

The EVANGEL

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Editor: Lisa Cooper

Layout & Design by Lynette Badenhop

Letter From the Editor

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior! As we approach Easter, we contemplate the glorious truth that Jesus, God's only begotten son, though put to death, did not stay dead. When put to death in our stead for our sins, Jesus did not stay dead. Instead, he rose—victorious over sin, over death, over the Devil in order that we too may be raised on the last day.

Easter has been well established as a celebration in the Christian church since around the second century. It is comforting to know that those faithful saints even back in the first and second century were celebrating the resurrection of Jesus just like we are today. In the ancient church, baptism was most often associated with Easter. The image of being buried through baptism and raised again to new life in Christ (Romans 6:3-4) predominates the Easter tradition. Though I am sure that most people reading this have already been baptized, this is a perfect time to remember that fact. Your old self has been put to death, and your new self has been made alive in Christ. We know that these things are true because God's Word attests to it, and because it has indeed happened to us.

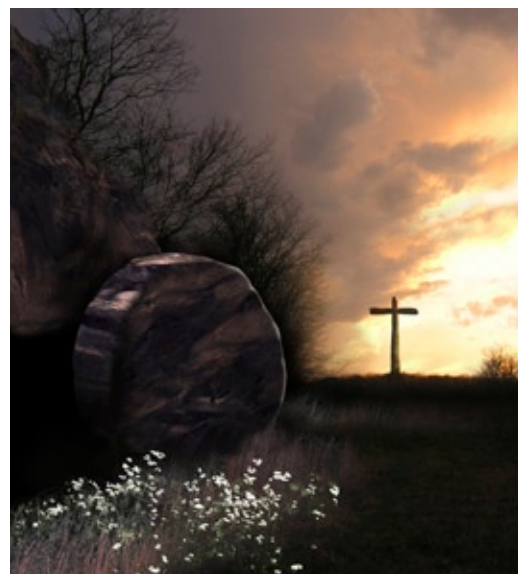
In John 20:24-29, we see the account of Thomas asking the resurrected Jesus for proof that He was indeed who He said He was. Here Jesus gives Thomas exactly what he needs to see and touch to believe. How gracious God is that he provides us with assurance of the truth, even when we doubt. And, even more, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and have yet believed" (MEV). We have not seen the resurrected Jesus in the same way that the Apostles did, but we do know the Scriptures to be true, and we know that through baptism we are united with Christ. We know that in taking the Lord's Supper, we partake of His very body and blood. These are the things we touch, these are the things we see that give us assurance today.

Growing up, I had no significant ethnic heritage, but every Easter my family would greet one another with the Ukranian Paschal greeting, and I will greet you with the same: ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС! And the response: ВоИСТИНУ ВОСКРЕС! (Khrystos voskres! Voistynu voskres!).

Christ is Risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

In Christ,
Lisa Cooper



A New Exodus

by TAALC Presiding Pastor Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins

TRANSFIGURED GLORY

After Peter's famous confession at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus shocked His disciples with an unexpected announcement:

The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day. Luke 9: 22

In spite of the protests of Peter, Jesus set His face for Jerusalem. His passion, crucifixion, and death stood before Him. In preparation for His sacrifice, Jesus went up on a mountain to pray. He took with Him Peter, James and John. While Jesus prayed, His appearance was transformed.

Luke explains that, "[T]he appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became dazzling white" (Luke 9: 29). In Greek, this is the language used to describe lightning. Jesus became radiant. But unlike lightning, His brightness was not for an instant only. It was sustained. His glory-brightness radiated so that His face and even His clothing shone like lightning.

EAVESDROPPING ON HEAVEN

Suddenly, the disciples saw two men standing with the Lord: Moses and Elijah. What is more, the disciples overheard a heavenly conversation. The glowing figures were discussing God's eternal plan to rescue and redeem humanity.

They appeared in glory and were speaking of His death, which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Luke 9: 31

Please notice the word "death." Some translators use the word "departure," others use the word "death." Both translations miss the mark. The Greek word used in this sentence is "exodus." This word gives the passage a great depth of meaning and should be translated exactly.

They appeared in glory and were speaking of His exodus (ἐξοδον), which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Luke 9:31

Jesus was about to accomplish a New Exodus! It would be parallel to the first Exodus, but ever superior and supernal in comparison. The first Exodus required lamb's blood on the doorposts so that the Angel of Death would pass-over, the second required the blood of the Lamb of God so that the redeemed would live forever. The first Exodus established a Passover meal, the second provided a Lord's Supper in which the bread and cup would become the True Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The first Exodus delivered God's people from Egyptian slavery, the second delivered believers from eternal bondage to sin, death, and the devil. The first Exodus gave God's people passage through the Red Sea into the Promised Land, the second gave God's people passage through the waters of Holy Baptism into the Family of God.

