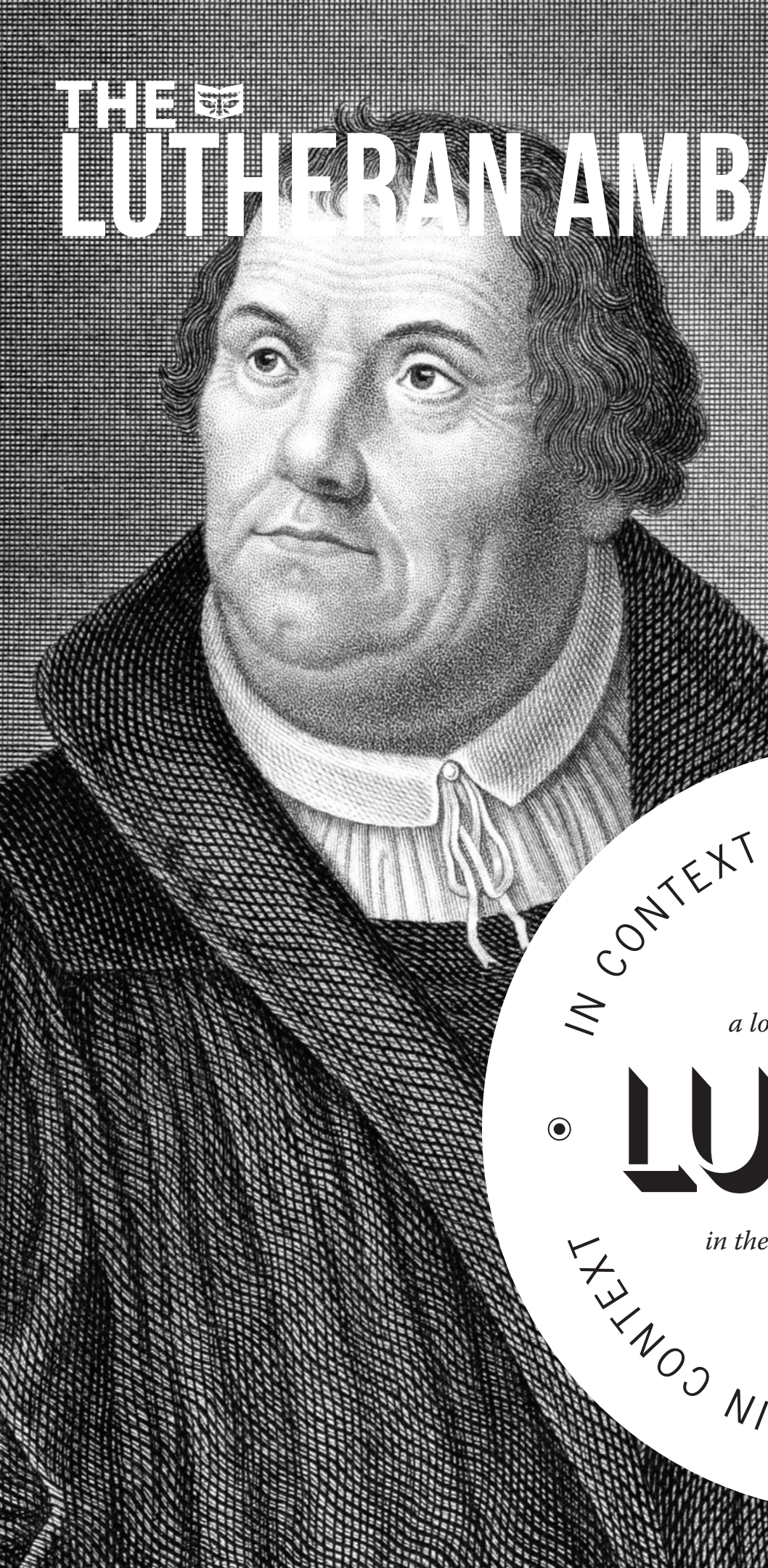


THE 

NOVEMBER 2015

LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR



IN CONTEXT

IN CONTEXT

a look at contemporaries

LUTHER

in the reformation movement

IN CONTEXT

IN CONTEXT



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

NOVEMBER 2015
VOL. 53 NO. 11

EDITOR

Pastor Robert L. Lee
rlee@aflc.org

MANAGING EDITOR

Ruth Gunderson
ruthg@aflc.org

CIRCULATION

Charlotte Fruehauf
charlotte@aflc.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

