

# *The* EVANGEL

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Pg. 2 — From the Editor

Pg. 3 — From the Presiding Pastor

Pg. 4 — Servant Unique  
Family Ministries

Pg. 5 — ALTS Update

Pg. 6 — 150 Years of Sharing the  
Gospel

Pg. 8 — Oh What a Season of Lent

Pg. 10 — Lisa & Her Dad

Pg. 11 — Sportsman's Banquet

Pg. 11 — Hold the Line Conferences

Pg. 12 — Pinewood Derby Race

Pg. 13-14 — Prayer Bookmark

Pg. 14 — 26th General Convention

Pg. 15 — Living Last Supper

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# Letter From the Editor

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior! This edition of *The Evangel* continues our theme of *Luther's Small Catechism*, and tackles the topic of the first article of the creed: creation. You may have heard that my church, Faith Lutheran in Watseka, IL was damaged by a flood in our area. The chairman of our congregation has written a letter that you will find later in this edition with more details. I ask for your forgiveness in the delay of this edition for this reason.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." This is the first article of the creed. Luther's explanation reads:

*I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them; in addition thereto, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and homestead, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; that He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life, protects me from all danger, and guards me and preserves me from all evil; and all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I owe it to Him to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.*

In the aftermath of a natural disaster, I have been considering the question: how can God allow these sorts of disasters to happen? Here Luther writes that God "guards me and preserves me from all evil." What about the times when it seems like that isn't the case?

The reality is that there is no good answer for this. We can talk about God's providence: His omnipotent, omniscient nature, exalted over all things, and how "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him" (Romans 8:28). But in these trials, we are allowed to mourn. Earlier in Romans 8, Paul writes that "the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (8:22). Sin affects everything: not just our disposition, but all of creation along with it. We are allowed to look on the damage sustained, and in our confusion, cry out just as the father of the demon-possessed child cried out to Jesus for help: "Lord I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

We are allowed to, like the sons of Korah in Psalm 88, petition God in the midst of our suffering, even if we don't understand why, or how these events will work out. If you take the time to read this psalm, you will find that there is no resolution to their suffering. There is no easy answer, no platitude that addresses their deep pain. Frankly, we may never see what God is doing through the trials we face in this life, not until we are with Him in eternity. We are called in these moments of uncertainty and upheaval, to pray to God. We are told to ask, to seek, to knock (Matthew 7:7-11). God hears us.

Yet, we are not a people without hope. This life is temporary, these gifts we have in this life are fleeting: our bodies, minds, property, etc. Luther says this in his explanation of the first article. Everything we have in this life is given not because of our own goodness, but because God desires to give good gifts to his children.

The eternal reality, however, is that we have been promised everlasting life. This is so much more than any temporary comfort. Jesus Christ put to death the powers of sin, death and the devil. He has made our physical deaths a gateway into eternal life with Him. In this truth, we have hope, though in this life we will continue to be called to take up our crosses and follow Jesus. You may have not experienced a natural disaster, but I'm certain that you have experienced how sin affects creation in many other ways. Perhaps you are a farmer, and you have sown seeds, yet they haven't produced. Perhaps you have watched as a loved one has passed away. Perhaps you have experienced chronic illness.

God who created all things and sustains all things loves you. Even in the suffering we endure, we can be sure that God will one day make all things new and perfect: the earth, our bodies, our relationships, everything. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us:

*But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God (Romans 8:25-27).*

This is most certainly true.

In Christ,  
Lisa Cooper

\*All citations of the *Small Catechism* are from [www.bookofconcord.org](http://www.bookofconcord.org).  
\*Scripture references are from the NKJV.

# I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

by TAALC Presiding Pastor, The Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins

**T**he Apostles' Creed is not only a clear Confession of our faith, it is a powerful declaration of God's faithfulness. This is the message that Martin Luther gives to us in his *Large Catechism*. Unfortunately, the average Lutheran may quickly pass over the Creed on a Sunday morning, reciting its words without thinking much about them. But, Luther teaches us that even the first sentence of the Creed contains such grace and goodness that we should meditate upon its meaning and take its promises to heart. Luther's explanation of Article I contains at least three points of encouragement that we would do well to remember.

