian Educators for Special Education annual conference**—Aug. 7. Country Springs, Pewaukee, Wis. Website, wels.net/events.

**Lutheran Girl Pioneer international convention**—Oct. 6. St. Paul's, Franklin, Wis. Karen Martinez, karen.martinez@wels.net. Website, welsrc.net/event/lutheran-girl-pioneer-international-convention/.

**Women's Ministry retreat**—Oct. 6. Theme, "Grace." Peace, Loves Park, Ill. Website, peaceip.com/womens-retreat.

**Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors convention**—Oct. 10–12. Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake, Wis. For all seniors, age 55 and older. Website, wels.net/events.

**Christian Life Resources' Celebration of Life event**—Oct. 20. Theme: "Transformed." Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wis. Website, clrevents.com.

**Lutheran Recovery Ministries recovery retreat**—Oct. 26–28. Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery, Phoenix, Ariz. Website, wels.net/events.

**WELS National Multi-Site conference**—Nov. 12–14. Ingleside Hotel and Conference Center, Pewaukee, Wis. Website, wels.net/multi-site-2018/.

**Tour**—"In the Footsteps of Paul" study tour to Greece and Italy. Jan. 4–16, 2019. Hosted by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Asia Lutheran Seminary, and Wisconsin Lutheran College. steve.geiger@wls.wels.net or joel.pless@wlc.edu.

### NAMES WANTED

**Fort Atkinson, Wis.**—contact information of alumni, former students, teachers, pastors, and staff of St. Paul School, Fort Atkinson, Wis. For upcoming 150th anniversary of Christian education. Complete the form at goo.gl/forms/CovbhREdXstnkZak2 or call 920-563-5349.

### WELS ONLINE BULLETIN BOARD

Needed and available items as well as volunteer and job opportunities are updated regularly on the online WELS bulletin board. Check out these additional resources at welsrc.net/bulletinboard/.

Find additional community events and resources at **welsrc.net**. To place an announcement, call 414-256-3210; bulletinboard@wels.net. Deadline is eight weeks before publication date.

# WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY GRADUATES

At the graduation service on May 25, 27 graduates received diplomas for successfully completing their seminary studies.



**Julius A. Buelow**  
Carthage, Mo.



**Dean G. Ellis**  
Cape Town, South Africa



**Andrew J. Ewings**  
DeForest, Wis.



**Thomas P. Gorzalski**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Scott W. Henrich**  
St. John's, Antigua



**Joel D. Hering**  
Rowlett, Texas



**Erik P. Janke**  
Watertown, S.D.



**Paul M. Koester**  
West Allis, Wis.



**Aaron J. Kristopeit**  
South Milwaukee, Wis.



**Timothy J. Leistikow**  
Bend, Ore.



**Philip J. Loescher**  
Jackson, Wis.



**Cale A. Mead**  
Wonewoc, Wis.



**Nicholas R. Mount**  
Mukwonago, Wis.



**Wolf B. Parsons**  
Box Elder, S.D.

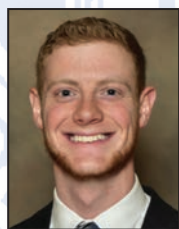


**Benjamin T. Phelps**  
Plymouth, Wis.



## Assignments

At the Call Day service held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., on May 24, 29 men received new assignments (listed below). From the class of 2018, 26 students received assignments. Three candidates from previous years received new calls. Four were re-assigned to their present fields of labor; one had his current call made permanent.



**Peter G. Plagenz**  
Manchester, Wis.



**Micah J. Plocher**  
Vassar, Mich.



**Lucas A. Proeber**  
Saginaw, Mich.



**Kenneth J. Rodrigue**  
Clifton Park, N.Y.



**Aaron A. Schrimpf**  
Zumbrota, Minn.



**William D. Schubert**  
Winnebago, Ill.



**W. Russell Scoggins**  
Austin, Texas



**David P. Strucely**  
Dallas, Texas



**Paul M. Wilde**  
March Rapids, Wis.



**Noah J. Willitz**  
Wausau, Wis.



**Benjamin T. Zamzow**  
Antigo, Wis.



**Jason A. Zuehlke**  
Oconomowoc, Wis.

**Buelow, Julius A.**, to St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich.

**Ellis, Dean G.**, to Crown of Life, Inland Empire, Calif.

**Ewings, Andrew J.**, to Resurrection, Verona/Monroe, Wis.

**Gorzalski, Thomas P.**, to associate for the Minnesota District president

**Henrich, Scott W.**, to Shepherd of the Hills, Knoxville, Tenn.

**Hering, Joel D.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

**Janke, Erik P.**, to Risen Savior, Pooler, Ga.

**Koester, Paul M.**, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

**Kristopeit, Aaron J.**, to St. Peter, Weyauwega, Wis.

**Leistekow, Timothy J.**, to Grace, San Carlos/Peridot, Peridot, Ariz.

**Loescher, Philip J.**, to Crown of Life, Cadillac, Mich.

**Mead, Cale A.**, to Christ, Juneau, Alaska

**Mount, Nicholas R.**, to Grace, Geneva/Trinity, Grafton, Neb.

**Parsons, Wolf B.**, to Divine Savior, Shawano, Wis.

**Phelps, Benjamin T.**, to Grace, Kenai, Alaska

**Plocher, Micah J.**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

**Proeber, Lucas A.**, to St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

**Rodrigue, Kenneth J.**, to Grace, Sugar Bush, Wis.

**Schmiege, Caleb J.**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

**Schrimpf, Aaron A.**, to associate for the Michigan District president

**Schubert, William D.**, to Heritage, Lindenhurst, Ill.

**Schultz, Caleb K.**, to Cross of Life, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

**Scoggins, W. Russell**, to New Hope, Racine/St. Luke-Oasis Youth Center, Kenosha, Wis.

**Strucely, David P.**, to Atonement, Plano, Texas

**Wilde, Paul M.**, to Salem, Owosso, Mich.

**Willitz, Noah J.**, to Living Savior, Missoula, Mont.

**Wordell, Nathan A.**, to associate for the Northern Wisconsin District president, Mount Olive, Appleton, Wis.

**Zamzow, Benjamin T.**, to St. Mark, Bemidji, Minn.

**Zuehlke, Jason A.**, to Shepherd of the Lakes, Fairmont, Minn.



# MLC GRADUATES

One hundred seventy-five people graduated from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., on May 12. One hundred six were in the teacher track, and three were in the staff ministry track. Thirty-five completed the preseminary program, and one received seminary certification. Thirty received master's degrees.