Oryen Benrud
Pastor Jerry Moan
Pastor James L. Johnson

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

(USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413)
is published monthly by
the Association of Free
Lutheran Congregations.
AFLC headquarters and
publications office is at
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441.
Phone (763) 545-5631;
fax 763-545-0079.

SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES AND INFORMATION

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441.
763-545-5631
luthamb@aflc.org

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$19 a year, Group, U.S.
\$20 a year, Individual, U.S.
\$22 a year, International
Periodicals postage paid
at Minneapolis, MN, and
additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to
The Lutheran Ambassador,
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441.

ENCOURAGING WORD

THANK YOU FOR BLESSINGS

BY DORIS STENSLAND

Heavenly Father, we come today
with a big thank you.

We've found that You give us
what we need, plus a little
extra.

When we received our daily
bread, there was jelly too.

The turkey came with dressing.
And we got ice cream with
our pie.

But our thank you isn't just for
food. You've blessed our lives
in every way.

Thank you for our families—the
children, grandchildren, and
great-grandchildren.

You've blessed us with good
friends; like desserts, they
make our days tastier.

We see Your giving hand
wherever we look.

Daily You display Your beautiful
creation, with flowers bloom-
ing throughout the year.

And we enjoy the sweet music
of bird songs and children's
laughter.

Thank you, Father, for another
day, another month, another
year.

You are the One who gives us
breath, and keeps our hearts
beating.

But the greatest gift of all is
knowing that You love us,
forgive our sins, and heal our
diseases.

Your eyes watch over us both
night and day.

M

any thanks! We don't find it too
difficult to thank people for what
they do for us; even when we pay
someone to work for us, we still say
thank you. However sometimes we
take for granted the blessings the Lord has for us,
especially the little things. Do we thank Him for
eyes to see, ears to hear, and feet to walk? Because
of these many blessings we should be aware that
our Heavenly Father is always waiting for our
gratitude.

When we read about Jesus healing the ten
lepers, we hear Jesus' sad voice asking, "Were
there not ten I blessed? Where are the nine?"
Jesus seemed disappointed as He waited for a
thank you. Only one leper, a Samaritan, returned
to give Him thanks. Perhaps the nine were so
busy enjoying their new lives they forgot the
Giver and went home to their wives. God blesses
us today and the situation is the same. Too often

we are the blessed ones, called by His name, who
take His benefits for granted and are stingy with
our thanksgiving.

May we be numbered with the unlikely one,
the healed Samaritan leper, who came back on the
run, thanking and praising His name. Oh my soul,
forget not the myriad of God's blessings!

What is a blessing? It is really anything from
the hand of God that is for our good and His
glory which we can use for the service of others.
John 1:16 tells us, "From the fullness of His grace
we have all received one blessing after another."

"Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all
of His benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

*Stensland, a charter member of Redeemer Free
Lutheran, Canton, S.D., lives in Sioux Falls with her
husband, Hans.*

Anyone who is to find Christ must first find the church. How could anyone know where Christ is and what faith is in him unless he knew where his believers are?

—Martin Luther

For Christians to influence the world with the truth of God's Word requires the recovery of the great Reformation doctrine of vocation. Christians are called to God's service not only in church professions but also in every secular calling. The task of restoring truth to the culture depends largely on our laypeople.

—J. Gresham Machen

I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would do this day, if all that is in earth, whether it be honor, pleasure, or riches, might be given me.