Today, Jesus Christ has accomplished the New Exodus for us. The suffering that He planned, the death that He prophesied, the resurrection that He proclaimed, and the forgiveness and eternal life that He promised, all have been completed. His glorious work of salvation is finished!

After His resurrection, Jesus visited His disciples in the Upper Room:

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." Luke 24: 45-48

We are children of the New Exodus, rescued by God's mighty Hand and the Blood of the Lamb. By grace through faith in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have been delivered out of slavery, death, and the kingdom of darkness, into freedom, life, and the kingdom of His glorious light!

Hallelujah! Christ has Risen!!

He has Risen Indeed!!!

Pray & Be Prepared

By Rev. Richard Shields, ALTS President

“When you pray, be prepared! God just might answer, and more!”

The Need for Pastors

The need for pastors never seems to stop. Pastors die, pastors retire, pastors accept new calls. It takes a certain number of seminary students to maintain status quo in our church body.

Beyond that, we look to some seminarians who will eventually begin mission work, starting congregations, bringing the Gospel to people. Some might think that we have more than enough churches in the U.S. But as the population grows and changes, the church must be ready to ready new people.

Seminary Interest

Over the past two years interest in seminary education has increased. ALTS has two routes for seminary education and pastoral formation. 1. On campus studies at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW). 2. Online studies through the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program. Both are important and valuable for our meeting the growing interest. Both produce well qualified men to serve in our church body.

In the past two months we have begun receiving inquiries from men in Europe and Africa, all asking about pastoral education. Who would have thought? Oh, wait, Dr. Leins and I began praying about that possibility more than a year ago. Our perspective was, oh, maybe 5-8 years down the line. But that wasn't God's perspective. We don't know where this will lead, but consider the implications of training men throughout the world!

Three Anchor Points

God has certainly blessed us. Now we look at what this means for current pastors, congregations, and individuals.

1. Recruitment

Each of you probably know a man who could become a pastor. Offer to him the possibility of attending seminary at CTSFW. Residential seminary training is a valuable experience and we have access to one of the best seminaries in the world.

If circumstances make that unattainable, then offer the online seminary for the MTS degree program. With the technology available we can live interactive teaching and discussion for all seminary classes.

2. Prayer

Pray for that man or teenager right now. It's not too soon to plant the seeds. Encourage him as he begins to step forward in service in the congregation.

Pray for those who are already in seminary. Pray for the professors who serve God and His church by offering their knowledge, wisdom, and pastoral insights to men preparing for pastoral ministry. Pray for their families, especially the wives who walk with their husbands every step of the way. Send the students cards or letters or emails showing your support for them.

We pray not only for the seminarians but those who train them. Pray for the professors at CTS/FW. Pray for our online professors; we now have seven men teaching in our seminary:

Pastor Jordan Cooper, Faith Lutheran, Watseka, IL
Dr. Adam Francisco, Concordia University, Irvine, CA
Rev. Dr. Craig Henningfield, Steamboat Springs, CO
Rev. Dr. Curt Leins, Presiding Pastor, TAALC
Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
Pastor Rich Shields, ALTS President, pastor Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran, Frazier Park, CA
Pastor Dave Spotts, Campus pastor, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

3. Support

It has been a pleasure to see renewed interest in our church body for the seminary. Giving to ALTS has increased. And we give thanks to God for this support.

The growth of the seminary in terms of numbers also means that the overall expenses to run the seminary increase. The best way to financially support the seminary is to give to the ALTS General Fund. That allows the seminary to use the money appropriately for tuition and program needs. This helps the seminary rather than sending designated funds to a specific individual or account.

The Present and Future

We do not know exactly how this will play out in coming years. But we do know that God can do more than we think or imagine. The churches are His; the pastors are His; the seminarians are His. Let us be about His work for His glory.

***Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever. (Psalm. 118:1 NKJV)***

Meet a Seminarian:

Pastor John Morley

By Lisa Cooper

Pastor John Morley is currently serving as an RLLP at Sonland Lutheran Church in Casa Grande, AZ. He was installed on November 15, 2015 by Pastor Ishamaru and Pastor Stoner, followed by a potluck. Pastor Morley and his wife of eight years, Gigi, relocated to Casa Grande from Colorado earlier in the year to serve this church.

