

The  
**EVANGEL**

*Women's Ministry Edition*





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# From the Editor

Well, ladies and gentlemen of The AALC, we asked and you answered. The topic of “women serving” brought so many excellent contributions that this editor had the difficult task of holding multiple articles until the next edition—what a problem to have!

Ladies, if you have ever wondered if there is a place for you in the church, or have wondered if the work you do matters, the answer is: yes!

God graciously filled Scripture with stories about women serving. Remember how the midwives around the time of Moses' birth preserved human life? Think of Deborah—and other women—who gave wise counsel. Note all the women who sang songs describing God and proclaiming truth. Or the godly mother and grandmother who raised a future pastor, the women who bore children in the lineage of our Savior, the first believers who witnessed Christ's resurrection. Or perhaps one of the most interesting accounts: Jael's quick mind and steady hand with a hammer and tent peg, defending God's people against an enemy. Wow, would I love to sit down with her over coffee and get some more details on that story!

Even Martha reminds us that preparing food for guests is a good thing; it's the getting upset and complaining to the Lord that gets us church ladies in trouble (does that sound familiar to anyone besides me?).

God is in the business of preserving His Church. Isn't it amazing that He uses us women in the process? He has gifted each of us and put unique situations and people in our paths, and somehow all of it is God delivering His truth and forgiveness to a broken world.

May the pages of this edition encourage you, ladies, in the various vocations God has placed before you. Remember: He is pleased with you through Jesus' righteousness, not your own attempts. *That* fact is how we can serve with freedom and peace.

Thank you,  
Gretchen Baker  
The Editor

# Spiritual Mothers

by The Rev. Dr. Curtis E. Leins

The study of the early church is called, “Patristics,” a word derived from the Latin: pater, and the Greek: patér, meaning “father.” This study spans the time from the end of the Apostolic Age, circa A.D. 100, to the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451. Patristics is named for the patriarchs or spiritual fathers of the Christian faith. Unfortunately, such a title easily overlooks the extraordinary contributions of the wonderful women of God who served as our spiritual mothers. This edition of *The Evangel* is devoted to women of faith. Let’s take a look at some of the significant women who impacted the early years of the Christian Church.<sup>1</sup>

## Prayer and Service

Several early church writers discuss the ministry of widows. Hippolytus in his *Apostolic Traditions* (c.210 A.D.) describes their ministry as “appointed for prayer” (Chapter 11). Another work from the same time, *Didaskalia Apostolorum* (Syria, C. 230 A.D.) declares that the widow has prayer as her “primary duty.” Widows prayed for the whole church and for all those in special need. Their ministry was of such importance that it was often listed along with other offices of the church: bishop, elder, and deacon. As such, Tertullian calls them an “order” (*On Modesty:13.4*). *Didaskalia* explains that in addition to praying, widows excelled in charitable works and acts of mercy. They visited the sick and distressed, provided acts of hospitality, and created and donated woolen articles. A fourth century Egyptian document, *The Apostolic Order*, describes the two-fold ministry of the widow as prayer and service.

Christian Churches in the East confronted their pastors with special circumstances. Because of the severe restrictions upon the interactions between men and women, the order of deaconess developed. Once again, *Didaskalia* is extremely helpful. It explains that a diaconal ministry composed exclusively of women was established in order to serve the bishop. There were many circumstances in which it was not appropriate for a man to interact with a woman. For example, because baptism was a spiritual new birth, it was done naked. It was necessary,

therefore, for the deaconess to shield those women who were being baptized so that their nakedness was not seen. The deaconess also would provide the anointing with oil at baptism.

In addition, the deaconess had the responsibility of teaching and instructing newly baptized women in proper Christian conduct, specifically regarding modesty and chastity. In this way, the deaconess served as a spiritual mother to newly baptized women. The deaconess also was responsible for visitation and care of women who were ill.

As time passed, the responsibilities of the office of deaconess grew. She was the keeper of the doors to restrict the entrance of men into the women’s section of the church. She became supervisor of seating in the female portion of the congregation during worship. She became liaison between clergy and female members of the congregation. The deaconess also became the abbess who was responsible for the religious life of the local nunnery. The duties of the deaconess-abbess, in addition to overseeing the discipline and spiritual life of every woman in the religious community, included raising children, practicing hospitality, washing feet, and distributing bread to the needy.

## Scripture and Theology

Christian women had expressed their interest in the Word of God and sound doctrine from the time of Christ. The history of the early church is filled with examples of women who excelled in their study of Scripture and theology. Charito was martyred with Justin Martyr, probably because she was associated with his school in Rome. The lectures of Origen were attended by women, including the mother of the Emperor. Jerome taught two women, Marcella and Paula, who were renowned for their exceptional knowledge of Scripture and theology. Paula established a monastic community of women in Bethlehem.

One of the most influential writers of the early church was a Spanish nun named Egeria. She spent several years in the late 4th century traveling through Egypt,

*Continued on Page 4*

Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor. Egeria kept a diary as a record of her experiences, *Egeria's Travels*. She stayed three years in Jerusalem, and includes a detailed description of worship in the Holy City during Holy Week. Some "dear ladies" in her hometown were the intended recipients of her literary masterpiece.