Jacob M. Andersen  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa



Cody J. Anderson  
Bloomer, Wis.



Evan R. Arrowsmith  
Bay City, Mich.



Christa M. Backhaus  
Tomah, Wis.



Alec J. Bergmann  
Slinger, Wis.



Kendra M. Bergmann  
Slinger, Wis.



Carl J. Boeder  
New Ulm, Minn.



Joshua M. Bohlmann  
Crete, Ill.



Abigail M. Bosin  
Greenville, Wis.



Annalies G. Brander  
Picture Butte,  
Alberta, Canada



Karen M. Broring  
Rochester, Minn.



Dakota M. Brown  
Prior Lake, Minn.



Garrett M. Buch  
Manitowoc, Wis.



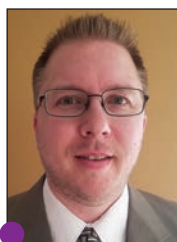
Joshua A. Busch  
Rapid City, S.D.



Andrew R. Carter  
Round Rock, Texas



William T. Chojnacki  
Riverside, Calif.



Jared D. Christensen  
St. James, Minn.



Jocelyn N.  
Christmas-John  
St. John's, Antigua  
and Barbuda



Tassia-Channel  
Clement  
Corinthe Estate,  
Gros Islet St. Lucia



Hannah E. Cook  
West Salem, Wis.



Sarah R. Couture  
Ottawa, Ontario,  
Canada





**Barton J. Cox**  
Oconomowoc, Wis.



**Simeon A. Crass**  
Ortonville, Mich.



**Ethan E. Doble**  
Ortonville, Mich.



**Kelli M. Doell**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Eric K. Dorn**  
Crete, Ill.



**Luke B. Dorn**  
Lewiston, Minn.



**Stanley C. Draper**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Stephanie W. Draper**  
Menomonee Falls, Wis.



**Elizabeth D. Duff**  
Saint Paul, Minn.



**Taylor E. Eastin**  
Westland, Mich.



**Alexander M. Enter**  
Stillwater, Minn.



**Eric J. Fillner**  
Caledonia, Wis.



**Jonathan D. Fleischmann**  
Kaukauna, Wis.



**Kari L. Fuerstenberg**  
Carleton, Mich.



**Megan E. Fury**  
Houston, Texas



**Rebecca C. Gast**  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.



**Adam M. Glodowski**  
Kiel, Wis.



**Kira N. Grev**  
Oakdale, Minn.



**Joseph F. Grzonka**  
Monee, Ill.



**Nathan M. Hablewitz**  
West Allis, Wis.



**Grant T. Hagen**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Danielle J. Hall**  
Oshkosh, Wis.



**Justine D. Hanan**  
Adrian, Mich.



**Maria N. Hardenburger**  
Waucousta, Wis.



**Rachel B. Haugly**  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



**Jeni L. Heiden**  
Mequon, Wis.



**Tessa K. Heiling**  
Redwood Falls, Minn.



**Samuel P. Helwig**  
Richfield, Wis.



**Madeline E. Helwig**  
Mequon, Wis.



**John M. Henning**  
Puyallup, Wash.



**Nathan J. Hensler**  
Freeland, Mich.



**Katie L. Henzi**  
Brillion, Wis.



**Lillian M. Herber**  
Linwood, Mich.

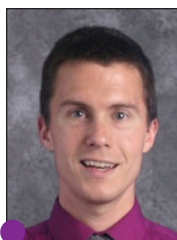


**Jacob M. Heyn**  
Crete, Ill.



**Carolyn K. Hunt**  
Cary, N.C.





**Adam T. Igl**  
Fox Lake, Wis.



**Joseph S. Kasper**  
Thomasville, Ga.



**Sarah E. Kell**  
Zumbrota, Minn.



**Joohyun Kim**  
Seoul, South Korea



**Caleb G. King**  
Lomira, Wis.



**Theodore A. Klug**  
Tacoma, Wash.



**Melissa N. Koenig**  
De Pere, Wis.



**Rendell A. Koepfel**  
Reseda, Calif.



**Brittany J. Krause**  
Hortonville, Wis.



**Joel D. Krieger**  
Las Vegas, Nev.



**Rebecca J. Kroll**  
Allen, Texas



**Heidi R. Kruger**  
Mauston, Wis.



**Karl B. Kruschel**  
Mukwonago, Wis.



**Chandra J. Lange**  
West Allis, Wis.



**Jacob M. Lash**  
Racine, Wis.



**Calista J. Leistikow**  
Campbellsport, Wis.



**Megan N. Lemke**  
Jefferson, Wis.



**Joyce A. Lendt**  
Nicollet, Minn.



**Amanda M. Lewig**  
Hillpoint, Wis.



**Alex M. Lindemann**  
Lewiston, Minn.



**Angela E. Livingston**  
Kewaskum, Wis.



**James C. Livingston**  
Kewaskum, Wis.



**Victoria K. Lober**  
Juneau, Wis.



**Samuel H. Lor**  
Kansas City, Kan.



**Kailynn D. Lovett**  
Caro, Mich.



**Caroline G. Madson**  
Acworth, Ga.



**Cortney M. Manning**  
Parkville, Mo.



**Elizabeth A. Mantz**  
West Bend, Wis.



**Sara C. Marquardt**  
Guntur, India



**Adam R. Mateske**  
Kaukauna, Wis.



**Dane C. Mattes**  
Brillion, Wis.



**Nathan C. Meitner**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Sarah A. Melcher**  
Johnson Creek, Wis.



**Benjamin M. Melott**  
Delano, Minn.



**Heidi K. Moldenhauer**  
Manitowoc, Wis.





Richard C. Muchka  
Morrisson, Wis.



Emily A. Muir  
Watertown, Wis.



Christina E. Nelson  
Phoenix, Ariz.



Heidi S. Nielsen  
Golden Valley, Minn.



Jonathan D. Niemi  
Watertown, S.D.



Ruth D. Nitz  
Olympia, Wash.



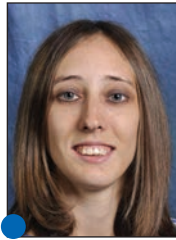
Josiah S. Nommensen  
Cudahy, Wis.



Joshua T. Numrich  
Eagle River, Wis.



SiKyung Oh  
Seoul, South Korea



Rebecca A. Olson  
Dousman, Wis.



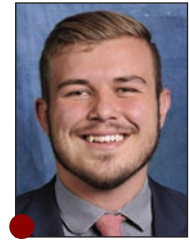
Erich A. Osterman  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Isaac W. Pappenfuss  
New Ulm, Minn.