Over the years, his call to the ministry became more apparent. He became involved with Stephen Ministries Caring Program for laity, which focused on Biblical authentic care, through which he received 60 hours of training. Knowing that he wanted to be more educated in theology, he began the Licensed Lay Deacon program with the LCMS in October 2009, but upon its cancellation, he came into contact with Rev. President Shields about taking classes with the AALC. Because ALTS was primarily online education that could be done at a distance, it afforded Pastor Morley the opportunity to take classes while operating his own window cleaning business.

“The hardest thing about ALTS,” he explained, “is managing time between work, family, study, and personal time.” But it has all been worth it because he has not only learned about theology, but he has also learned practical information about how to love and serve his congregation.

Though he couldn't choose a favorite class thus far in seminary, he did explain that every teacher has conveyed their passion. In other words, in liturgy class, Pastor Leins' excitement made him all the more excited about the liturgy. The pastoral care aspects in all of his classes have been arguably the most impactful. “You learn how to bring the grace of the Gospel to people who are the most broken, and that is the most important thing.”

ALTS has also equipped Pastor Morley with a dynamic approach to ministry grounded in 2 Timothy 2. He has benefited greatly from the fraternity and churchmanship that he has found in the AALC, through which he has been able to seek council and edification.



Photo Credit: Sonland Lutheran Church

Walk-Stand-Sit (Default Christianity)

by *The Rev. Nathan Hoff*

Default Christianity is what I revert towards naturally. It is the reason the whole life of a Christian must be one of repentance. Nordis Christenson said about the Christian life, "It's just so daily!"

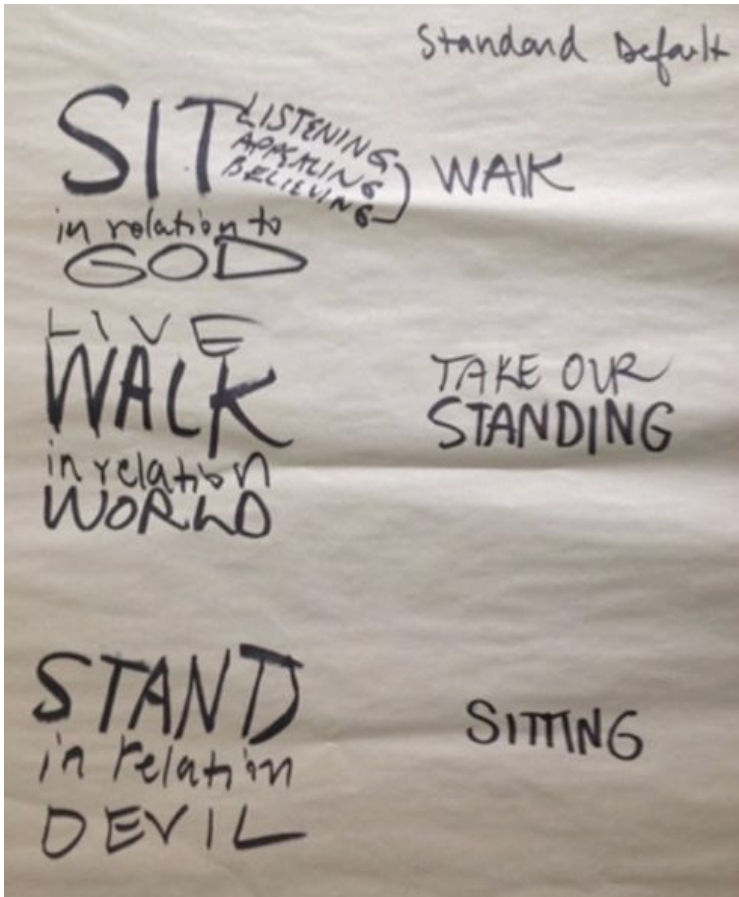


Photo Credit: Rev. Nathan Hoff

I had the chance to run through the book of Ephesians again with a group here at Trinity. Watchman Nee's book again proved valuable at summarizing Paul's message:

Ephesians 1-3 "Sit"

Ephesians 4-6.9 "Walk"

Ephesians 6.10-24 "Stand"

"For Christianity begins not with a big DO, but with a big DONE. Thus Ephesians opens with the statement that God has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (1:3) and we are invited

at the very outset to sit down and enjoy what God has done for us; not to set out to try and attain it for ourselves." (Watchman Nee. *Sit, Walk, Stand*. Tyndale, Carol Stream, IL. 1977, page 2). In relating to God our position is sitting.