### Martyr and Example

Charito was mentioned above as a martyr at the time of Justin Martyr. The early church saw the death of many female martyrs. Their examples were an inspiration of faithfulness and courage for both men and women alike. Blandina died in AD 177. She was hung on a post, but her prayers inspired those Christians who were martyred with her.

Potamiaena was a pupil of Origen. Her love and testimony were given to the soldier who led her to death, so much so that he himself joined her in both a profession of faith and a martyr's death (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*: 6.5.1).

### Spiritual Mothers

Women of the church today have received a wonderful legacy from centuries of faithful Christian women before them! Those spiritual mothers of ages past were incredible gifts of prayer and service, of study and knowledge, and of sacrifice and inspiration. In this brief article, we have looked

at the lives of only a few individuals, but these characteristics have been demonstrated in the lives of untold silent saints and unnamed faithful. Their lives of spiritual motherhood have impacted countless precious souls all around them.

Blessed women of The AALC, whether you have your own children or have spiritual children in the family of God, your ability to inspire faith and goodness is far greater than you can imagine! Your spiritual children are watching and learning, both men and women, both young and old. They notice and are grateful for your prayers and for your loving acts of service! They count on your Scripture study and your wisdom and guidance that come from God's Word. Especially, they are blessed by your faithfulness in the day of trial or the hour of adversity. Your trust in Jesus Christ is inspiring, and your words of hope and love are comforting and life-changing!

You are the spiritual mothers of the church today! We all are very thankful for you!

**The Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins is the Presiding Pastor of The AALC.**

<sup>1</sup>A document by William Weinrich was extremely helpful in the preparation of this article: "Women in the History the Church." See John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991), pp. 265-284.

# Women's Luncheon Planned During Convention

Greetings from the National AALC Women of L.I.F.E. Executive Board!

In this edition of *The Evangel* highlighting women in service, it is fitting to present our upcoming schedule at The AALC General Convention in June. The National WOL Board desires to be of service to the women of our congregations! In order to do just that, we need to meet together and get to know you and your needs.

Our Women of L.I.F.E. luncheon will be Wednesday, June 22, from 11:30 AM-1:00 PM. All women are invited to attend. We will have a devotional, enjoy lunch and fellowship together, and conduct the business meeting. We will review our benevolence giving and the work being done by the missionaries we support, and vote on our benevolences for

the next two years. We will also need to vote on new officers. The positions that need to be filled are: 1) Co-Chair 2) Mission Outreach Chair, and 3) Secretary. So please be thinking about joining the executive committee, or, if you know someone who would like to serve on the executive committee, feel free to nominate them! We also still have an opening for the Western Regional representative.

Our prayer breakfast will be Thursday, June 23, from 7:30-8:15 AM at the college. Shuttle service will be available. Come be a woman of prayer with us!

If you are unable to join us at convention, please know that we would still love to hear from you. You can contact Katherine Hofinga, Co-Chair, at 605-586-2233 or khofinga@hotmail.com.



# Serving Our Neighbors in Love

by Kathy Buhr

*“The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and good conscience and sincere faith.” 1 Timothy 1:5*

Jesus replies to a Pharisee when asked what is the greatest commandment, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39).

If we are obedient to the command to love our neighbor, then it follows that we are also to **serve** our neighbor in **love!** And, of course, the greatest **love** is God’s love for us. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him” (John 3:16-17). This is God’s plan for our salvation to live our eternal life with Him.

It is our Christian responsibility to “Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:13). Paul continues to speak to us in Romans 13:10, “Love does no harm to its neighbor.” And in Romans 15:2, “Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.” We are commanded and called to love, to encourage and help our neighbor; it is our motivation for godly living. Jesus teaches us that “our neighbor” is anyone in need (Luke 10:25-36).

My daughter, Traci, is very conscientious in reading and memorizing Scripture. She is also very faithful in prayer and believes that God can use her where He wills. One particular day, Traci asked God to give her a generous heart. God heard her prayer and presented her with the opportunity “to be generous.” In line at a pharmacy, she waited her turn to pay. The woman ahead of Traci didn’t have the money she needed to pay for her purchase.

This is what God does when we ask Him to bless us! Every day He presents us with opportunities to honor and obey Him. Often, He comes in the ordinary, haphazard things or happenings that are placed in our lives to love our neighbor and help them.

There are endless ways to help, maybe sitting quietly with someone who is lonely or hurting, or just listening when someone needs to talk. Perhaps letting a neighbor use your

washer and dryer, or maybe seeing an elderly person mow the lawn and you decide you can get out of your vehicle and mow for them. Perhaps there is a need to pray for someone or an event because this is the way we are able to serve. God will always present opportunities.

Are we willing? Are we available? Are we ready to say, “Yes, Lord, here I am, send me?” It won’t be a waste of time. The task is really simple: **to trust and obey** and go God’s way.

“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul” (Psalm 143:8). I suppose the place to start if I’m willing and want to be a servant of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is to ask, “Am I faithful in reading God’s Holy Word? Am I faithful in prayer?” God is so loving and really wants to hear our hearts and voices in prayer. God sent His Son who taught us how to pray. Ephesians 6:18 tells us to “Pray continuously.” I absolutely need to be reading my Bible. I absolutely need to be praying, listening to God’s voice, and sharing my heart in order to know His will for me each day.

My dear friends, let us be grateful that God calls us to humble ourselves and be a servant! We are to be like Jesus, “Who being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a **servant**” (Philippians 2:6-7a, emphasis added).