*I am His creature.* Because the Creed is written in the first person, Luther often writes his explanation in very personal terms. For example, Luther writes, "I am a creature of God; that is, that He has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul, and life..." Here is Luther's foundational teaching on the Creed, "I am God's creature." This is a simple truth that we often forget. In his *Large Catechism*, Luther provides an explanation that strengthens our faith and encourages our hearts. To state this truth personally, Luther would say, "God has made YOU." He formed you in your mother's womb. You are His and He gave you life. He created your body, your soul, and your life. More than this, He preserves and sustains your life every moment of every day. It is God who thinks about you, watches over you, and provides for your every need, continuously.

Though Luther does not use this illustration, his words call an image to my mind. It is as if God were a giant movie projector, and you were an image shown on the screen. Please pardon the awkwardness of this example. If the projector should ever turn off or lose power, the image on the screen would disappear. Similarly, if God were ever to stop thinking about you or stop sustaining you, you would cease to exist. Of course, God does not ever turn off His gaze. He does not ever lose His power. He does not ever avert His eyes or remove His attention from you. You are constantly on His mind, in His heart, and under His care. The very fact that you live, move, and have being is a reminder that it is God who is giving and sustaining your life! Moment by moment, God has you in the palm of His hand.

For this reason, you can be assured that God always will provide everything that you need. You have no need to fear the present or the future because you are God's creature, and He is your Creator. He will supply you with food and drink, clothing and support, home and family, and every good thing that you need.

*He Daily Preserves and Defends Us.* As if God's provision were not enough, Luther goes on to remind you that the Heavenly Father also preserves and defends you. The Psalmist cries out, "Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me" (Ps. 22:12). The devil, the world, and your own flesh trouble you, tempt you, and wage war against you. Sometimes, you may be overwhelmed with the cares and calamities of this life. But, Luther's *Large Catechism* reminds you that God is not only your Provider, He is your Protector. He strengthens your faith, enabling you to fight the good fight. More than this, He fights for you, defends you, and protects you, especially when you are too weak to fight for yourself.

God's protection is not because you have merited His attention or earned His involvement in your struggles. God defends you because of His pure love and fatherly goodness toward you. God protects you from misfortune, calamity, and danger on account of His paternal heart. In many cases you neither see nor know that His hand of protection is shielding you or waging war for you. Nevertheless, it is God who is forever vigilant and faithful in His care for you.

*Our Duty is to Love, Praise, and Thank Him.* Up to this point, the *Large Catechism* has reminded us of the faithfulness and love of our Heavenly Father. We have confidence in Him to provide for us and to protect us. Therefore, Luther encourages us to be truly thankful. On account of God's great goodness, we must respond with hearts of praise. It is our duty to offer Him lives of obedience to His Commandments. But, we do not do it! All too often, our praise is weak and our actions are disobedient. Our offering to God is our ingratitude and sin. Because of our sin, the words of this First Article "ought to humble and terrify us all," says Luther.

But, Pastor Martin does not leave us in shame and despair. Luther continues his explanation of Article I of the Creed with a reminder of the goodness of Almighty God. "Whenever we escape from calamity or danger, that [sic] it is God who gives and does all these things, that [sic] therein we sense and see His Paternal heart and His transcendent love toward us."

**"I believe in God the Father Almighty."** What does this mean? It means that I trust My Father in Heaven to provide for me and protect me. I believe in His ever-faithful love, in spite of myself and my sin. In his explanation of Article I, Luther concludes, "We see how the Father has given Himself to us, together with all creatures, and has most richly provided for us in this life, besides that He has overwhelmed us with unspeakable, eternal treasures by His Son and the Holy Ghost, as we shall hear."

# Servant Unique Family Ministries

## *The 500th Year of the Reformation Continues & SUFM Will Again Collect Humanitarian Aid Items*

**S**ervant Unique Family Ministries (SUFM) has had an active relationship with the Latin American Lutheran Mission (LALM) since 1988 so I must share with you that Rev. Moises Mendez, the director of LALM for almost six years, went to be with the Lord on February 8, 2018, two days after his 66th birthday. He suffered a heart attack while in the ICU at the hospital in Laredo for treatment of a lung infection; his chronic diabetes was a complicating factor. He was a great partner, friend, brother, and impassioned preacher of God's word, and he inspired many to become followers of Jesus.