In relating to the world and others, our position is walking. As our position in Christ Jesus is secure, our position in this world and with others is transformed. We can "walk in a manner worthy of the calling" (Ephesians 4.1). We are to "no longer walk" in the old way we used to walk (Ephesians 4.17). We can "walk in love, as Christ loved us" (Ephesians 5.2).

In relating to the enemy of our souls, our position is standing. Like Nee reminds us, not fighting or marching, but standing in the decisive victory already won for us by Jesus, we fight from victory, not for victory.

I don't think you will regret reading the whole little book called *Sit, Walk, Stand* from Watchman Nee.

Sitting, then walking, then standing is not only the structure of Ephesians, but also the structure of the Christian life. Our walk and taking our stand is empowered only by our sitting. Sitting is not a reward for a well-fought battle or a successfully completed project. Sitting is the pre-emptive rich resourcing of the Trinity into our pervasive poverty before we even take a step or take our stand. Grace first!

Here is the problem for most Christians (present company included), our default isn't sit, walk, stand. Our default is walk, stand, sit. This messes everything up.

Our position in Christ becomes co-opted by proving, pushing, grasping, working and walking. No wonder so many of us are spiritually exhausted, after being on the religious hamster wheel for who knows how long. We think the Almighty Work-a-holic is chirping, "faster, more consistent, better, try harder, walk faster, resolve more, move it!" Really, our Brother is saying, "Sit up here with me, beloved. You don't have to prove a thing. All has been accomplished. Father chose you a long time ago, and I don't mean to ever let you go."

(Continued on Page 15)

The Power of Hope

By: Jim Sanell of Faith Comes By Hearing

The men and women in the United States Armed Forces face many challenges. They've served multiple deployments in the most harrowing regions—Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond. They've seen the horror of modern war and stood strong for their families and our freedoms. Our Troops need real hope as they deal with the challenges of military service.

Faith Comes By Hearing, a ministry based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, stepped up to bring God's Word to those faithfully serving our country. Founded in 1972, Faith Comes By Hearing is dedicated to getting God's Word to everyone, everywhere. They record Scriptures in regional heart languages and make them available free of charge worldwide through various media. Their catalog consists of Scripture recordings in more than 900 languages spoken by nearly 6 billion people around the world.

In 2008, Faith Comes By Hearing introduced the Military BibleStick to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of our troops. Working with guidelines from the Department of Defense, the ministry developed a compact Audio Bible that service members can take with them to use even in the most restricted conditions. Since then, the ministry has partnered with local churches to provide our troops with these pocket-sized digital audio players.

No larger than a pack of chewing gum, the Military BibleStick comes equipped with a set of earbuds and a triple-A battery. Each one contains the complete New Testament and 65 minutes of specially selected Psalms, like Psalm 91, the Warrior's Psalm. More than 580,000 military heroes have been able to find the hope and peace that they need every day.



Photo Credit: Faith Comes By Hearing

More than 1,600 chaplains in every branch of the military request BibleSticks for those under their care. They say the Military BibleStick may be the most effective tool that they have ever had to ensure the troops are equipped with the most important thing before leaving home: the spiritual armor of God.

Many in our armed services tell how the Military BibleStick has changed their lives:

“Since I have the BibleStick, I keep myself more on divine track. Thank you” Petty Officer First Class, U.S. Navy

“When I am depressed, I listen to the Bible. It is therapy for me. I don't have e-mail.” Private, U.S. Army

(Continued on Page 14)



Photo Credit: Faith Comes By Hearing

Pastor, I Have a Question

by Rev. Dr. Daniel K. Schroeder

Q: What's a good way to start doing family devotions? Can you suggest some resources?

A: Let's start at the beginning with making a regular time for devotions. You should aim to have at least one meal together every day, where the whole family is able to sit together around the table. That may sound easier than what it actually is, considering all of the various schedules and activities that happen in today's families. This is time you may have to actually schedule amongst everything else; and even though it might not always be 100% attainable, you can still make it a regular family time with a little flexibility figured into it.

Supper time (or whatever you call your evening meal) is usually the best. Start your meal with a short prayer. Growing up in our home, we had a book entitled "Grace Before Meals" (pictured) by A. William Nyce and Hubert Bunyea, which has a brief mealtime prayer for each day of the year. Originally published in 1911, it is still in print and available on Amazon.com or at Barnes & Noble. During my father's years in the ministry, he would give one of these books to every couple he married.