Christians are to care and have a deep sympathy for each other. “Serve one another in love” (Galatians 5:13b).

I love the song “One Day At a Time” by Lynda Randle, which says, “Just give me the strength to do every day what I have to do, Lord help me today, show me the way, one day at a time.”<sup>1</sup>

**Kathy Buhr is a former Women of L.I.F.E. Co-chair and is a member of Ascension Lutheran Church, Waterloo, IA.**

<sup>1</sup>Lynda Randle, “One Day At a Time,” accessed March 13, 2022, via [www.songlyrics.com](http://www.songlyrics.com).

# Women in the Church: Holy Vocations and Godly Ordering

by Rev. Jon and Karen Holst

## The Challenge Facing Christians Today

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27).*

Among the many significant challenges facing Christians today, is the hellish lie that we are born neither male nor female, and that we can be whatever we want to be with respect to our gender. The religion of godlessness would have us worship the creature rather than the Creator and exchange the truth that we are created by God as male and female for the growing lie that gender is only a social construct (cf. Rom 1:25). More than ever, it is imperative that faithful Christians be mindful in both the understanding and practice of the beautiful order in which God has created us as male and female. After all, upon completion of His work of Creation, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31).

## The Order of Redemption and the Order of Creation

*“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (Gal 3:26-29).*

You may remember that when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11), the Evil One tried to twist the meaning of Holy Scripture as his means of attack. In our own day, Satan has used this passage from Galatians to deceive some people into thinking that the divinely created order of male and female isn’t relevant, and that men and women may assume any vocation they like without boundary. In actuality, this passage is not about the roles in which men and women are given to serve, but rather our equal status in the Order of Redemption. The context is clear: “as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ ... you are all one in Christ ... heirs according to promise.” By virtue of our baptism, all the faithful, both male and female, are equal heirs of the promised inheritance of salvation and eternal life in Christ.

It is also true, however, that God has given women and men different roles in the Order of Creation.

*“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior” (Eph 5:22-23).*

*“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...” (Eph 5:25).*

These verses can rub our sinful human natures the wrong way. Women might not like it that God has established male headship in the Order of Creation, and men might not like it that that we’ve been called to be so self-sacrificially loving that we should give up even our very lives for our wives. It’s all really a paradigm of self-sacrificial love and service that even shows up in other God-given vocations:

*“Children, obey your parents ... Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger” (Eph 6:1-4).*

*“Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters ... Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven” (Col 3:22-4:1). “Obey your leaders [pastors] and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account” (Heb 13:17).*

We may not understand exactly why God has ordered things the way He has, but as those who’ve been called by the Gospel into His glorious kingdom, we should strive with the help of the Holy Spirit to hold fast to the truth that “God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (1 Cor 14:33) and pray “Thy will be done,” as we love and serve in self-sacrificial humility in accord with the Order of Creation.

## Women as Members of the Priesthood of the Baptized

*“... you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5).*

In the Order of Redemption, Christian women are just as much a part of the Priesthood of the Baptized as Christian men. With that comes the responsibility of offering up “spiritual sacrifices” such as prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. Christian women are called to pray, praise, and give thanks for their families, the Church, the world, the many people in their lives, and for themselves that their “spiritual sacrifices [might] be acceptable to God through Jesus Christ,” that is, in accord with His will.

It is also true that, as members of the Priesthood of the Baptized, women have been given many gifts with which they might sacrificially serve.



*“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor 12:4-7).*

In the New Testament, for example, Dorcas “was full of good works and acts of charity” (Acts 9:36); Priscilla (and her husband) “took [Apollos] aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26); and Nympha made her home available for the gathering of the church (Col 4:15). Whatever the family life and occupational situation may have been for these faithful women, they used their gifts to serve those in need, speak the truth of God’s Word and promises to others, and to be supportive of the Christian congregation.

### **Women as Servants of Christ’s Church**

*“As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says” (1 Cor 14:33-34).*

The inspired Paul is speaking here in the context of orderly worship when the churches (Gk. ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, “the assemblies”) come together for the Divine Service of Word and Sacrament. It’s another one of those passages that can rub our sinful human nature the wrong way. Even the sinfully lazy man might be prone to think: “Why not? That’s less that I’d have to do!” But like it or not, we are called to cling to the truths that God is a God of order, that out of His fatherly love He has set boundaries for His children in life and service (just as all good parents set boundaries for their children), and that whether we understand those boundaries or not, they are ultimately for our eternal good. Even men have such God-given boundaries. Not only are men *not* given to bear children, but neither are all men called (or even qualified) to preach, teach, and administer the Sacraments (cf. 1 Tim 3; Titus 1).

There are, of course, some areas of service where these boundaries can get a little fuzzy in our minds, namely, communion assistants, lectors, and acolytes (especially the first two: being the administration of the Sacrament and the public proclamation of the Word which would make these areas of service outside of God’s boundaries for women according to the Order of Creation and the unique responsibilities of the Pastoral Office). While beyond the scope of this article to address in detail theologically, suffice it to say that the Church has historically used these areas of service to train up young men who might one day be called and ordained to serve as pastors. The Church today could learn from this wisdom. Owing to the critical role of men in ensuring that their families remain faithful (see the work of Assistant Presiding Pastor Larson on this topic: [www.taalc.org/pastors-conference](http://www.taalc.org/pastors-conference)) it would also be good, practically speaking, to limit these areas of service to men: giving them uniquely masculine roles in which to man-up and become faithful servants as well as beginning the formation of future pastors.