Zachary A. Peterson  
Watertown, S.D.



Anthony L. Pflughoeft  
Germantown, Wis.



Ryan M. Plath  
Courtland, Minn.



Emma M. Plocher  
Garden Grove, Calif.



Erin R. Plocher  
Phoenix, Ariz.



Joel T. Prange  
Burlington, Wis.



Gretl Y. Quan  
Tianjin, China



Rachel A. Ragan  
Austin, Texas



Micah A. Ray  
El Paso, Texas



Kimberly M. Rehbaum  
Watertown, Wis.



Monica E. Rehberger  
Appleton, Wis.



Rachel L. Riediger  
West Salem, Wis.



Elise M. Rosenbaum  
St. Joseph, Mich.



Mackenzie J. Rothfuss  
Bay City, Mich.



Zachary C. Satorius  
Annandale, Va.



Nathaniel D. Savage  
Phoenix, Ariz.



Molly L. Schalinske  
Racine, Wis.



Hannah A. Schleef  
Platteville, Wis.



Nathan T. Schleef  
Jackson, Wis.



Neil A. Schlieve  
Westland, Mich.



Jacob L. Schlomer  
Helenville, Wis.



Robert J. Schmidt  
Janesville, Wis.



Mikala R. Schmitz  
Fort Atkinson, Wis.





Lana D. Schmitzer  
Jenera, Ohio



Marah E. Schneider  
Schertz, Texas



Morgan R. Schnose  
Dearborn, Mich.



Megan S. Schoch  
Merrill, Mich.



Micah T. Schoeneck  
Green Bay, Wis.



Michael E. Schoenfeld  
Lake Mills, Wis.



Sarah M. Schoenfeld  
Fort Atkinson, Wis.



Laura A. Schoenher  
New Ulm, Minn.



Kylah M. Schroeder  
Modesto, Calif.



Emma E. Schultz  
Elkhorn, Wis.



Ethan J. Schultz  
Waukesha, Wis.



Nathan L. Schultz  
Hartford, Wis.



Lynn M. Sellnow  
Grand Rapids, Mich.



Daniel J. Sprain  
Surprise, Ariz.



Justin D. Steinke  
San Antonio, Texas



Jessie L. Stibb  
Princeton, Wis.



Matthew F. Stob  
Star Prairie, Wis.



Seth M. Tews  
New London, Wis.



Matthew C. Thiel  
Chesaning, Mich.



Mark G. Thiesfeldt  
Tampa, Fla.



Brenna C. Thoma  
Sturgeon Bay, Wis.



David A. Ticks  
Kimberly, Wis.



Rachel L. Timmermann  
Ostego, Mich.



Kelsie M. Tupper  
Minocqua, Wis.



Emily G. Unke  
Las Vegas, Nev.



Ashley A. Urbanek  
Bangor, Wis.



Nolan H. Valus  
Montrose, Minn.



Katherine L. Van Alstine  
Howards Grove, Wis.



Andrea L. Van Sice  
Huntersville, N.C.



Darren J. Vogt  
Whiteriver, Ariz.



Joshua M. VonDeylen  
Friendswood, Texas



Philip J. Waldschmidt  
Greenfield, Wis.



Bryan J. Walkley  
Onalaska, Wis.



Lydia C. Wassermann  
La Crosse, Wis.



Amanda A. Weinrich  
Neenah, Wis.





**Thomas W. Welch**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Collin D. Wenzel**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Vincent G. West-Hallwas**  
Beach Park, Ill.



**Michael E. Wilde**  
Stratford, Wis.



**Justin L. Wilkens**  
Haymarket, Va.



**Joycelyn E. Williams Green**  
St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda



**Miriam D. Willitz**  
Frankenmuth, Mich.



**David G. Wilson**  
Manitowoc, Wis.



**Nathan D. Wong**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Nicole C. Wood**  
Boulder, Colo.



**David E. Young**  
Oconomowoc, Wis.



**Eric J. Zabell**  
Green Bay, Wis.



**Marissa A. Zachow**  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Jason A. Zweifel**  
Lake Mills, Wis.

## Assignments

On May 12, the Conference of Presidents assigned 137 new and previous teacher and staff minister candidates. Thirteen May 2018 graduates deferred assignment, choosing to pursue further education or other areas of service (some electing international service opportunities). Due to marriage plans or living in specific locations, 60 new and previous candidates were available for regional assignments. Thirty-six of those candidates were assigned on May 12 with the remaining candidates available for calls from congregations through their district presidents. Additional calls/assignments will be posted at [mlc-wels.edu/events/commencement/](http://mlc-wels.edu/events/commencement/).

### Teachers

**Andersen, Jacob M.**, to Emmaus, Phoenix, Ariz.

**Bergemann, Elizabeth M.**, to Grace Lutheran Academy, Lowell, Ark.

**Bergmann, Alec J.**, to Divine Savior Academy, Sienna Plantation, Texas

**Bergmann, Kendra M.**, to Divine Savior Academy, Sienna Plantation, Texas

**Botero, Santiago D.**, to Joint Mission Council evangelist for the Arizona/California District and the One Latin America team