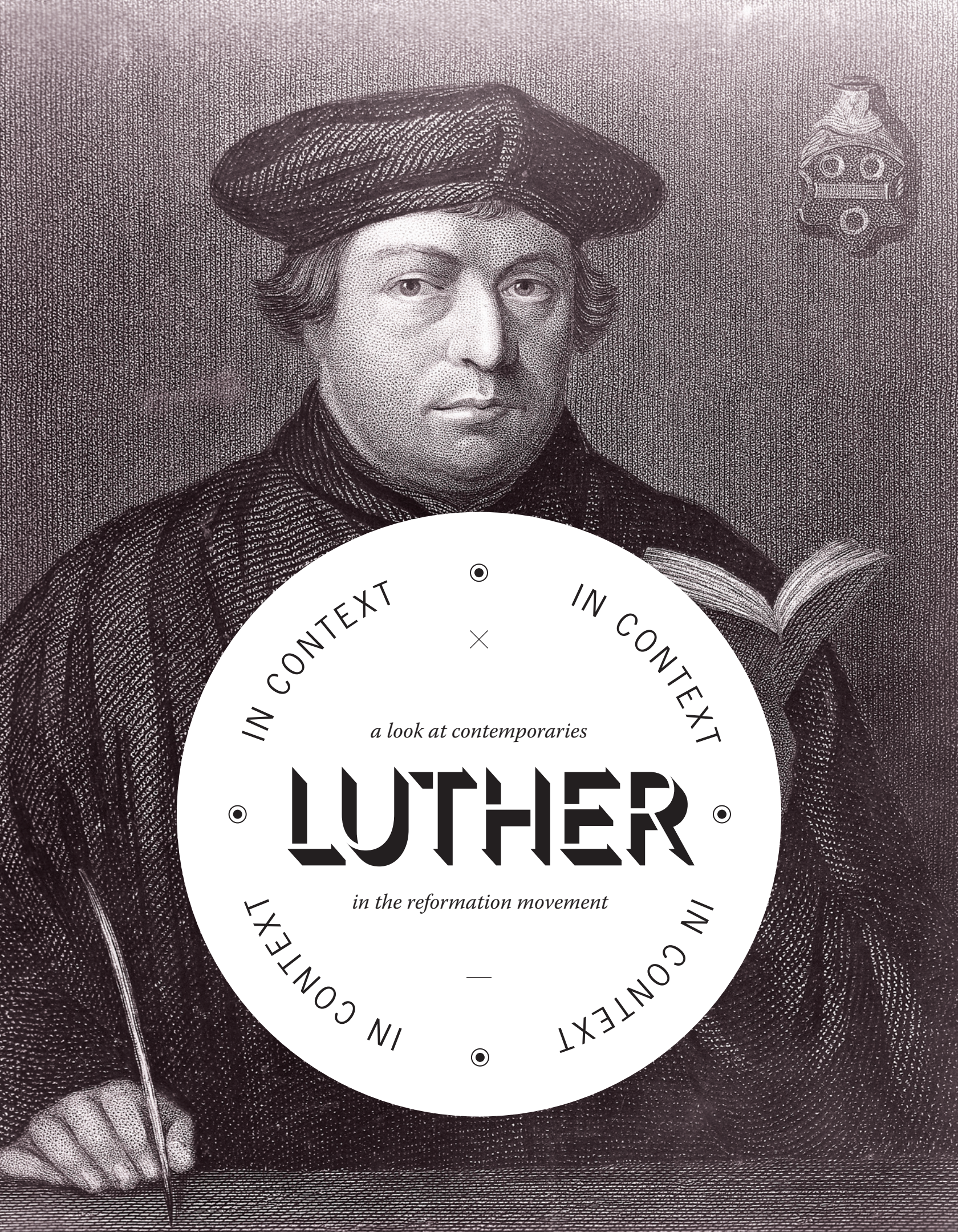
—William Tyndale

What I have taught with my lips I now seal with my blood.