Rev. Moises is the first director in the 80+ years of the LALM ministry who has died while serving the LALM and the Evangelical Church of Mexico (ELCM). He fostered leadership among a number of related house churches and maintained and developed a supportive relationship with the pastors of the ELCM. He was instrumental in establishing a cooperative relationship with other religious and social agencies in Laredo, and initiated the storage and distribution of surplus food for the needy.

His wife, Rev. Mariana Mendez, has been named the new director; she and Moises were active partners with LALM's ministry and is fully aware of the many facets and issues of keeping the mission viable. Her son, Yael, will help her in various issues of business and financial matters of the mission. Please remember her and the LALM in prayer during this change in leadership.

### **The Reformation continues ...**

Those who hold true to the Reformer's teachings are still battling those things that Dr. Martin Luther was battling against 500 years ago.

- We are saved by grace alone, faith alone. This is why I so much believe in the work of LALM and the ELCM because our Mexican brothers and sisters have been taught by those who invaded and conquered their country. The Spanish colonized the country, made Spanish the national language, and established the Roman Catholic Church which became the faith of Mexico.
- We are saved by grace alone, faith alone. Ephesians 2:8-9 is not what I would say is widely accepted. Many in Mexico are not sure of their salvation and feel that they must do or have someone do something in order to enter heaven and receive eternal life. They do not understand that they can know today, right this minute, that they have eternal life.
- Jesus has already gone and prepared a place in heaven for those who believe in Him. All that Jesus wants is our hearts to truly believe and trust in Him for the remission of our sins.

### **SUFM will again collection humanitarian aid items...**

SUFM is planning on being at The AALC Convention this June to receive your humanitarian aid items. We are looking for clothing, shoes, coats, toys, layettes, school kits, health kits, and quilts to assist LALM with its ministry in Mexico and along both sides of the border. We are also looking for a couple of specialty items—(1) new or good working portable sewing machines and patterns for sewing classes to the Mexican women so they can make an income and (2) musical instruments to assist in their worship services, like guitars, electric keyboards, and other band/musical instruments in working order.

We hope that you will make an effort together and collect these items. Why? Because it really helps to open doors for our pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico to share the Gospel with those they are serving.

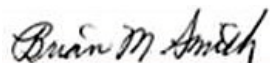


I need to apologize for those who expected us at the Reformation Celebration in November. We arrived just in time for evening worship on November 1 because we had a leaking fuel pump which delayed us by a day. When we got to the church, we were told to park at the back of the parking lot. Due to the weather and lack of lighting, no one could see us and no announcement was made as to our location. So please be assured we will be at the convention this year. We anticipate that we will be parked behind and below the dormitory where we have been before so you can drop off your items.

If you need more information or pamphlets or have questions, please write us at Servant Unique Family Ministries, 6938 Boggs Rd, Waterloo, IA 50703 or call 319-235-1382 and leave a message.

We pray for safe travels for all those coming to the convention and that it will be a time of growing and planning for the future of The AALC. Please also remember to pray for our ministry as we continue to look for new leadership for SUFM and for the monetary support to carry out our part of the ministry to help LALM and the ELCM. My health issues remain a constant changing problem for me as I continue to try to serve Him as best as I can so please remember me in your prayers as well. May the Lord bless our coming convention!!

Sincerely In His Service,



Brian M. Smith, Director/President

# ALTS Update

By Lisa Cooper

A new semester at the American Lutheran Theological Seminary is in full swing. An *ad hoc* committee has been formed by the Commission for Higher Education and the Executive Committee to fill the Seminary President vacancy. Along with all of the administrative duties of the seminary, they are also working to develop a new academic catalog, with the intention of releasing it at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. They are also finalizing standard procedures for MTS students who need to complete a vicarage.

ALTS is offering six classes this semester. These classes include: Catechesis, History and Polity of The AALC, Doctrine II, Synoptic Gospel, Apologetics, and Pauline Letter. There are currently sixteen students who are registered, and six students are set to graduate at the upcoming General Convention in June: John Morley, Scott Neumann, Chris Rosebrough, Abe McNally, Alex McNally, and Lisa Cooper.

During this time, because there is no Seminary President yet elected, all questions for the seminary should be directed to the national office. And in the interim, I will do my best to keep everyone updated about what is happening at the seminary, with the help of Bonnie Ohlrich and Emily Gerken. In this time of transition, I encourage you all to pray. Pray for our seminary, for our teachers and students, for our administrators, and for our *ad hoc* committee as they do the work that they are called to do.