**Bovee, Allison E.**, to Apostles, San Jose, Calif.

**Brander, Annalies G.**, to St. Paul, Wonevot, Wis.

**Brown, Dakota M.**, to Little Lambs Learning Center, Duluth, Minn.

**Buch, Garrett M.**, to Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.

**Caldwell-Boeder, Allan L.**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.

**Clement, Tassia-Channel**, to Grace, Grand Anse, Grenada

**Cook, Hannah E.**, to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.

**Doble, Ethan E.**, to Zion, Valentine, Neb.

**Doell, Kelli M.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

**Dorn, Eric K.**, to St. John, St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda

**Dorn, Luke B.**, to St. Paul, Beverly Hills, Fla.

**Duff, Elizabeth D.**, to St. Martin's, Watertown, S.D.

**Dutcher, Jason M.**, to Good Shepherd Lutheran Academy, Deltona, Fla.

**Eastin, Taylor E.**, to St. Mark Little Lions Preschool, Salina, Kan.

**Frost, Rachel L.**, to Ascension Lutheran Preschool, Macomb Township, Mich.

**Fury, Megan E.**, to Hope Lutheran Early Learning Center, Manhattan, Kan.

**Gawel, Nicole M.**, to Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee, Wis.

**Guhl, Nathan L.**, to Michigan Lutheran High School, Saint Joseph, Mich.

**Hablewitz, Nathan M.**, to New Hope Lutheran Academy, West Melbourne, Fla.

**Hahn, Eric J.**, to Salem, Loretto, Minn.

**Hall, Danielle J.**, to Zion, Rhinelander, Wis.

**Haugly, Rachel B.**, to St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

**Heiling, Tessa K.**, to California Lutheran High School, Wildomar, Calif.

**Henning, Elizabeth E.**, to Holy Trinity, Des Moines, Wash.

**Hensler, Nathan J.**, to Zion, South Milwaukee, Wis.

**Henzi, Katie L.**, to Lambs of Grace Child Development Center, Charlotte, N.C.

**Herber, Lillian M.**, to St. John, Westland, Mich.

**Johnson, Stephanie A.**, to Peace, Green Lake, Wis.

**Kent, Julie C.**, to Risen Savior, Milwaukee, Wis.

**Knox, Elizabeth N.**, to Christ Alone, Thiensville, Wis.

**Koenig, Melissa N.**, to St. Mark, Bemidji, Minn.

**Krause, Brittany J.**, to Grace, Oshkosh, Wis.

**Kretsch, Travis J.**, to Immanuel, Salem, Ore.

*Assignments continued on p. 28*

*continued from p. 27*

**Kruger, Heidi R.**, to Faith, Anchorage, Alaska  
**Kuschel, Karl B.**, to St. Croix Lutheran Academy, West Saint Paul, Minn.  
**Lange, Chandra J.**, to Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah  
**Lange, Seth A.**, to Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah  
**Lash, Jacob M.**, to Illinois Lutheran High School, Crete, Ill.  
**Lemke, Megan N.**, to Grace, Portland, Ore.  
**Lober, Victoria K.**, to Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis.  
**Mantz, Elizabeth A.**, to Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis.  
**Marquardt, Holly R.**, to Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb.  
**Meitner, Nathan C.**, to Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Melott, Benjamin M.**, to Grace Lutheran Academy, Lowell, Ark.  
**Meyer, Mary E.**, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Mittelstadt, Alana M.**, to Loving Shepherd, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Moldenhauer, Heidi K.**, to Faith, Tacoma, Wash.  
**Muir, Emily A.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Naumann, Rachel C.**, to St. John, Montello, Wis.  
**Nielsen, Heidi S.**, to Little Lambs Learning Center, Danube, Minn.  
**Nommensen, Josiah S.**, to Grace, Grand Anse, Grenada,  
**Nottling, Ruth L.**, to Divine Savior Academy, Doral, Fla.  
**Oh, SiKyung**, to Westside Christian School, Middleton, Wis.  
**Olson, Rebecca A.**, to Ascension Lutheran School & Preschool, Sarasota, Fla.  
**Peavy, Douglas M.**, to Trinity, Hoskins, Neb.  
**Peterson, Zachary A.**, to Divine Savior Academy, Doral, Fla.  
**Plocher, Emma M.**, to Zion, Valentine, Neb.  
**Plocher, Erin R.**, to Word of Life, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Rehbaum, Kimberly M.**, to Zion, Egg Harbor, Wis.  
**Rehberger, Monica E.**, to St. John, Libertyville, Ill.  
**Riediger, Rachel L.**, to Divine Savior Academy, Sienna Plantation, Texas  
**Rockhoff, Stephanie N.**, to St. John, Sleepy Eye, Minn.  
**Rosenbaum, Elise M.**, to St. John, St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda

**Roske, Haley G.**, to Huron Valley Lutheran High School, Westland, Mich.  
**Santos, Martin**, to Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb.  
**Scharf, Nathan L.**, to Shepherd of the Valley, Westminster, Colo.  
**Schmidt, Robert J.**, to Divine Savior Academy, Doral, Fla.  
**Schneider, Marah E.**, to Mt. Olive, Delano, Minn.  
**Schoch, Garrett J.**, to St. Paul, Columbus, Ohio  
**Schoch, Megan S.**, to Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb.  
**Schulte, Sarah C.**, to St. Croix Lutheran Academy, West Saint Paul, Minn.  
**Schultz, Emma E.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Stein, Megan A.**, to St. John, Jefferson, Wis.  
**Stibb, Jessie L.**, to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Preschool, Las Vegas, Nev.  
**Stob, Matthew F.**, to St. John, Hemlock, Mich.  
**Towne, Wesley S.**, to Mt. Calvary-Grace, La Crosse, Wis.  
**Tupper, Kelsie M.**, to Trusting Hearts Learning Center, Palos Heights, Ill.  
**Uher, Eric K.**, to Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis.  
**Unke, Emily G.**, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Unke, Zachary D.**, to Trinity, Belle Plaine, Minn.  
**Urbanek, Ashley A.**, to St. John, Neillsville, Wis.  
**Van Alstine, Katherine L.**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.  
**VonDeylen, Joshua M.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Vrable, Raine L.**, to Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Walkley, Bryan J.**, to California Lutheran High School, Wildomar, Calif.  
**Wassermann, Lydia C.**, to Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis.  
**West-Hallwas, Vincent G.**, to Christ the King, Bremerton, Wash.  
**Wilde, Michael E.**, to Grace, Glendale, Ariz.  
**Willitz, Miriam D.**, to St. Paul, Franklin, Wis.  
**Witte, Jonathan D.**, to Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis.  
**Staff minister**  
**Carter, Andrew R.**, to Grace, Milwaukee, Wis.

## Obituaries

### James D. Weiland, 1959–2018

James Weiland was born Oct. 13, 1959, in Milwaukee, Wis. He died Jan. 22, 2018, in Wausau, Wis.

A 1985 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served First, Racine, Wis., and Christ, Merrill, Wis.

He is survived by his wife, Sue; his parents; two sons; three daughters; five grandchildren; two brothers; and one sister.

### Arvon E. Peter, 1933–2018

Arvon Peter was born Dec. 15, 1933, in Norfolk, Neb. He died Jan. 24, 2018, in Two Rivers, Wis.

A 1957 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., he taught at First, La Crosse, Wis.; St. John, Saint Paul, Minn.; Emanuel, New London, Wis.; St. Bartholomew, Kawkawlin, Mich.; Grace, Saint Joseph, Mich.; and Immanuel, Manitowoc, Wis.

He is survived by 4 daughters, 1 son, 19 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his wife, Carol; one daughter; one great-grandchild; and three brothers.

### Gerald R. Hildebrandt, 1935–2018

Gerald Hildebrandt was born July 11, 1935, in Milwaukee, Wis. He died Feb. 6, 2018, in Weyauwega, Wis.