—Jan Hus

But faith is not belief in the history of Christ, as the godless think, but belief in the purpose of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. For he took on flesh, was crucified, and rose from the dead in order to justify all who would believe in him.

—Philipp Melanchthon



IN CONTEXT

IN CONTEXT

a look at contemporaries

LUTHER

in the reformation movement

IN CONTEXT

IN CONTEXT



by micah klemme

ontext, context, context.” My Latin professor has often repeated these words to emphasize the importance of translating a word properly. With one quick glance at a practice sentence I’ve made the mistake of translating a word without seeing how it fits with the rest of the sentence; I missed the point of it entirely. Context is important. Last year at college someone casually asked me, “Why do you Lutherans worship Martin Luther?” To me that moment sounded like a Twix commercial since I needed a moment to explain to my friend that what he said simply wasn’t true. To a person from outside the Lutheran tradition, it may seem weird that we celebrate, quote, read, talk, and debate so much about Luther. Some context is needed for my friend!

What is the gospel and what does it mean for us? Do we earn salvation by works or do we in any way contribute to our salvation? Martin Luther’s teaching against this was that we are saved only by God’s grace through the gift of faith. He was brought to this conviction through Scripture alone; he did not reason his way to start a new religion, but Scripture spoke to him with plain words of Christ’s death and resurrection for the redemption of mankind. It was this gospel, this announcement of God’s grace in Jesus, which was central to what Luther taught and simply why we like talking about him so much. However, Luther was not the only reformer; there were many others whom God used to reform His church.

Prior to the Reformation, the invention of the printing press allowed the mass printing of written material. Educated people who were supporting Luther’s teachings (at least in the early years of the Reformation) began to write more in German instead of Latin, allowing laymen to join the conversation. Popular among the people were small pamphlets which were affordable and easily circulated, allowing the message of reform to travel fast without much hindrance. Philipp Melanchthon, Johannes Bugenhagen, and Andreas Karlstadt were among the most popular authors of these widespread pamphlets. Luther’s works clearly dominated these other authors, but the writings that others contributed were invaluable to the ongoing reformation mission.¹

Artists were also important in helping spread the gospel during this time. Luther’s translation of the Bible into German was a huge achievement, it allowed people to read the Bible in their own language. For some, it was their first time reading the Bible at all. Woodcut illustrations were put into this Bible by artists to help others understand crucial portions of Scripture. Luther wanted these pic-

tures to be kept simple yet capture the key aspects of the text.² Luther’s close friend, Lucas Cranach the Elder, was another artist who often painted in themes that supported Luther’s teachings, such as law and gospel. Luther grew up with much guilt which drove him to despair; he could only feel the condemnation of God. It’s not a big surprise that the art of the day communicated what Luther feared: a wrathful deity who would judge all sinners according to their deeds.³ God is just and righteous, but He is also a God of compassion. “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness,” says Lamentations 3:22-23. Cranach’s art depicted Christ as the merciful and forgiving God and used images such as Christ blessing the children, which helped people understand that God is love.⁴

Looking at the context of the Reformation shows how Luther was surrounded by all sorts of people who supported him and often added to his efforts. The Roman Catholic Church at that time missed the whole picture of God’s redemption story and needed a man like Luther to remind them of the Christocentric nature of the gospel. Some of the people I mentioned earlier ended up disagreeing with Luther on a number of issues. Reformation history is quite messy, but I am reminded in Romans that “for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). No matter how dark things may seem, at times for the reformers and also for you, there is comfort knowing that Jesus has already won salvation for us. Our lives, which are riddled with mistakes and under constant attacks from the enemy, cannot stop Him from furthering His kingdom. I am grateful that God used people like Luther and others to pass on the gospel that we, too, are able to confess Christ to a broken world.

Klemme, a 2013 graduate of AFLBS and a member of Minnewaska Lutheran, Starbuck, Minn., is a student at Concordia University Wisconsin.