# 150 Years of Sharing the Gospel

*by Mary Koeberl Rechenberg*

In a small town in the Heartland of America, not far off the beaten path, there is a little brick church topped by a tall steeple and a silver cross that glows in the sunlight. That little country church is St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Pocahontas, Missouri, organized 150 years ago in the year of 1868.

St. John's Lutheran Church is thankful for its long history of sharing the gospel. Shortly after the Civil War, the journey to become an organized church began. Throughout the year of 2018, St. John's will celebrate this awesome milestone.

Pocahontas, Missouri, a community of less than 120 people, is surrounded by picturesque rolling hills in Northern Cape Girardeau County. Farms and homes dot the scenic hillsides in this unique part of the heartland, approximately nine miles north of Jackson, Missouri and less than ten miles west of the Mississippi River.

In the years before, during and after the Civil War, immigrants from the mountainous regions of upper Austria began to settle in and around Pocahontas. The immigrants found the hills around the town quite attractive, not because of the richness of the soil, but because the wooded hillsides and the creek-bottomed valleys reminded them of their homeland.

In their new home, they sought at once and found brethren of their own faith: the Saxons, who had settled some twenty to thirty years earlier in nearby Perry County, Missouri and had established Lutheran congregations in Altenburg and the surrounding towns. The nearest of these congregations was Immanuel Lutheran at New Wells, Missouri, about 5-9 miles away.

Log cabins and frame houses could be found scattered over the steep hills in the mid 1800's. Most people were farmers and their houses were surrounded by small fields of corn, wheat, and grass, where the land was flat enough to allow cultivation. Roads were merely dirt paths through the woods, creeks, and valleys. Most families used a horse and wagon or horse and buggy for trips to town or church.

The distance to the New Wells church would not be a problem in today's world, but it was especially dif-

ficult for children attending the parochial school. Children in those days generally walked to school.

Families from the Pocahontas area were determined to have a school in their community. The number of children around Pocahontas had increased enough that having a school seemed the sensible thing to do. Providing a Christian education and a safe environment for their children was of utmost importance. The church at New Wells did not support the Pocahontas citizens with this venture.

After much prayer and discussion, the determined people took it upon themselves to invite a pastor from the Lutheran church in Altenburg, Missouri to conduct services in the homes of residents in and near Pocahontas.

Plans were soon underway to build a church. Erection of the first church building began in 1868 and was completed in 1870. That same year the first pastor was called. He not only took on the duties of pastor, but parochial school teacher as well.

By December 1893 a new brick church building was dedicated, and a parsonage was built in 1903. However, tragedy struck May 4, 1910, when the spire of the church was hit by lightning and fire destroyed the beautiful sanctuary. By the grace of God, the furnishings of the building were saved, but only the blackened brick walls of the building remained.

The members of St. John's were not deterred, but stepped up to the task, and by October 1910, only six months later, the rebuilt church was dedicated.

St. John's Lutheran Church grew and flourished in the small town. The Sunday School was organized in 1920, Luther League in 1922, and the Ladies Aid in 1938. A new parish hall, dedicated in 1958, received an addition in 1999. The parochial school stayed in operation for over seventy years.

In December 1928 a pipe organ was purchased. After being transported nearly 300 miles to the church, the 4000 lb. organ was assembled and placed in the front of the sanctuary, with the majestic pipes pointing heavenward. Even though the organ came with a \$1500 price tag, which in that day and time was a considerable amount, the dedicated members soon had

it paid off. An organ of this design and size was unique to the area, and the glorious sounds emanating from it seemed to transform the small church into a cathedral. That beautiful organ is still in use today.

St. John's, now a member of TAALC, has seen many changes. Families became smaller and the community leaned less on farming and more on industry. However, their focus on sharing the true word of God has never wavered, and they continue to reach out to the community in any way they can.

Monthly benevolence projects at St. John's are varied. Supporting the local food bank, Lutheran Family and Children Services, recovery programs for alcohol and drug addicts, Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry in Columbia, MO., and helping provide support for seminary students' education are just a few of the opportunities God has provided for sharing His love and grace.

The members of St. John's were ready and willing recently when they were able to offer their empty parsonage to a Pocahontas family whose house burned. Three years ago they initiated their first "Blessing of the Bikes" Sunday.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is indebted to those who have gone before with their determination and dedication to the teaching of God's word. We are honored to carry on in His grace. Our doors are open to all.