So, how *can* godly women use their spiritual gifts in service to Christ’s Church? First and foremost, by being godly wives, mothers, and single women who have the challenging vocation of being teachers, mentors, and caring supporters for the next generation of faithful Christian women. Also, Christian women can be a great blessing to their congregations by serving in offices that respect the Order of Creation and the specific responsibilities of the Pastoral Office. This includes Sunday School teachers, musicians, trustees, financial secretaries, treasurers, Altar Guild members, outreach event coordinators, and numerous other areas of service according to local need.

Additionally, we should also mention the biblical vocation of Deaconess. You may remember that Phoebe served as a “servant” (Gk. δούκων from which we derive “deaconess” in Phoebe’s case) of the church at Cenchreae (Rom 16:1). From the time of the early Church, we know that Deaconesses have served their parishes and surrounding communities in countless works of mercy: bringing comfort and hope to the needy, lonely, distressed, and suffering – all while bearing witness to Christ and His saving work for all.

### **Conclusion**

*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another ... And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col 3:12-17).*

Christ’s Church has always needed and will continue to need faithful women who give selflessly and tirelessly of themselves in home, congregation, and community. Let us all, as the Body of Christ, give thanks to God for the countless women who have blessed us with their unique gifts in their God-given vocations even as we encourage and support those who are prayerfully considering how they too might serve.

*For all the faithful women  
Who served in days of old...  
They served with strength and gladness  
In tasks Your wisdom gave  
To You their love bore witness,  
Proclaimed Your pow’r to save.<sup>1</sup>*

**Rev. Jon Holst serves as pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Lutheran Church in Jurupa Valley, CA, and Karen, in addition to her faithful service as wife, mother, and grandmother, has served on the Altar Guild, as Sunday school teacher, as trustee (painting more walls than she’d care to recall), and in the choir.**

<sup>1</sup>Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr., “For All the Faithful Women,” *Lutheran Service Book* (Saint Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2006), #855, st. 1

# Who are The AALC Women of L.I.F.E. (WOL)?

## Lutherans In Fellowship and Evangelism

All confirmed women of The AALC are members of the Women of L.I.F.E., but it is recognized that some women will serve in areas of Christian service other than the Women's Commission and congregation circles. Women who serve in the congregation in such areas as choir, Sunday School, Altar Guild, etc., are a part of The AALC Women of L.I.F.E. It is also recognized that some women, because of small children, or handicapped, aged, or infirm members of the family, may not be able to take responsibilities in other Christian service, at least for a while. All women of the congregation beyond confirmation age, however, are the concern of The AALC Women of L.I.F.E. and should be considered in planning.

### **We are: A Commission of The American Association of Lutheran Churches.**

As a group of women, we first met in conjunction with the constituting convention of The AALC in November of 1987. From that point on, we were a women's standing committee. In June 1991, we became The AALC National Women of L.I.F.E. Commission. "Acknowledging that our Lord, Jesus Christ is the Divine Head of the Church, and desiring in our day to follow and serve Him, we now with united effort, dedicate ourselves to the furtherance of His Kingdom, by a stewardship of life and service to the glory of the Triune God." (Statement of Faith and Purpose, 1987).

### **WOL Theme Verse**

"Fear (obey) the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; For consider what great things He has done for you." 1 Samuel 12:24

The WOL have chosen to function in a three-fold manner:

- ✠ Ministry: Our inward spiritual growth
- ✠ Missions: Our outward spiritual witnessing, and our mission outreach support
- ✠ Materials: Our future publications and Bible studies uplifting Christian education

The WOL organizational structure consists of a National Executive Board (listing current leaders):

- Two Co-Chairmen (Karen Huskamp & Katherine Hofinga)
- Secretary (Mary Dapelo)
- Treasurer (Donnette Taylor)
- Material Resource Chairman (Laurie O'Brien)
- Mission Outreach Chairman (Beth Brokenshire)
- Pastoral Advisor (Rev. Dick Hueter)

The AALC in 1987 had 10 regions and a woman was elected to be a Regional Representative from each region: Atlantic Coast, Eastern Great Lakes, Western Great Lakes, Heartland, Central Plains, Southern Minnesota, North Star, Northwest Plains, Pacific Northwest and Pacific Southwest.

Now The AALC has five regions with five regional representatives:

1. Eastern: Ann Sloan
2. Greater Heartland: Traci McNally
3. West Great Lakes: Barbara Ruuska
4. North Plains: Donnette Taylor
5. Western: TBD

Please check out our resources at:  
<https://www.taalc.org/women-of-life>

**Compiled by Kathy Buhr, former Women of L.I.F.E Co-Chair.**





# Women Serving: The Family

by Barbara Ruuska

*“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10 KJV).*

*“Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you” (1 Samuel 12:24 ESV).*

Do you frequently consider all of the great things God has done for you? Have you been blessed with women in your life who are great role models in how they serve God and their neighbor? 1 Samuel 12:24 is the theme verse for the Women of L.I.F.E. in The AALC. It serves as a reminder to all of us that we should fear the Lord and consider all of the wonderful things He has done for us.