Otherwise, there are a number of appropriate mealtime prayers, some of which are included as an addendum to the Small Catechism. Many of us know the Common Table Prayer, that also has several slight variations: "Come, Lord Jesus, be thou our guest; and let these gifts to us be blest. Amen." Another quite popular table prayer is: "Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen." Some of us know this one (again with some slight variations), which is sung to the tune of the Doxology (Old Hundredth): "Be present at our table, Lord; be here and everywhere adored, these mercies bless and grant that we, may strengthened for thy service be. Amen." And there are those will use the words of Psalm 145:15-16: "The eyes of all wait upon thee [O Lord]; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Beginning your mealtime with prayer is an important start.

Following the meal, it's time for the devotion; and everybody should be present at the table during this time. Many, if not most churches provide daily devotional booklets for the congregation. Our congregation provides "Meditations," a publication of Northwestern Publishing House. Others use "Portals Of Prayer," a publication of Concordia Publishing House. Both of these are available by subscription.

Lutheran Hour Ministries (www.lhm.org) has some great free devotional resources on-line, as does the LCMS (www.lcms.org), WELS (www.wels.net), and the ELS (www.els.org). Our synod's own website has some links worth exploring (www.TAALC.org). You can even subscribe to some of these, and you will receive a new devotion every day by Email. Otherwise, there are many appropriate devotional books in print, some of which are tailored for specific situations. These are available from Northwestern Publishing House or Concordia Publishing House; just go to their respective websites and search for "devotionals."

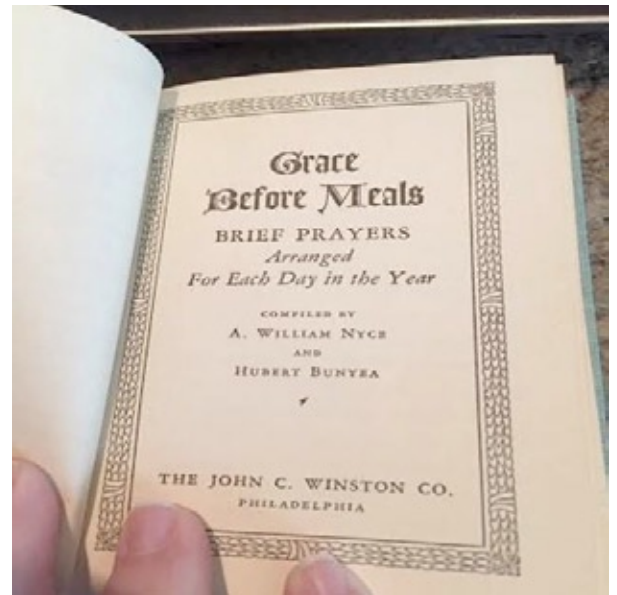


Photo Credit: Rev. Dr. Daniel K. Schroeder

Different family situations will dictate how the devotions should proceed. Normally, there is an appointed Bible reading, followed by the devotion itself. Sometimes this concludes with one or more hymn verses. Then there is a short prayer, followed by everybody praying the Lord's prayer. Many then close devotion time by saying the words of Psalm 136:1 together: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (sometimes this is said by everyone at the beginning of the meal after the table prayer). You can also ask if there is anything family members want to pray about, and incorporate that into the devotions.

If you have children at home, consider rotating the responsibility (e.g. sibling #1 does the Bible reading, sibling #2 does the devotional reading, etc.). Be sure to use an easily understandable Bible translation, especially for the younger folks (the God's Word translation is a good one). Otherwise, an older couple I know divided the devotions between them. The wife did the devotion after breakfast, and the husband did the devotion after supper. Just be creative!



Photo Credit: Rev. Dr. Daniel K. Schroeder

Hymns are a welcome addition too, especially if there are pianists, organists, or guitarists in the family. If the children are learning to play, they can practice some simple hymns for the family to sing. And even if nobody can play an instrument, there's nothing wrong with singing "A Capella," or even reciting a hymn verse or two. Hymnals are a great devotional resource, and everybody in the family should have one of their own.

Apart from regular family devotion time, individual time is also important. Parents might like to read "Little Visits With God" (Concordia Publishing House) to their children after they're tucked into bed, followed by a simple bedtime prayer. Here's an old traditional bedtime prayer:

As upon my bed I lie,
Thou, Lord, art forever nigh.
There are four corners on my bed,
And four angels 'round my head.
One to watch, and one to pray
And two to bear my soul away.
Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.
I pray this all for Jesus' sake. Amen.