He taught at St. Peter, Weyauwega, Wis.

He is survived by one daughter, one son, six grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. He is preceded in death by his wife, Patricia.

### Ruth E. Peikert, 1944–2018

Ruth Peikert was born July 18, 1944, in Minneapolis, Minn. She died Feb. 10, 2018, in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1967 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., she taught at Immanuel, De Pere, Wis.; Zion, Valentine, Neb.; and Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee, Wis.



She is survived by one brother. She is preceded in death by her parents and one brother.

### Harold A. Hosbach, 1930–2018

Harold Hosbach was born Apr. 17, 1930, in Saginaw, Mich. He died Feb. 12, 2018, in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1951 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., he taught at St. Peter, Helenville, Wis.; St. John, Caledonia, Wis.; St. John, Milwaukee, Wis.; Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis.; and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

He is survived by one daughter, three sons, nine grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his wife, Rosalie, and two brothers.

### Lloyd A. Hohenstein, 1934–2018

Lloyd Hohenstein was born Aug. 18, 1934, in Hutchinson, Minn. He died Feb. 27, 2018, in Watertown, Wis.

A 1959 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served at Grace, Pickett, Wis.; St. John, Tomah, Wis.; St. Jacob, Norwalk, Wis.; Immanuel, Gibbon, Minn.; St. John, Lake City, Minn.; and Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association, Austin, Minn.

He is survived by his wife, Virginia; 2 sons; 3 daughters; 20 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren; and 1 sister. He is preceded in death by one son.

### James J. Radloff, 1937–2018

James Radloff was born Apr. 6, 1937, in Milwaukee, Wis. He died Mar. 2, 2018, in Round Rock, Texas.

A 1962 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served at Redeemer, Tomahawk, Wis.; St. John, Enterprise, Wis.; St. Paul's, Litchfield, Minn.; Holy Word, Austin, Texas; and Grace, Woodlands, Saint George, Grenada. He also served the synod as a mission counselor.

He is survived by his wife, Joyce; one daughter; one son; three grandchildren; and one sister. He is preceded in death by one son.

## NPH adjusts to current market



Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) has announced it will close its retail store in the fall. The store, located in Milwaukee, offers Christian books, music, gifts, and church supplies. These items will continue to be available at NPH's website, [nph.net](http://nph.net), or by calling 1-800-662-6022.

A WELS subsidiary and non-profit organization, NPH has served customers for more than 125 years with Christ-centered resources. Going forward, NPH remains committed to developing new materials. Planned titles include *Ten Things to Tell Your Grandkids* and *Look Up From Your Phone So I Can Love You*. The final books in the Peoples Bible Teachings and Bible Discovery series are also being developed. In addition, NPH is continuing its work on the new hymnal and its accompanying resources, which are scheduled to be available by Advent 2021.

As the announcement of the store's closing was made, NPH's customers reacted to the news with both sadness and understanding. Many reminisced about the special atmosphere and products for which the store is known. Others voiced their support for NPH and its mission.

"A sad announcement but a practical one," wrote Johnold Strey, pastor at Crown of Life, Hubertus, Wis.

"Glad you're still going to have an online store, which reaches so many more people than one brick and mortar building could," shared Lorraine Goward, a member at Christ, Oakley, Mich. "Sounds like an excellent use of your resources to close the store and pour more into the website."

In a letter to customers, Bill Ziche, president of NPH, explained that Christian publishing has faced many challenges in recent years. "Publishers affiliated with church bodies have declined significantly in number and size," noted Ziche. "For many retailers, there has been a dramatic shift by their customers toward purchasing online rather than at physical retail store locations. Northwestern Publishing House has been impacted by these trends as well."

NPH's retail store currently represents about 17 percent of total sales. As the store's sales have fallen, NPH's leadership began to anticipate this change and upgraded its website at [nph.net](http://nph.net). The site now provides better search capabilities and an improved customer interface.

In spring 2019, NPH will implement another cost-saving measure by transitioning its warehousing and distribution to an outside fulfillment partner that will ship orders to customers. NPH's staff will also move its offices to the synod headquarters at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. These changes will allow NPH to sell its current building and use the money to continue publishing Christian resources while developing even stronger relationships with WELS areas of ministry and commissions.

Mary Sieh, a member at Good Shepherd, Burnsville, Minn., voiced many people's thoughts when she wrote on Facebook, "Thankful for you, NPH and staff! May God bless your efforts as you move forward in continuing to provide us with the biblically sound material we've come to know and love from you."

# Pray. CHRISTIAN, Pray!

**We are to pray at all times. When one engine of Southwest Flight 1380 exploded, forcing an emergency landing, prayer became vital.**

Alicia A. Neumann

Timothy Bourman, pastor at Sure Foundation, Queens, N.Y., says he's been doing a lot of praying in the aftermath of his flight on April 17, 2018. Bourman was heading to San Antonio, Texas, with his wife, Amanda, to attend Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's Grow in Grace retreat and celebrate his 10th year in the ministry. But the Bourmans never made it to Texas.

## **A TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE**

"It seemed like any other flight," says Bourman. "It was totally packed. We had checked in almost last, and thankfully we found two seats together in the back of the plane." After they were settled into their seats, the Bourmans started playing Sudoku to pass the time. "Right after we finished the puzzle, I heard a loud blast," he says. "One side of the plane just completely dipped. It felt like a nosedive, a descent like I've never experienced. The engine was gone; there was no power left. Our masks came down. I thought this was it. This was the end."

Shrapnel from the engine had blown out the window, and the cabin depressurized. "It was terrifying. It was a scene I never want to see again." Bourman says the first thing he did was start praying. "I grabbed Amanda's hand and said, 'Dear Jesus, send your angels.'"

After they finished praying, the Bourmans tried to turn on their phones to get a message to their daughters, Taylor (6), Brooke (4), and Felicity (2). But they couldn't get reception. So in the midst of all of the chaos, they managed to purchase in-flight wifi and got a message to go through. "It was all garbled. It said, 'Pray. Engine exploded. We are going to try to land. Tell the girls that we love them and to never lose their faith in God,'" says Bourman. "I was thinking about my daughters and how it would be after God takes Mommy and Daddy away from them when they are so young. And I just didn't want them to lose their faith. So I wanted them to have a text message from Mom and Dad that they could always have."

Soon, they heard the pilot's voice over the speakers, saying they were going to make an emergency landing in Philadelphia. "I didn't think we would make it," says Bourman. "When we came below the clouds and I could see the ground, the flight crew was yelling, 'Brace for impact, brace for impact!' I put my head up against the seat ahead of me and held on."