Martin Luther described the vocations in our lives as the three estates: the church, the family and the state. Women have served various roles in these estates throughout all of history. The Bible gives us many examples of how women served critical roles and praised and served the Lord.

In our own lives, we have examples of women who have dutifully served and continue to serve the three estates. In this article I’m going to focus on one of the three estates: the family.

## The Family

In Proverbs 31:10-31, we meet a woman who is an archetype of a woman serving. These final verses from the Book of Proverbs are “...an impressive acrostic poem honoring the wife of noble character.”<sup>1</sup> She runs her household like a tight ship—everything down to the smallest detail is in order. Neither bad weather nor the limited hours in a day are a match for her wisdom and efficiency. Her children and husband lack nothing. She fears the Lord and serves him faithfully in all that she does. “She is wisdom personified.”<sup>2</sup> In wisdom, she serves others and considers everyone in her household more worthy than herself.

I grew up in the suburbs of St. Paul, Minn. My mother’s parents lived about eight miles away, which was close to the heart of downtown St. Paul. Their house was near the bluff across the river from downtown. You could look out the front upstairs bedroom window and see the downtown

St. Paul skyline. Through the years, my brothers and my parents all shared loving stories of the woman we all referred to as “little grandma.” I missed out. I was born nearly a year after she died. These are some of her stories.

My little grandmother rose early every morning. She cooked, cleaned, and managed the household on a meager budget. Money was scarce. My grandfather rarely held onto a job for more than a few years at a time and was frequently unemployed. My grandmother scraped and found ways to economize to keep the family fed, clothed, and still could give to others in need. I don’t know the entire story, but during the Great Depression, hobos would find their house and ask for food. She served the sojourners by providing them with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. My mom says that the house was marked somehow, but even today she’s not sure how they found the right house.

My grandmother’s ability to economize was known in the neighborhood. The local grocer was closed on Sundays and Mondays. Every Saturday, she would shop there while her kolache dough was rising. The grocer would set aside a small bag of produce that was not going to last until Tuesday, and he would give it to my grandmother. He knew that she would be able to use it to feed her family, and he didn’t have to throw it out.

Now in no way was my grandmother even close to the wisdom of our wise woman from the Book of Proverbs 31. My grandmother was a hardworking, little lady who feared the Lord and considered all of the great things He had done for her.

We give thanks to all women who humbly serve in the name of the Lord.

**Mrs. Barbara Ruuska is the Commission for Women Representative from the West Great Lakes Region.**

<sup>1</sup>Hoerber, Robert G. General Editor, et al. “Concordia Self-Study Bible,” Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 1986. p. 945.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

# Prayer: God's Gift to Us

by Cathy Twito

Prayer. I am convinced that on this side of heaven we have little to no idea of the importance and impact of our prayers lifted to God. It is God's gift to us and a way to serve Him in His kingdom. On this note, allow me to pass along some nuggets I've gathered along the way.

G.K. Chesterton wrote, "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly."<sup>1</sup> Uhhhh...what does this have to do with prayer? Just this: Some shy away from prayer, feeling inadequate for whatever reasons. When it comes to prayer, let me borrow a phrase to make a point: "Just do it!" Prayer is like a muscle that needs to be exercised—don't wait to make it a daily habit. Whatever, wherever, however...just do it.

Oswald Chambers articulated it best: "Prayer does not equip us for greater works—prayer is the greater work... Prayer is *the* battle."<sup>2</sup> So much could be expressed in reflection of these words, but for now, let me share a challenge offered at a conference. Participation in mission work can thrive...in my home...on my knees...in conversation with my Savior on behalf of my Christian family or missionaries throughout the world.

Someone older and wiser shared this quote when I had little ones: "When kids are little you talk to them a lot about God, and when kids are older, you talk to God a lot about them." Can I get an "Amen!" from those of you with teenagers or adult children? If I could grab you by the ears having your full attention, I would tell you passionately that the children in your life (of any age!) desperately need your prayers. It's a mine-filled jungle out there and bringing their names before our Lord in prayer daily is of utmost importance.

In the last handful of years, I've found myself being stirred to prayerfully wrap my heart around loved ones as I read Scripture allowing His word to be the springboard. Here's some of my recent favorites:

"The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever" (Isaiah 32:17). The Hebrew word "shalom" is translated "peace," meaning a state of completeness, wholeness, fulfillment, and well-being. Christ's righteousness brings this blessed fruit of peace. May God's shalom pour over you.

"May the Lord give strength to His people; may the Lord bless His people with peace" (Psalm 29:11).

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Jesus to His disciples: "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (Matthew 14:25).

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...And the God of all glory...after you have suffered a little while, will HIMSELF restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen" (I Peter 5: 8-11). (Emphasis mine.)

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go: I will counsel you with my eye upon you" (Psalm 32:8).

"See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble" (Hebrews 12:15).

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

It's almost painful to stop here as clearly there are so many great verses to whisper in prayer! But for now: just do it!

May God richly bless you in sweet fellowship with Him through this marvelous gift of prayer!

**Cathy Twito is a member of Ascension Lutheran Church, Ames, IA.**

<sup>1</sup>G. K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong With the World*, accessed March 26, 2022, <https://www.chesterton.org/a-thing-worth-doing/>.