How you have devotions in your family is entirely up to you. The important thing is that you indeed do them! Figure out what works best in your situation, and make it a tradition in your home, because it is so easy to just let this slip away. Through your prayer and devotional life, you are able to stay close to your Saviour. Always remember his accepting, forgiving, and redeeming love. Jesus, who has forgiven all your sins and who has given you the gift of faith, also promises to never leave nor forsake you.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is not just for church; rather, it must happen and be nurtured in the home. This is where the foundation for a Christian life is laid, which is ours through faith alone in Jesus. And regardless of our age, we are still but children in our Heavenly Father's family.

Regardless of what your prayer and devotional life is in your home, always remember this old saying: "Jesus Christ is the head of this house; the unseen guest at every meal, and the silent listener to every conversation."

Missions in Turkey

By: Paul and Lea of Bible Lutheran Church in Dodge Center, MN

What comes to your mind when you think of the country of Turkey? Or do you think of Turkey at all? Did you learn about it at all in World History? What pops into your mind when you hear mention of Turkey?



Remember the Lucky Strike cigarette packs? They depicted a camel in a desert with palm trees and the pyramids in the background. Then there was the slogan 'Fine Turkish Tobacco'. Well that is less than accurate, there is desert here in the Southeast part of Turkey, there are palm trees where we live on the South coast, camels used to come here on the ancient camel caravans, but the pyramids are on a different continent and tobacco is not grown in Turkey!

When visitors come here for the first time, they are surprised on the ride in from the airport because everything looks so modern. If you go into a mall, except for the language on the signage, you'd think you were in any mall in the West. You can buy an I phone 6+, a Samsung smart TV, Oreos, a BMW or Mercedes, BK Big King Meal, and even a coffee at Starbucks or Caribou Coffee. But then on the way home you might see a horse and buggy being operated by a Roma Gypsy on his or her route picking recyclables from the dumpsters.

Except for the horse and buggy thing, sounds kind of like life in America right? But everything you do here takes longer. Going to the bank (extremely aggravating), grocery shopping, dealing with the maze of government bureaucracy (like dealing with the DMV only 10 times worse), on and on. There is much less canned or prepared foods to buy here. Most food is fresh and cooked from scratch and therefore much healthier, but more time consuming.

But then there are conveniences. I never have to go into the bank, I can deposit as well as withdraw money at the ATM and I can have ALL my utility and car tax bills paid by the bank automatically (as long as I have the money in my account). Every shop you enter wants to serve you tea. You can enjoy a meal out for as long as you want, they will never ask you to leave, and will bring the check only when you ask for it. People will give up their seat on the bus for you. The people are very relational and have time for one another.

But the biggest difference between living in America and Turkey is the lack of Christians here. When we arrived 10 ½ years ago, there were about 1200 evangelical Christians in Turkey. Now there are around 4500. There is growth, but out of 80 million people, 4500 barely registers statistically.

The Turkish church we are most familiar with here in Antalya has around 100 members making it one of the mega churches in Turkey. Normally the churches are smaller and have difficulty finding places to legally meet. Their membership numbers fluctuate as members come and go. Some move on looking for work or opportunity, others just migrate back to Islam because they cannot stand to be separated from their families or cannot find work once they have been identified as Christians.

In our ministry we work with the St. Paul Cultural Center which exists to give a legal place for the Turkish church, the International church, and now a church for another people group from the Middle East (that we shouldn't identify for their security) to meet. This last country referred to sends secret police into Turkey to identify them and persecute their friends and family and to sometimes kidnap them to take them back never to be heard from again.

The Cultural Center has outreach into the community and goes to great lengths to offer classes or other opportunities to get nationals and internationals into the Center to try and break down the cultural walls between

TURKEY

Islam and Christianity. It offers a place for them to come and ask questions, get a Bible or to be prayed for.

But then we have the joy of being able to walk where John, Paul, Barnabas and others have walked. We have two places mentioned in the Bible just within our city limits. 60% of the New Testament was written to or from Turkey. All seven churches of Revelations, Galatia, Cappadocia, Nicaea and many other sites are all here. Parts of all three of Paul's missionary journeys took place here. In fact Paul's home city of Tarsus is in what is now Turkey.

The difficulties I mentioned should not be taken as complaining, I intended to only point out some cultural differences. The culture here and the one in the States are very different but that's all, they're just different. Our culture in America has many drawbacks that we get used to but drive others to distraction. Living here and adapting to the culture has given us a greater understanding of what it is like for a foreigner to come and live in America, which is not as easy as you may think.