St. John's has scheduled a variety of events to celebrate their 150 year milestone. On April 28, an organ recital, featuring Mr. Matthew Palisch, Director of Music and Liturgy, at St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, in Jackson, Missouri will be held at 2:00 pm. Palisch will entertain visitors with a variety of music on St. John's ninety year old pipe organ. An open house in the church parish hall will follow.

On June 17, 2018 an outdoor worship service, beginning at 10:30 am, will be led by Pastor David Spotts. Pastor Spotts is a missionary campus pastor, caring for students, faculty, staff and administration of the University of Missouri Columbia through his work with the Wit-



tenberg Door Campus Ministry. Following worship will be a potluck meal in the parish hall.

On August 19, 2018 join us for worship service at 11:00 am, conducted by Pastor Lawrence Bradt, Pastor Bradt is the pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in New Wells, Missouri and is currently serving as supply pastor at St. John's. Following worship and a light lunch we will enjoy ice cream and dessert as we are entertained at 1:30 pm. by The Front Porch Players, a dulcimer group, from Sikeston, Missouri.

We look forward to many more years of sharing the Gospel. Everyone is invited to join us each Sunday for worship as well as at any of these special events.

Facebook page: St. John's AALC  
or email: stjohnspocahontas@gmail.com.

*Mary Koeberl Rechenberg is a member of St. John's Lutheran Church, a retired teacher, and a freelance writer who lives near Pocahontas. [www.marykoeberlrechenbergwriter.com](http://www.marykoeberlrechenbergwriter.com)*



# OH WHAT A SEASON OF LENT

*by Dr. Rodney J. Bohlmann, Chairman of Faith Lutheran Church*

## The Locale

Faith Lutheran Church, is located in the central plains of Illinois in Iroquois County and in the town of Watseka. The town began at the confluence of the Iroquois River and Sugar Creek where Hubbard built a trading post years before Illinois was a state. Today the town expands to the East and somewhat South from those humble beginnings, but the Iroquois River and Sugar Creek have not moved. These streams carry water from a vast basin through Watseka and on to the Kankakee River, then the Illinois River, to the Mississippi River on to the Gulf of Mexico.

## The Event

February 2018 brought large amounts of rain across Illinois and Indiana, filling the Iroquois River clear back in the Hoosier state and setting the stage for the water flow that filled Hubbard Trading post locale and overflowed into Watseka. The water started slowly at first to fill the lower parts of town. As the water rose, it eventually rose to a level not seen in recent years. We have had regular floods, but water levels are varying. This one was a high water mark.

## The Effort

As the water came rising and it was raining still, several of our members began the effort to try to protect our beloved church property. With plastic over doors, and sandbags stacked high, we braced for rising water. By midnight the water was ten inches deep along the south and east sides of the church. Water was seeping into the interior and wetting carpet and wall board, but never got to any standing depth inside Faith Lutheran Church. But, it eventually rose to 18 inches outside and the duct work under the slab floor finally filled with water.

That put the task into a high effort to keep the water down inside. As the ducts overflowed water soaked areas of carpet in the sanctuary, fellowship room, library, Pastor Cooper's office, the secretary's office and the nursery. The soaking continued all day Friday, and Saturday, church was cancelled Sunday and still the effort continued. Moving furniture from rooms that needed carpet repair, we still continued to bail water. Transfer pumps, shop vacs and carpet vacs all joined in the continuing effort to keep the water from rising inside.

The effort to move the offices out was massive. Pastor Cooper is our local scholar, and his books needed to move from the office. The water was soaking fast enough that some pressed wood book cases collapsed and books were removed before any pages got wet. Have you ever seen a stack of books on a conference table 15 books deep? At this point they were safe. Moving the secretary out took more effort to keep her office somewhat functional. Her desk was set up in the narthex, and little did we know that it might stay there a month or more.

The vast majority of damage was to carpets. The carpet in the library was removed completely as were the carpets in the two offices and the nursery. All of these were due for replacement, but this pressed the decision earlier than planned. The water remained for the better part of a week but reduced slowly and no longer threatened to return.

The parsonage across Faith street to the east experienced water in the garage, but not into the house. A group from Southern Illinois with vast experience came to muck out the garage so it could dry for repair. Side walls of plaster board were removed to two feet up and wet insulation was removed. The mitigation of mold in the crawl space was effected by a fogging treatment.