<sup>2</sup>Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, accessed March 26, 2022, <https://utmost.org/the-key-of-the-greater-work/>



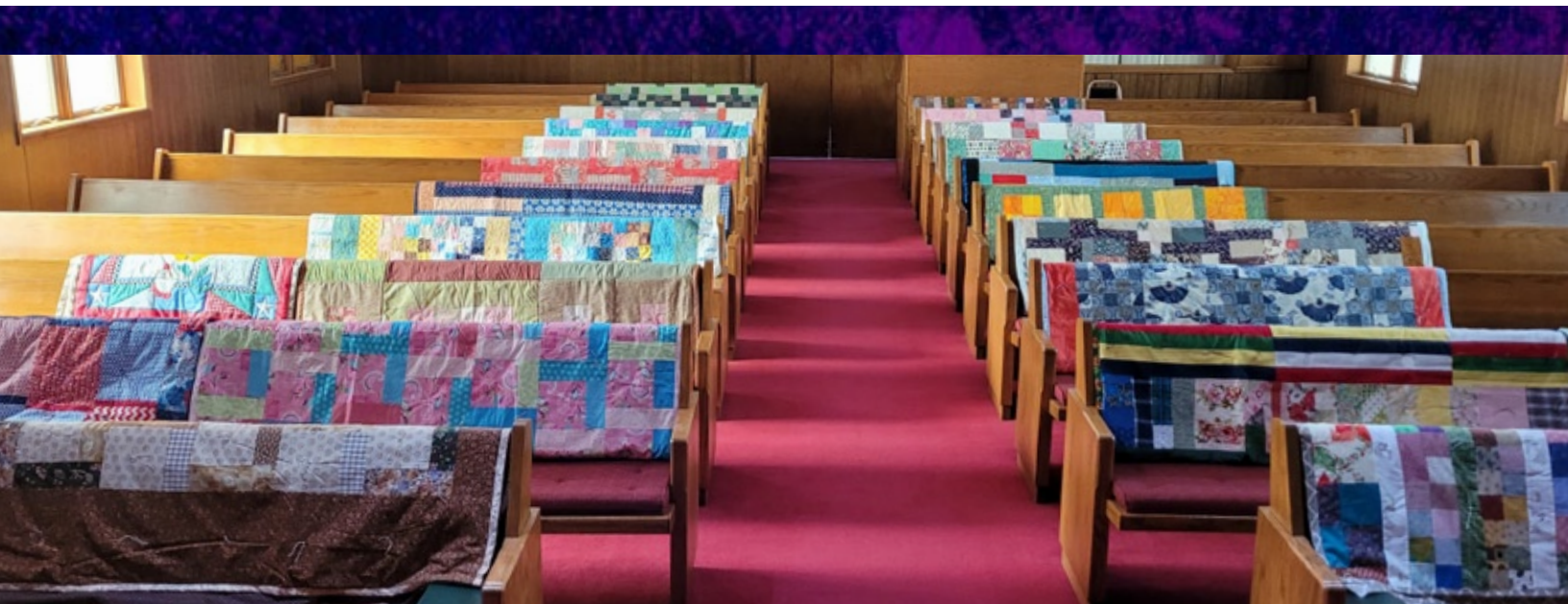
# Are you a Pastor's Wife?

Are you new to that role and do you know what your role is? "Support my husband!" Yes, definitely...but what does that look like? Have you had any training? Do you feel like you're bumbling along but not really sure if you're doing the best you can? Do you feel alone in your struggles?

Or have you been a pastor's wife for many, many years and would like to impart some of your wisdom to a newer pastor's wife? Have you ever thought: "I wish I knew what I know now when I first became a pastor's wife?" Have you made any mistakes? Do *you* feel alone in your struggles?

Several pastors' wives have been in discussion and would like to get together at The AALC General Convention. We have a room reserved for us on Wednesday, June 22, from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm so that we can eat, get to know each other, and see where we want to go from there. Please join us!

If you can't be at Convention but would like to be kept in the loop about pastor's wife stuff, please email Katherine Hofinga at [khofinga@hotmail.com](mailto:khofinga@hotmail.com) or Gretchen Baker at [flowerspurple@hotmail.com](mailto:flowerspurple@hotmail.com) and we will be in touch.



## Quilters Donate to Local Charities

The women of St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church, Traer, IA, created 24 quilts over the past several years to be given to those in need. The women did much of the work on the quilts at home, but came together one Saturday to help each other tie the quilts, which was a very fun time of stories and laughter, besides the quilting. The quilts were displayed in the sanctuary several Sundays in February before being donated to two local charities, including a women's shelter. Pictured left to right: Judy Williams, Doris Danker, Anita Herker, Betty Meggers, and Gretchen Baker. *Group Photo by Mandy Boldt.*



# Mendivelso provides bi-lingual Ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church

By Rev. Ray Lorthioir

In 1925, the Long Island Railroad electrified its lines in Nassau County just east of the New York City border. This permitted a 45-minute trip to Manhattan from the western part of the county. As a result, potato fields began to be turned into suburbs. Thus, Norwegian background people from Trinity Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, moved to developing areas south and west of the village of Hempstead, New York. Therefore, in 1925, a pastor was sent to organize two congregations, one of which is Trinity Lutheran Church, West Hempstead, NY.

In reality, Hempstead is a small city. It was a commercial center when the county was rural. And West Hempstead was its suburb. Today, Hempstead retains its more urban flavor while West Hempstead is a tree shaded suburban community. All the potato fields are gone, and the entire county has been developed into a suburb of New York City.