When I became a missionary, I had this unrealistic ideal in my head that we were going to be super spiritual individuals sharing the love of God with the world and be in a constant spiritual euphoria. Forget that, as I said, it takes longer to do everything, and a lot of the difficulties we face are a result of spiritual warfare. Satan doesn't like what we do and tries his best to confound our work. But God is triumphant and the churches are growing! Just a month ago the Turkish church baptized 12 and the other church, 24; and the international church has doubled in size in the last three years.

I cannot end this without offering an invitation. Turkey is a beautiful place to visit. And it is safe. In fact you will be safe as soon as you leave Minneapolis, Chicago, New York, or wherever you depart. The difficulties in this part of the world are a long way off and well contained. If you wish to come for a visit, contact us at pmat2819@generalmail.com. We would meet you at the airport with a smile and offer a clean bed and good company. You will not regret it.

If you are interested in supporting this ministry, donations can be sent directly to The Sending Place or the Eastern European Missions Network.

EEMN
2111 Golf Course Road; Suite C
Rio Ranch, NM 87124

www.eemn.org

If you would like to specify, put Paul and Lea's name on a note with the support, so finances go to the correct account. Thank you.



Pilot Knob Lutheran Women's Bible Study

by Pastor Bob Snitzer

The ladies of Pilot Knob Lutheran Church, Forest City, Iowa, enjoyed their study of Jonah this past year. There were many interesting insights and opportunities for discussion.

At the end of the year's Christmas Party, the Martha circle has a Christmas celebration highlighting the study's theme. Pictured above is the plant that God gave to shade Jonah. Also included is the worm that killed the plant thus removing his shade. The blue whale is a tea infuser that a member brought to each study complimented by whale nut-cups.

We all had a great time and learned a lot, thank you Kathy Twito.



Photo Credit: Barb Snitzer

Faith Lutheran Bible Study

Watseka, IL

By Lisa Cooper

At Faith Lutheran Church in Watseka, Illinois, we tried something different and started having our Saturday morning Bible study at the local coffee shop. Between 9 and 10:30am, we eat breakfast and drink coffee together while reading through the book of Matthew. We have been studying small sections at a time, so after 8 months of study, we are just now finishing Matthew 7. Though the study began with mostly high school and college age students, we now have a lively group of people of all ages who come and study together. It has been a great blessing to come together to pray and study the Scriptures.



Photo Credit: Lisa Cooper

Prayer Requests

The Prayer Request Bookmark was suggested by the Evangelism Committee as a way to encourage prayer within TAALC population for certain people, churches, or other Christian concerns worldwide.

April:

Please pray for:

1. The persecuted church
2. Unity in the church
3. Reverend Curtis Leins, Presiding Pastor
4. For all of our seminary students
5. Reverend Roger Twito, Assistant Presiding Pastor
6. The AALC Foundation
7. Pastors and church workers
8. The Commission on Doctrine and Church Relations
9. Christian Martyrs
10. Families of Christian martyrs
11. Your local AALC church
12. Commission for Evangelism
13. Rev. Rich Shields, Seminary President
14. Christine Stumpf's ministry
15. The persecuted church
16. Unity in the church
17. Board of Appeals and Adjudication
18. AALC affiliated online ministries
19. 50 seminary students in 5 years
20. That God would raise up church workers
21. Pastors and church workers
22. Ailing pastors
23. Those who are grieving
24. Rev. Irvin Stapf, Secretary of AALC
25. Your local AALC church
26. Commission on Higher Education
27. Seminary professors
28. Commission for Commissioned Church Workers
29. The persecuted church
30. Unity in the church

May

Please pray for:

1. The AALC leadership
2. Rev. Dean Stoner, National Home Mission Developer
3. The future of our seminary
4. Pastors & Church workers
5. Regional Mission Developers
6. Christian Martyrs
7. AALC affiliated online ministries
8. Your local AALC church
9. Dr. Dan Kruger, Treasurer of the AALC
10. Wittenburg Door ministry
11. Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse, Seminary President
12. The persecuted church
13. Unity in the church
14. Protection for our military
15. 50 Seminary students in 5 years
16. Dr. Adam Francisco, Seminary Professor
17. Our emeritus pastors
18. Pastors & Church workers
19. Rev. Joe Dapelo, Administrator of the AALC
20. AALC Foundation
21. Family of Christian martyrs
22. Local AALC church
23. The Clergy Commission
24. Rev. Dr. Craig Henningfield, Seminary President
25. Your local community
26. Persecuted Church
27. Unity in the church
28. Bonnie Ohlrich, Secretary/Coordinator
29. Protection for the unborn
30. God would raise up church leaders
31. For our government and the upcoming election

Thanks to Gigi Morley of the Commission for Evangelism for assembling the Prayer Bookmark.