Large dehumidifiers were brought into the church and the furnace helped dry things out. This was a time of decision. We chose to redecorate the offices, ordered new flooring material and paint. We scrambled to find new book cases for Pastor's books. We modernized the lighting in the offices and kept an eye on the calendar hoping to be able to worship on Easter the first of April.

## The Recovery

Weeks went by as we dried out and got in line for flooring installation. The material was delivered in mid March and within a week the floors were done. Paint was dry, bookcases were acquired and lighting was installed. Now the regress into the offices and other rooms began. The books by now were halfway back to Pastor's office having to move so the conference table could be removed for flooring work. Installing the bookcases, sorting and carrying books took a couple of days, slow but sure. A new normal was emerging.





*The original screenshot was taken from Robert Devine's YouTube page and later edited to highlight the church and parsonage locations.  
The link to the YouTube video is <https://youtu.be/wBgAnmJup-4>.*

## The Cost

Each time we took action the cost of recovery continued to rise. The cost of the contractor to dry things, the cost of flooring material and installation, the cost of paint and contract painters all added up and up. As chairman, I advised the congregation that we may need to seek a short term loan to finish the effort outside of our regular budget. We urged one another to pray for provision.

## The Prayer

The congregation and other congregation began to pray with us. Pastor alerted the AALC and started a Go Fund Me campaign to help. Slowly we started to build that everlasting trust the God does not forsake us nor leave us to repair our own hurts.

## The Provision

Soon the provision began to materialize. It would be improper to mention congregations or name of persons who proved financial assistance in addition to their prayers. God is so good in how he moves us to help one another and many persons were thus moved so that the costs were substantially covered. Our treasurer is still calculating the income and total cost. Hopefully, the final accounting can be complete by the 4th of July.

## The Restoration

The offices, the fellowship hall, the library, and the nursery all got new flooring and some got new wall paint and lighting. All is dry and restored. Surely, nitty-gritty details continue, but Easter Sunday had new meaning for us. God had raised us from the flood and has raise our Savior Jesus from the dead, what relief we feel. Relief from our burden of sin and our burden of sludge was uplifting for us all.

## The Rejoicing

On Easter Sunday, the church was full with family and friends as we were once again able to shout HALLELUJAH. After the struggle of lent, this rejoicing was from a new-found joy.

## The Thanksgiving

We continue to give thanks for our many friends and a new beginning. We thank God for giving us strength for a renewed effort to serve our neighbors in the county, our state, nation and world. Thanks be to God for hearing our pray and bringing forth the provision needed for restoration. Thanks be to God for faithfulness to His creation and to His people. And thanks be to God for resurrection and our redemption from sin, HALLELUJAH!

# Lisa & Her Dad

*by Tom Stover*

I took a call from the Director of one of the Phillip's neighborhood ministries asking if I would be willing to conduct a funeral service for a non-member of our church. A young woman named Lisa was in her office rather distressed and not knowing where to turn. Her father had just died and she had no family to help her work through the details or spend time with her during this traumatic time.

Lisa was living in subsidized housing nearby and did her best to stay in touch with her dad making sure he was eating and taking care of himself. She would go looking for him on the streets and when she found him he was always happy to see her. She would bring him his coffee and sometimes, if she had enough money, she would bring him to a local restaurant and they would eat together. This last week when she went looking for her dad and asked around if anyone knew where he was, she was told by someone rather bluntly, "Oh ya, I think he died." She found out that her father's body was being held at HCMC. A friend told Lisa to contact a particular organization in the neighborhood and they may be able to help her with funeral arrangements and they then contacted me.

When I talked with Lisa we found out her dad was in the military and that he had an honorable discharge. I contacted Fort Snelling and explained the circumstances and we were able to have his body sent to Fort Snelling for a military funeral. We were able to find a nice suit for him and the ministries purchased a nice dress for Lisa. The funeral service was small, and the weather was beautiful. At the sound of the 21 Gun Salute, there wasn't a dry eye in the group. It was an honor and a blessing to be able to serve Lisa at this time as we let the light of the Lord shine around her.