For decades now, there has been a strong Hispanic presence in Hempstead and to a lesser extent in West Hempstead. The possibility of doing Hispanic ministry at Trinity has been on Pastor Ray Lorthioir's mind for a long time. Only there was no bi-lingual pastor in The AALC to call.

Then, at the Pastor's Conference of 2018, the Rev. Edwin Mendivelso of Bogota, Columbia, showed up. He was referred to Trinity by TAALC's leadership and a long-distance relationship by video conference began.

Pastor Mendivelso was not on TAALC's Clergy Roster. Therefore, in February of 2019, Trinity called him to be an Assistant to the Pastor (as a lay person). But a lengthy process of securing a religious worker visa was necessary. Finally, on March 4, 2020, that visa was granted. The final step was to visit the U.S. embassy in Bogota to gain permission to enter the U.S. But, within a week, Covid-19 closed the U.S. embassies in Colombia and they remained closed until August of 2021. Pastor Mendivelso was stuck in Colombia.

When Pastor Mendivelso was finally able to gain an interview and be approved, we urged him to get to the U.S. as soon as possible. Therefore, he arrived on September 16 of 2021. He was colloquized at the conclusion of the October 2021 Pastors' Conference and was admitted to TAALC's roster of ministers by the Association Council on Novem-



**Pastor Mendivelso was installed as the Assistant Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Hempstead, NY, on Sunday, February 27, 2022. He is pictured with Rev. Dr. Jordan Cooper, officiant of the installation service, and Rev. Ray E. Lorthioir, Jr., who also serves the congregation at Trinity Luth. Church. Submitted photo.**

ber 5th. On Sunday November 21, 2021, Trinity Lutheran Church called Pastor Edwin Mendivelso to be Assistant Pastor of the congregation.

Immediately upon his arrival in September, Pastor Mendivelso began the work of announcing an Hispanic ministry at Trinity. On October 24th, he began a free English as a Second Language (ESL) program at Trinity on Sunday afternoons. A week later on October 31st, he began a Spanish language service. That service has grown to about a dozen people. Pastor Mendivelso was installed as the Assistant Pastor of the congregation on Sunday, February 27th, by Dr. Jordan Cooper, president of our American Lutheran Theological Seminary. This was followed by a massive pot luck luncheon. We are blessed to have Pastor Mendivelso's ministry among us.

**The Rev. Ray E. Lorthioir, Jr., serves the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Hempstead, NY.**



# Holst serves St. Luke the Evangelist Luth. Church

Rev. Jon Holst is the pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Lutheran Church in Jurupa Valley, CA (a young congregation currently gathering in the parsonage). Although coming from a predominantly Lutheran family, he was not raised in the Lutheran Church, and was baptized and confirmed as an adult. He served as cantor and deacon at an LCMS parish until its closure, and was ordained and installed at St. Luke's on July 23, 2017, by Rev. Tylan Dalrymple (then, of the Lutheran Ministerium and Synod). He was born in Long Beach, CA, (his grandparents having made the exodus from North Dakota around the time of the Great Depression), and was reared in Artesia, CA (where he enjoyed the passions of his youth: classical music and baseball).



Rev. Jon Holst

Having received the Chancellor's Performance Award in classical guitar, Pr. Holst earned his BA in Music. As a Gluck Fellow, he sang in the Choral Society and Chamber Singers, played flute in wind and chamber ensembles, clarinet in the orchestra, guitar in the guitar ensemble, and lute, recorder, and krummhorn in the Collegium Musicum. He then went on to complete Multiple Subjects and Education Specialist teaching credentials, additional studies in classical Greek, an MA in Humanities where his thesis was entitled *The Impact of the Lutheran Reformation on the Development of German Sacred Music in the Renaissance and Early Baroque*, and an MDiv with a concentration in biblical and theological studies.

Pr. Holst has been married to Karen (nee Johnson) for almost 27 years and has been blessed with two daughters, a granddaughter, and a grandson to date. In addition to preaching, teaching, and administering the sacraments, his professional interests include the importance of the liturgy for teaching and confessing the faith, the organic development of Church music as distinct from secular music, and as part of the Church's ethos, worker-priests in 21st century Lutheranism, and sharing the blessings of Lutheran theology and practice with American Evangelicals and the unchurched. For fun, Pr. Holst enjoys Cowboy Action Shooting (two-time Western Divisional and one-time State Champion in his category) and Flamenco guitar (which he plays for Karen's dance classes when he's able).

## PRAYER BOOKMARK

May 2022

1. Commission for Higher Education
2. Dss. Brigitte Gassman
3. Dss. Kathy Awtrey
4. Dss. Susan Scott
5. Agency for Professional Chaplains
6. Faith Lutheran Church *Watseka, IL*
7. Faith Lutheran Church *Columbus, ND*
8. First Evangelical Lutheran Church *Parshall, ND*
9. Trinity Lutheran Church *West Hempstead, NY*
10. Commission for Women
11. First English Lutheran Church *Gibsonburg, OH*
12. Grace Lutheran Church *Nunda, SD*
13. Women of L.I.F.E. Executive Committee
14. Hope Lutheran Church *Hampton, VA*
15. Hospital Chaplains
16. ILC, Den Lutherske Kirke I Norge
17. Trinity Lutheran Church *Galata, MT*
18. Rev. Larry Juergensen
19. Rev. Neil Cadle
20. Rev. Chris Rosebrough
21. Christ Lutheran Church *Germantown, MD*
22. Rev. Dr. Jordan Cooper, Seminary President
23. Rev. Joe Christina, National Home Mission Developer
24. Pastors Wives
25. Rev. Len Brokenshire
26. Rev. Michael Badenhop
27. Rev. Michael "Myke" Main
28. Rev. Nathan Hoff
29. Rev. Norman C. Hoffeld
30. Seminary professors
31. TAALC Foundation