The Evangel

(Continued from Page 7)

“Wow!! When you feel down and hurt. When you listen to God’s words you have hope and love. This is really a great thing you all do. Staff Sergeant Retired, U.S. Army

In addition to the men and women in the field, many have returned home with “mental shrapnel.” 400,000 military men and women have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and 22 commit suicide every day. The Military BibleStick is changing this painful statistic by providing peace, comfort, and encouragement before the silent battlefield takes its awful toll on our veterans.

Over 9,200 churches across the country have participated in the Military BibleStick program, some more than once, to ensure our service members have the emotional and spiritual protection they need. For more information, visit MilitaryBibleStick.com. If your church is ready to make a difference for our Troops and their families by funding Military BibleSticks, call Debra Curry at (800) 545-6552.

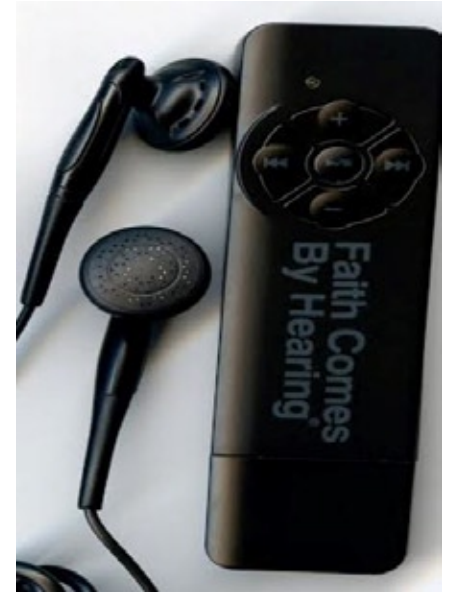


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Attn: Lisa Cooper
Faith Lutheran Church
425 E. Lincoln Avenue
Watseka, IL 60970

Please include your contact information along with the article, along with photo and article credit.

For electronic submissions, please send articles/pictures to theevangel@taalc.org or lisakcooper@gmail.com. Please attach using Word, plain text, or RTF formats (I cannot work with PDFs). All article submissions must include an indication of who wrote the article, and all pictures submissions must include picture credit. Thank you!

(Continued from Page 6)

Our default position in this world looks and sounds more like a stand than a walk. Judging by the titles of many of our organizations which engage with society, Christians have become the most defensive people around. When the world around us thinks of the church they don't think of open hands and beautiful feet bringing good news to marriage, and family, and work, and every other vocation (Ephesians 4-the beginning of 6). They think of clenched fists and planted feet. Let's walk again church! Breeze through the byways humming a gospel tune.

Our default position with the enemy is really dangerous. Why do we grant Satan a sitting? We are so busy working for God, we don't sit and listen, hear and trust God (faith comes by hearing, Romans 10.17). Yet, we sit and listen, hear and trust the whispers of the

liar (faith comes by hearing him too)? We believe his old condemnations and are immobilized by his threats. The old Puritan (help me remember which one) said something like, "Don't believe the Devil even when he is telling you the truth." Here is where we take our stand, like Jesus in the wilderness, and unlike Adam and Eve in the garden. We don't have to listen to the liar, because we have listened to the "it is written."

Sit

Walk

Stand

Not, walk, stand, and sit.

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The Evangel - Online

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What are the advantages? You can read *The Evangel* with the free e-reader from Adobe called Acrobat. You can enlarge text and pictures for easy reading. Also, you can save the cost of postage and printing *The Evangel*. If you request this option, *The Evangel* will no longer be mailed to you (if you currently receive it by mail).

This is a small step in the direction of the inevitable - that most reading will soon be done electronically. At the same time, it keeps those of us struggling to keep up with the trends in technology in the loop.



The American Association of Lutheran Churches

921 East Dupont Road, #920

Fort Wayne, IN 46825-1551

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The American Association of Lutheran Churches

Main Office Located at:

6600 N. Clinton St.

Augustine Hall

Fort Wayne IN 46825

Phone: (260) 452-3213

Fax: (260) 452-3215

Email: theaalc@TheAALC.org

Visit Us On The Web
www.TheAALC.org

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