Bourman says the landing was "rather intense," but by the grace of God, they didn't crash. "It was quite amazing, the whole thing," he says. "It took 22 minutes from the time the engine blew until we landed. I knew everything was in the Lord's hands, one way or another, but until the plane actually came to a stop, I didn't think we were going to make it."

As soon as they landed, Bourman started high-fiving the passengers around him. "The guy who was sitting next to me said, 'You were so calm! You kept me and everyone else around you calm too.' But I didn't feel calm," he says. "At that point everyone





Timothy Bourman and his wife, Amanda, before their trip.



The engine that blew up about 20 minutes after takeoff.



Timothy Bourman shakes hands with the pilot, Tammie Jo Shults.

was trying to figure out what just happened to us.”

Meanwhile, firefighters had rushed onto the plane to help the injured passengers, and the pilot, Tammie Jo Shults, came out of the cockpit and started personally ushering people out. The Bourmans were one of the last ones off the plane, and they shook the pilot’s hand and thanked her. “When I prayed to God to send his angels, he had already answered my prayer before I even uttered it,” says Bourman. “He sent Tammie to save our lives.”

## THE AFTERMATH

When they were finally given the all-clear to leave, the Bourmans rented an SUV for their journey home. When they got back to New York a couple of days later, they didn’t waste any time reuniting with their daughters. The two older girls were in school, so the Bourmans met them there. They rushed into their daughters’ classrooms and hugged them. “The teachers didn’t know what was going on until we said, ‘We were on Flight 1380,’” says Bourman. “It seemed like everyone knew about the flight but didn’t realize we were on it. So it was very emotional.”

Bourman said their homecoming was also very emotional for his father, James Bourman, who was watching Tayley, Brooke, and Felicity, and had received the text message as the plane was going down. “For him, it was like getting a son back. He was just holding me.”

In the days that followed, Bourman says things got back to normal pretty quickly for his daughters, who never really grasped the gravity of the situation. But it was a different story for him and Amanda. Getting back to their regular lives was tough—especially when the media started calling.

“They found our numbers, and our phones started blowing up,” he says. “So Amanda and I just made a conscious choice: We were going to start telling people about what Jesus did

for us.” Amanda shared her photo of the plane’s engine on Instagram, and soon the Bourmans were contacted by outlets like the Associated Press, CNN, *The New York Times*, and *People* magazine. “We picked what we thought were the most powerful media out there, and we started taking interviews,” he says.

Bourman says it hasn’t been easy, but it’s good to talk about the experience. “I’ve been thinking about how the truth of the gospel worked in our hearts in such a way that we weren’t worried about whether we would meet God or not. What a way to live!”

He says he’s also been reflecting on all of his blessings, including the love and support he’s received from family, friends, and his congregation. “I think we take for granted the gifts God gives us in a Christian church and Christian community,” he says. “These people are holding me up right now. It’s really beautiful stuff.”

## MOVING FORWARD

Bourman says this whole experience has crystalized some things for him. “If I could share anything with my fellow believers, it’s to pray. Pray with great expectations. God made a promise that if we call on him in our day of trouble, he will answer. We should take him up on this promise. I am living proof that God answers prayer.”

He also says that he knows God will use all of this for his good. “It’s all still so new to me; I’m not sure of the profound impact it’s going to have on my life,” says Bourman. “But I do know that you can look at this and see a cloud of gloom, but that’s where the Scriptures help you give thanks for salvation and give you a resurrection perspective. Living in that thankfulness and looking at this and seeing the Lord’s hand in it makes all the difference in the world.”

*Alicia Neumann is a member at Christ, Zumbrota, Minnesota.*



# The center of the universe

Andrew C. Schroer

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The God who  
created and fills  
the vastness  
of space does  
not treat us  
as we deserve.  
He loves us.  
He forgives us.

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In his book *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Douglas Adams states the obvious: "Space is big." But have you ever wondered how big space really is? A friend of mine recently shared with me the following analogy.

If the ballpoint of the pen on my desk was the earth, the sun would be the size of a ping pong ball about 15 feet away. The nearest star to our solar system, *Proxima Centauri*, would then be another ping pong ball located in the city of Toronto, Canada. I live in Edna, Texas, by the way.

There are more than one hundred billion stars in our galaxy, all of which are trillions of miles farther away. And that's just our galaxy. Scientists estimate that there are more than two hundred billion galaxies in the known universe, each containing between one hundred billion and one trillion stars.

Douglas Adams was right. Space is big. From the perspective of the moon, the earth appears to be the size of a marble. From the perspective of other galaxies, the earth is imperceivable. It is invisible. It is nothing.

So what does that make us? We aren't even a microscopic speck in God's universe. King David once wrote, "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" (Psalm 8:3,4).

If you have a chance this week, read Psalm 8. It gives us a proper perspective of our relative size and place in God's universe. We are insignificant, microscopic specks. Yet God knows and loves each of us personally.

We need that perspective because so often our perception is skewed. Like the warped images in a fun house mirror, our sinful mind distorts how we look at ourselves. We see ourselves as

bigger than we really are. We make ourselves the center of our universe.

My life, my goals, and my happiness become the purpose of my existence here on earth.

God made us tiny specks to be the crown of his creation. And what do we do? We treat him as insignificant. Instead of our lives revolving around him, he becomes a small satellite that enters our orbit only when we think we need him.

The amazing thing is that God loved us rebellious specks so much, he didn't want us to suffer the punishment we deserve for our distorted views. The God who created and fills the vastness of the universe became an insignificant microscopic speck just like you and me to take our place and die our death.

And because he did, we are forgiven for all the times we have made ourselves the center of our own universe. We are forgiven for all the times we have relegated God to being simply a small satellite that revolves around our world.

The God who created and fills the vastness of space does not treat us as we deserve. He loves us. He forgives us. He gives us heaven.

Keep that perspective. Remember your place in God's universe. Remember who you are and what he has done for you. Don't make him simply a satellite that enters the orbit of your life every so often. Don't relegate him to being just a part of your life. He is your whole life. Everything you have and everything you are is because of him.

May God always be the center of your universe.

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*Contributing editor Andrew Schroer is pastor at Redeemer, Edna, Texas.*



# MAJORING ON THE MINORS

Thomas D. Kock

## MICAH: A KING WHO'S A SMALL-TOWN KID

I want him to understand me! I want him to relate to me!

Is that the goal of the reporter's question?