# PRAYER BOOKMARK

June 2022

1. Greater Heartland Region
2. Rev. Dean Stoner, Administrative Assistant to The AALC
3. Association Council
4. Rev. Thomas Baumgarten
5. American Lutheran Church *Mandan, ND*
6. Rev. Robert Wallace
7. Rev. Richard Shields
8. Rev. Joe Marsh, Secretary of The AALC
9. Lake Madison Lutheran Church *Rutland, SD*
10. Shanda Knight, Commissioned Church Worker
11. Lucky Mound Lutheran Church *Parshall, ND*
12. Mr. Duane Kleven, Administrator of the ALTS
13. The Barn Again Lutheran Church *Cedar Crest, NM*
14. For parents and children
15. Mountain View Lutheran Church *Thornton, CO*
16. To help those being bullied
17. Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church *Williston, ND*
18. Ascension Lutheran Church *Ames, IA*
19. Parish Education Commission
20. Peace Lutheran Church *Defiance, OH*
21. Rev. Norman R. Beighley
22. Rev. Paul Hueter
23. Rev. Phillip Hofinga
24. Rev. Poul Erik Norgaard
25. Rev. Ray E. Lorthioir, Jr.
26. Rev. Robert G. Snitzer
27. Rev. Rusty Phillips
28. Rev. Scott Neumann
29. Christian Martyrs
30. For prospective Seminary Students

# Stroud installed at Emmanuel Lutheran

by Larry Farner and Sharie Adrig

Being one of only two AALC Churches in the state of Washington, Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Bremerton celebrated the installation of its second only called pastor on February 6, 2022. The Reverend Dr. Robert Stroud, retired Air Force Chaplain, was called to serve as Pastor. The special installation service was presided over by retiring Pastor Tim Cartwright.



Pastor "Rob" Stroud, who had recently returned to his boyhood home on the Kitsap Peninsula of Washington, was probably thinking his time as an active pastor had come to a close. Little did he know that God had "other" plans for his life. Those plans included an answer to the prayers of the members of Emmanuel Lutheran Church to send a shepherd for their small family of "true believers."

Emmanuel, a Lutheran congregation which left the ELCA to become affiliated with The AALC in 2010, joyously received Pastor "Rob" as its new pastor.

**Larry Farner and Sharie Adrig are members of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Bremerton, WA.**



The Reverend Dr. Robert Stroud was installed at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Bremerton, WA, on February 6, 2022. Rev. Dr. Stroud is pictured with his wife Delores. *Submitted photos.*



# McNally installed at ND churches

by Rev. Abraham McNally

I was blessed to be installed as pastor of First Lutheran Church and Lucky Mound Lutheran Church in Parshall, North Dakota, on the afternoon of Sunday, February 27, 2022. The Rev Dr. Cary Larson, our Assistant Presiding Pastor, was gracious to officiate my installation, as he had installed Rev. Kevin Beard at his church that morning. Also in attendance were the Rev. Beard, Rev. Steve Lundblom, Rev. David Huskamp, and Rev. Dean Johansen. What a blessing to have so many brother pastors present.



As a point of interest, I was ordained on Transfiguration Sunday in 2019 at Christ Lutheran Church in Germantown, Maryland, and installed also on Transfiguration Sunday at First Lutheran Church, Parshall, with my first sermon at each church being on Ash Wednesday. I am blessed to have served such an excellent and loving congregation at Christ Lutheran, and I am joyful to begin my ministry at First and Lucky Mound.

The Rev. Abraham McNally was installed at First Lutheran Church and Lucky Mound Lutheran Church, both of Parshall, ND, on February 27. Joining in the celebration were: Rev. Kevin Beard, Rev. Steve Lundblom, Rev. Abraham McNally, Rev. Dr. Cary Larson, Rev. David Huskamp, and Rev. Dean Johansen. *Submitted photo.*

# Beard installed at Light of Christ Lutheran



Rev. Kevin Beard was installed as pastor at Light of Christ Lutheran of Williston, ND, on February 27, 2022.

*Third photo:* Dr. Cary Larson officiated the installation service; joining in the celebration was Pr. David Huskamp who serves Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran in Sidney, MT.

*Far right:* Rev. Kevin Beard with his wife of 37 years, Marilee. *Submitted photos.*

The American Association of Lutheran Churches

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Please be in prayer for and consider contributing to these upcoming editions:

Sept/Oct theme: AALC Biennial Convention (deadline July 1)

Nov/Dec theme: To be determined (deadline Sept. 1)

Church News: *The Evangel* welcomes submissions of what's happening in your congregation, such as:

- Anniversaries of clergy ordination or installations
- Church activities or celebrations
- Men's and women's events
- Youth and children's activities
- Outreach or community events
- AALC clergy obituaries

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