# Sportsman's Banquet

by Tom Knight

Ascension Lutheran Church of Waterloo, IA

On Saturday, February 24th, our church held a men's event called the Sportsman's Banquet. The Sportsman's Banquet is a dinner consisting of wild game dishes prepared by the hunters, fisherman and outdoor enthusiasts at Ascension. All of the food is donated and tickets for the event are free. There is a time of fellowship at the beginning, then the dinner is served. After dinner, there is a short Gospel message geared towards outdoorsmen presented, then the door prizes are given away.

There are two main purposes behind this event. First, it is to strengthen the fellowship of men within the body of Christ. Second, it is to draw other men outside the church, closer to God's word.

We would like to thank all of the hard working volunteers who donate their time, talents and resources to make this men's event a success. We had approximately 120 people attend this event.



## Hold The Line Conferences

By The Rev. Stoner

The American Association of Lutheran Churches (The AALC) has recently begun hosting *Hold the Line* conferences. The idea behind this stemmed from our call as a conservative, confessional Lutheran church body to challenge the church catholic (universal) to hold to the inerrancy and infallibility of Holy Scripture. God's Word is under attack, quite frankly, both from outside the church, but also from within. These *Hold the Line* conferences are a call and invitation for other Lutherans to join us, The AALC, in this battle to defend the sacred Scriptures as the inspired Word of God.

Our hope is to bring attention to this cause, as well as grow our identity as a confessional Lutheran church body. We hope to make new friends and grow relationships through these conferences, which are open to all people.

The *Hold the Line!* Conference is designed as a one-day event, usually held on a Saturday, from about 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Presiding Pastor of The AALC, the Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins, hopes to have six of these events per year over the next few years. We are looking for Lutheran congregations (not necessarily TAALC) to host an event, and invite local Lutheran communities to attend.

For more information about the *Hold the Line!* Conferences please go to our web site: [www.taalc.org](http://www.taalc.org) and scroll down the home page to the *Events* section, or email us at [theaalc@taalc.org](mailto:theaalc@taalc.org)

# Pinewood Derby Race

by The Rev. John Morley

*“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV

**W**hile cleaning out one of the rooms in the basement of First Lutheran Church one Saturday morning, a group of members stumbled across something very special. Buried deep within a stack of dusty, worn hymnals, and other long-forgotten ‘church treasures’ was uncovered what appeared to be an old pile of wood sitting in a corner. Further examination revealed that this was no ordinary pile of wood, but something that was much more special: a pinewood derby track! Asking those people in the church and community about this “old pile of wood,” it couldn’t be helped but to notice the smiles and excitement that came to the faces as a flood of youth-filled memories washed over them and showed in the brightness of their smiles: “Wow, I remember doing that!” “We had such a fun time!” “I still have my car from when I was a little!” No matter what words the person used, a certain excitement and joy was shared by all in remembering this special time and event in their childhood.



As a Pastor, this really got me to thinking, “Why did we stop doing this?” After all, if this event was so special to this many people, wouldn’t it be a blessing to share in that excitement and joy with their children and create that same type of memory with them? Bringing this idea to the church and community was met with eager and willing hearts, and before we knew it, the “old pile of wood” in the corner had been resurrected from its resting place in the basement to be restored, and to once again bring smiles and joy to countless children, parents, and people of all ages.



Little was it realized how special this event was going to be, and the impact it would have as the church reached out into the community in this way. All of this was free and open to everyone. The church held three “build days” for those that needed help building their cars. The men and women, boys and girls, had an amazing time, not just building and painting their cars, but developing new friendships and catching up with old ones. There were teams of people that





drew together from the congregation to decorate, plan, promote, and prepare for the BBQ for race day. There was even a team to clean up after the race. Many people came together using their unique skills, gifts, and talents to make this day a reality. They came together and served in a spirit of unity and love.

Then came the big race day! 27 children from the ages of 5-14 came to test their cars on the race track, of which 14 were members of the church. With them followed their families—parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.—and before you know it, the basement of the church was filled with the laughter and excitement over 100 people. And guess what? The men and women, boys and girls, had an amazing time not just racing and cheering for their cars, but developing new friendships and catching up with old ones. A gratefulness, unity, and love overflowed in the church basement that day. So much so that even an hour after the race, lunch and activities had all come to a close, almost every single person could still be found sitting around and talking, laughing and enjoying the excitement of the day.