### PEOPLE WHO FIND IT HARD TO RELATE

During presidential campaigns, reporters sometimes ask the candidates if they know the price of milk or bread. They may not actually ask that question, but they want to know if the candidate “gets normal people.” It amuses me. Are most of our presidential candidates regularly in the local grocery stores, comparing the prices of bread or milk?!? I suppose that maybe some do. I don't know.

Wouldn't the difference be even more pronounced for those who are royalty? The prince who grows up in the palace, served by all sorts of people—what would he know about “normal people” or about “normal life”? Probably not much!

### A GOD WHO “GETS IT”

Now let's take it another step. What does *God* know about *us humans*? Oh, sure, one could say, “Everything, because he's *God*,” and that would be completely accurate. On the other hand, he's *God*! He's all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent. He's love. He's the source of all things. What does *God* have in common with *us humans*? By nature, nothing.

So what does *God* do? *God* comes to earth as a real human being. Yes, he comes as royalty. Jesus is the Son of David, the rightful heir to the throne.

But he's also a small-town kid. That's the message of Micah. He writes, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you

will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times” (5:2).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which at that time was a “nothing” little town, a “little sister” to Jerusalem a few miles away. Jesus spent most of his childhood in Nazareth, in Galilee. The “upper crust” at that time looked down on the Galileans. Regarding Nazareth, Nathanael asked, “Can anything good come from there?” (John 1:46). By our parlance, Jesus is a small-town kid.

So what do we have? We have a Savior who “gets it.” He gets what it means to be a normal person, because that's how he grew up. He grew up as a normal person in a normal place.

That means he gets you, and he gets me. He understands the challenges of life because he has experienced them. He understands the joys of life, the sorrows, the day-to-day grind. He “gets it”!

And yet he's also the King! He's the ruler of all, directing all things for your benefit, ruling the world for the good of his people.

What a combination! We serve *God*. We serve the King. He has all power. But we also serve a small-town kid. We serve someone who understands us through and through, the one who was born in a little town, in Bethlehem. He relates to you. He relates to me.

Yep, he knows the price of milk. Bread too.

*Contributing editor Thomas Kock, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, is a member at Atone-ment, Milwaukee.*

This is the sixth article in a 12-part series on the minor prophets

HOSEA

JOEL

JONAH

AMOS

OBADIAH

**MICAH**

**Name meaning:** “Micah” means “who is like the Lord.”

**Background:** Contemporary of Isaiah (late 700s B.C., perhaps early 600s B.C.) from Moresheth (sometimes called Moresheth Gath, cf. 1:14), about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

**Unique feature:** Jeremiah 26:18 quotes Micah 3:12.

**Key verse:** 7:18: “Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.”

NAHUM

HABAKKUK

ZEPHANIAH

HAGGAI

ZECHARIAH

MALACHI




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It takes time to  
grow pastors and  
teachers, but it starts  
early with prayer and  
encouragement.

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## Trees

Warm weather and more sunshine draw the leaves of the trees out from their winter nap. They soon soak up the sunlight, allowing the trees to grow wider and taller. The tree we want so desperately will get larger, but we must wait for the slow process of growth. In a world where we want everything instantaneously, impatience nibbles away at our resolve to wait.

Yet we know about the slow process of growth in our own families. Children enter our lives as little babies and slowly grow to adults. I think we sometimes become impatient with their growth, especially when they do not grow spiritually, emotionally, or intellectually as we want. But growth does not happen quickly or even in a straight line. Ups and downs, advances and retreats, become chapters in any kind of growth. It takes time to grow.

The pictures of the graduates of Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary are part of this issue (pp. 20-27). Like the trees, they did not suddenly appear as graduates ready to serve our churches and schools. Once, they were little saplings—perhaps a little awkward and weak—babes who were baptized and brought to faith and life by the Holy Spirit. God placed them in Christian families, and they grew. Yes, by Word and sacrament, they learned to treasure their Lord Jesus.

I remember my own early growth—a little sapling in grade school always interested in my studies and especially what I was learning about Jesus. I grew to appreciate my pastors and sought ways to imitate them. I remember “playing” church. I was part of a junior choir, and we had choir gowns we brought home until we needed them in church. I made use of mine at home by pretending to be a pastor and leading a church service with my family. My mother always announced at the end of our little game that there would be an ice cream social after the service.

My pastors encouraged me to grow, and they bent this young sapling in the direction of becoming a pastor. The journey wasn’t a straight line to the seminary any more than it is for almost anyone else. Ups, downs, doubts, and certainty—often repeated over the years—became the rings of growth one can see in any tree. Turning from the little sapling to a mature tree took time. Grade school, high school, college, and seminary are measured in years, not hours, days, or months.

As you look at the pictures of the graduates this year, thank God for their growth. They are ready to serve. And remember that they will not stop growing at graduation and after their assignments to their first years of service. The next years will bring experiences that become additional rings of growth for them as trees that provide the shade of the gospel for young and old.

Remember also that the need for full-time workers in the Lord’s church does not end with these graduates. Jesus reminds us, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:37,38).

So we all have a task: pray for workers. In addition, we can encourage those we think have the gifts and inclination to be pastors and teachers. Parents, grandparents, teachers, pastors, and every member of God’s church can look for and encourage the little trees. Then depend on the Lord to grow them to serve him in public ministry. It takes time to grow pastors and teachers, but it starts early with prayer and encouragement.





# COME Lord Jesus BE OUR GUEST

Joel S. Heckendorf

## NOURISHED BY MEALS WITH THE MESSIAH

### “CATCH ANY?” (JOHN 21:1-14)

“Catch any?”

If fishermen have no fish, is there anything more annoying than to hear that question? Even though a bad day of fishing is better than a good day of work, “Catch any?” can be a fillet knife that cuts the ego of fishless fishermen.

Unfortunately, the knifing question, “Catch any?” is not limited to dock conversations. An aunt asks her single-not-by-choice niece, “Not married yet?” The ladies at church ask the young, infertile couple, “When are the little ones coming?” The pick-up basketball player asks his unemployed teammate, “Find a job yet?” Each question is just another way of asking, “Catch any?” Catch any men? Catch any kids? Catch any employment? While it may not show in the respondents’ faces, each question is a knife to the heart, as they’d love the reply to be anything but no.

What about when Jesus asked the probing question? “‘Friends, haven’t you any fish?’ ‘No,’ they answered” (John 21:5). Yet when Jesus asks a heart-knifing question, the conversation doesn’t end at no. He provides the solution. To the fishless disciples, he directed, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat” (John 21:6). One hundred fifty-three keepers later,

they trusted that Jesus knew what he was talking about.