This Pine Wood Derby was truly more than just an “old pile of wood” sitting in the corner of the basement of the church. This was about a genuine community of people who care for one another and strive to share in the peace, joy, and love that our Lord and Savior so freely pours out on us every day. Plans for next years Derby are well underway along with some new and exciting ideas for reaching out into the community, building relationships and sharing in the love of Christ with the people of Parshall, ND.

# Prayer Bookmark

## June

1. Pilot Knob Lutheran Church Pilot Knob  
*Forest City, IA*
2. Rev. Scott Strohkirch
3. Ailing pastors
4. Lisa Cooper, Master of Arts student
5. Poplar Lake Lutheran Church *Fosston, MN*
6. Rev. Scott W. Bieker
7. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church,  
*Evansdale, IA*
8. Chris Leins, Seminary Student
9. Board of directors
10. Redeemer Lutheran Church,  
*West Union, IA*
11. Rev. Steve Lundblom
12. Matt & Amy Cline
13. John Lynch, Seminary student
14. Rev. Steve Smeback
15. Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran  
Church, *Frazier Park, CA*
16. For the National Convention
17. Chris Tasma, Seminary student
18. Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church,  
*Galt, CA*
19. Rev. Steven Klawonn
20. Regional chairmen
21. Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church,  
*Sidney, MT*
22. Rev. Tim M. Cartwright
23. Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church,  
*Yuba City, CA*
24. Charles Sandison, ULLM
25. The Sending Place
26. Karl Tervo, seminary student
27. Curt Roeszler, ULLM
28. Dee Parsons, Master of Arts student
29. Sonland Lutheran Church, *Casa Grande, AZ*
30. Henry Silke, ULLM

# Prayer Bookmark

## July

1. St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church,  
*Augusta, KY*
2. Ryan Dexter, Pastor & seminary student
3. Mike Zaske, ULLM
4. St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church,  
*Traer, IA*
5. Charles Upole, seminary student
6. Todd Krenzer, ULLM
7. Beyond the Barriers Ministry
8. St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church,  
*Otis, CO*
9. Christian Martyrs
10. St. Paul Lutheran Congregation, *Tripoli, IA*
11. Rev. Oliver Urdahl
12. Commission for Women
13. St. Paul's Lutheran Church, *Napoleon, OH*
14. Benjamin Baker, Certified Pastor
15. Andrew Virkus, seminary student
16. St. Peter's Lutheran Church, *Elk Grove, CA*
17. Abraham McNally, seminary student
18. The Barn Again Lutheran Church,  
*Tijeras/Cedar Crest, NM*
19. Rev. Bruce Ritter
20. Pastors & Church workers
21. Trinity Lutheran Church, *Galata, MT*
22. Rev. Carl Bengtson
23. Alexander McNally, seminary student
24. Rev. Carl Groh
25. Trinity Lutheran Church, *San Pedro, CA*
26. Chad Zimmerman, Seminary Student
27. Rev. Christopher Raiford
28. Wittenburg Door Campus Ministry
29. Trinity Lutheran Church,  
*West Hempstead, NY*
30. East European Missions Network
31. St. John's Lutheran Church,  
*Pocahontas, MO*



AALC

# 26<sup>th</sup> General Convention

of The American Association of  
Lutheran Churches

# Set Free!

*Galatians 3:13*

**June 26-29, 2018**

**University of Northwestern**

3003 Snelling Ave. North

St. Paul, MN 55113

### **Cost of Registration**

Double Room Occupancy: \$300 per person

Single Room Occupancy: \$330 per person

*Mark your calendar and plan to attend!*





# Living Last Supper

By The Rev. Bob Snitzer

**O**n Maundy Thursday, Pilot Knob Lutheran Church held their second annual drama of the Living Last Supper. Many of the disciples and Jesus grew beards for the occasion. This year we built our own table, benches and turned new goblets. The backdrop was also painted by our local professional artist, Andy Sinnwell. Our directors, Barb Snitzer and Cathy Caldwell did a fantastic job with fifteen men, props, advertising, and refreshments. Without them and many other helping hands it would not have been possible. Attendance increased from last year, maxing out our seating capacity.

The purpose of this drama is to draw attention to Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper and the sacrifice he made for our forgiveness and eternal life. Our goal is to remind people or introduce them to our Lord's love and salvation. Plans have been made for 2019 to enact the drama Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday.



Photos by Melissa Snitzer

The American Association of Lutheran Churches

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Fort Wayne, IN 46825-1551

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*The*  
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