While we stand in awe of this abundant miracle, notice what Jesus was doing before he provided the blessing. He was getting the grill ready. Isn’t that neat? He knew how he was going to bless the disciples before he blessed the disciples. The same can be said for you. In his wisdom, he may not choose to bless you with what you long for most. But he’s getting the grill ready. He already knows how he’s going to bless you before he blesses you.

And here’s another detail not to miss. Jesus wasn’t only getting the grill ready. Look what was on the grill. Fish. Before the disciples hauled their 153 in, Jesus already had his own catch on the grill, ready to share. Jesus does the same for you and me. He’s preparing to bless you with your own individual blessings, but don’t neglect to see the blessings that he has already caught and invites you to enjoy with him. Hear him say things like, “Come. Come to my Table for the forgiveness of sins.” “Come. Come to the table that I’ve prepared in the presence of your enemies. You have nothing to fear.” “Come. Come to my banquet table where we can feast forever.” “Come. Come and drink the living water that I provide.”

Pray for the blessings that you hope God is preparing for you. But also pray for the blessings that he already has on his grill. As we pray, “Let these gifts to us be blessed,” we will be so amazed at what he serves that we won’t have to ask, “Who are you?” We’ll know: “It is the Lord!” (John 21:7).

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Why does God allow our nets to be empty at times?
2. Why does the Holy Spirit include the number of fish in this lesson?
3. Compare Peter’s reaction to two different miraculous catches of fish (Luke 5:1-11 and John 21:1-14). Why the difference?

*Contributing editor Joel Heckendorf is pastor at Immanuel, Greenville, Wisconsin.*



This is the eighth article in a 12-part series that looks at Jesus as a mealtime guest and how he blessed his fellow diners—and us—with his living presence. Find the article and answers online after July 5 at [wels.net/forwardinchrist](http://wels.net/forwardinchrist).

## Becoming a Christian teacher is an opportunity to share Christ's love with another generation.

Jason Zweifel

My Martin Luther College (MLC) story started long before I stepped on campus. As far back as I can remember, I have always wanted to serve God and other people with my life. Growing up with Christian parents and attending a Christian grade school, I learned about the grace of our God from a young age.

When I was a sophomore at Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis., my childlike faith was tested when my brother Ryan passed away in a car accident after completing his freshman year at MLC. The next few years were a challenging season in my life.

However, I received comfort from the gospel and from the Christian people around me. Time and perspective granted me insight into the glory and plans of God. As an 18-year-old senior, thanks to the encouragement of teachers, pastors, other adults, and my parents, I decided that I wanted to be able to pass on the peace of faith in Christ that I had received. I decided to enroll at MLC.

MLC offered me many different opportunities to grow as a Christian

man in this world. Along with taking classes on campus, I also went on two immersion trips to Argentina and Chile and studied marine biology in Jamaica. I was able to play and coach football, go on a mission trip to Colorado, and make lifelong friends. In the 2015–2016 school year, I took an emergency call and served as a fifth and sixth grade teacher in Neenah, Wisconsin. There I received a personal and up-close introduction to the joys and challenges of teaching. That class will always have a special place in my heart.

After reflecting upon my educational experience at MLC, I feel as if I have been uniquely prepared for a career as a called worker. I have learned education theories, teaching strategies, inspiring content to teach, and a philosophy of education in which I believe. I have accumulated a wealth of first-hand teaching experiences in a wide range of settings. I have received a state license that qualifies me to teach.

However, all of these things are achievable at any great teacher preparation college and not unique to Martin Luther College. What is unique to MLC is a systematic focus on what is the most important part of life: Christ. Being a part of a community of people who are devoted to the cross is something special.

When I step into my own call, I look forward to the opportunity to impart the Christ-centered attitude that I have developed as a result of my experiences at my Christian grade school, high school, and college. I have learned so much through the daily interactions that I have had with other Christ-centered people. I thank God for the people that he put in my life and the course on which he has led me. I can think of nothing more worthy to do than to pass on the type of training that I have received to the next generation.

My prayer for my future classroom and students is that I will be able to faithfully model this Christ-centered attitude to the next generation just as it was modeled for me.

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*Jason Zweifel is a member at St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wisconsin. He graduated from Martin Luther College this May with a double major in elementary education and secondary Spanish education. He elected international service and will be serving in Ecuador.*

View photos of the 2018 MLC graduating class and a list of where they were assigned on pp. 22–28.

# Devoted TO THE CROSS

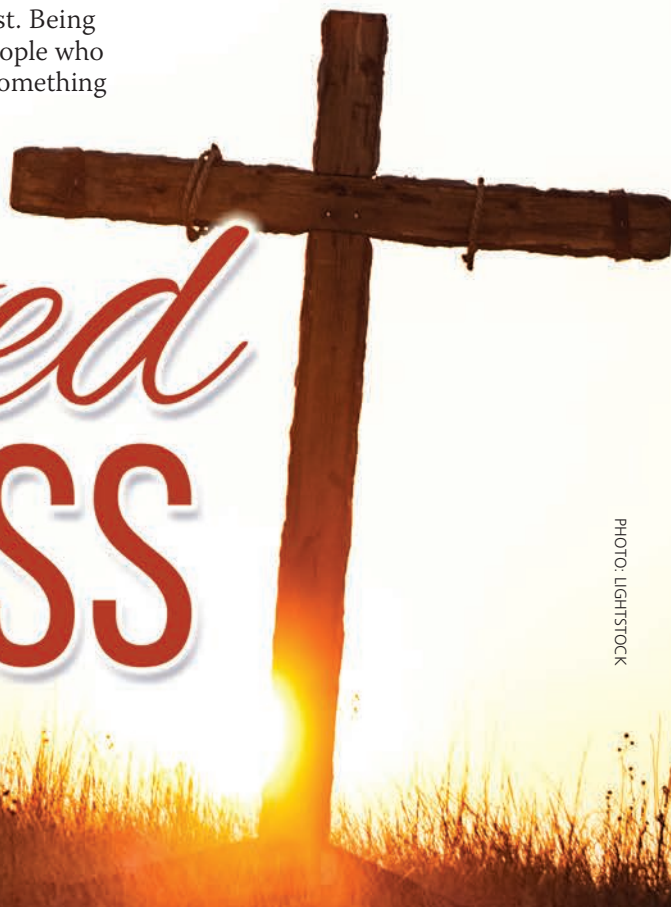


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