¹ Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 15-29.

² Carl C. Christensen, *Art and the Reformation in Germany* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1929), 123.

³ Ibid, 134.

⁴ Ibid

by pastor matthew ballmann



As we celebrate the 498th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and remember the individuals used by God to bring it about, we also do well to remember the individuals who were impacted by and served as key supporters of it. The German Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer was such a man. While some in the American Church may know Dürer or his art, chances are he is nothing more than a strange name you just read for the first time. Allow me the privilege to introduce you to this incredibly gifted man who was a key recipient and supporter of the Reformation.

Albrecht Dürer, The Man

Dürer was born in 1471 to Albrecht and Barbara Dürer. He was the eldest son and third of 18 children, 15 of which would die at a young age. His father was a Hungarian immigrant who moved to the city of Nuremberg, Germany, where he worked as a goldsmith. When Dürer the Younger was only 13, he became an apprentice to his father. After only two years, and to the displeasure but support of his father, Albrecht left to do what he really wanted—paint.

He went on to apprentice for three years under the painter and printmaker Michael Wolgemut (1434-1519), also in Nuremberg. Wolgemut was the first German painter to design woodcuts as illustrations for the newly developed printed book. It was under Wolgemut that Dürer learned the art of woodcutting, a skill that would play a crucial role in his career and influence upon the world. After three years, he went on for an additional two years as a journeyman in which he traveled to Basel, Switzerland. Upon his return to Nuremberg in 1494, Dürer married Agnes Frey in an arranged marriage. They would have no children together.

What was Dürer's relationship to the Protestant Reformation? While we have no record of him formally renouncing Roman Catholicism, his Protestant sympathies are evident in much of his art and letters. He had suffered some level of judgment for these sympathies when he wrote the following in 1524, "because of our Christian faith we have to stand in scorn and danger, for we are reviled and called heretics." It was especially the teaching that began the Reformation—the forgiveness of sins by grace, through faith in Christ—that so powerfully influenced Dürer and his work. Interestingly, it was the preaching of Johann von Staupitz, Luther's mentor and Vicar General of the German Congregation of Augustinians, that first moved Dürer to embrace the rediscovered evangelical theology.

It was not just Staupitz who influenced Dürer; Luther, too, had a significant influence on his thinking. When Friedrich the Wise sent Dürer one of Luther's books in 1520, Dürer wrote the following to the Elector's secretary, "I pray Your Honor to convey my humble gratitude to His Electoral grace, and beg him humbly that he will protect the praiseworthy Dr. Martin Luther for the sake of Christian truth. It matters more than all the riches and power of this world, for with time everything passes away; only the truth is eternal." It was Luther who helped Dürer find release from his spiritual distress through the preaching of the forgiveness of sins through Christ's death and resurrection.

Dürer spent the majority of his life living in Nuremberg creating and selling art. Whether woodcuts, engravings, paintings, or drawings, his work captured the attention and imagination of his contemporary artists and culture at large. When Luther heard of his

death 1528, he wrote, "It is natural and right to weep for so excellent a man." Today Dürer remains among the most admired artists in German history.

Famous Works

As many of the great artists of his day, Dürer had a wide spectrum of skills. He created altar pieces for churches, portraits of both religious and political leaders, and engravings and woodcuts for printed material. To get an idea of the volume he created, today we have about 100 of his paintings, some 100 engravings, and roughly 200 woodcuts. In addition, we have more than 1,200 drawings, sketches, and watercolors. From these he was most known and renowned for graphic works created from woodcuts or engravings. Artists across Europe admired and copied Dürer's innovative and powerful prints, ranging from religious and mythological scenes, to maps and exotic animals. The vast majority of his works have biblical images as their subjects.

Dürer's earliest major work, *The Apocalypse*, was a series of large prints illustrating the Book of Revelation, with the Scripture on the reverse side. Dürer's large illustrations were detailed and full of energy. His *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* has never been surpassed.

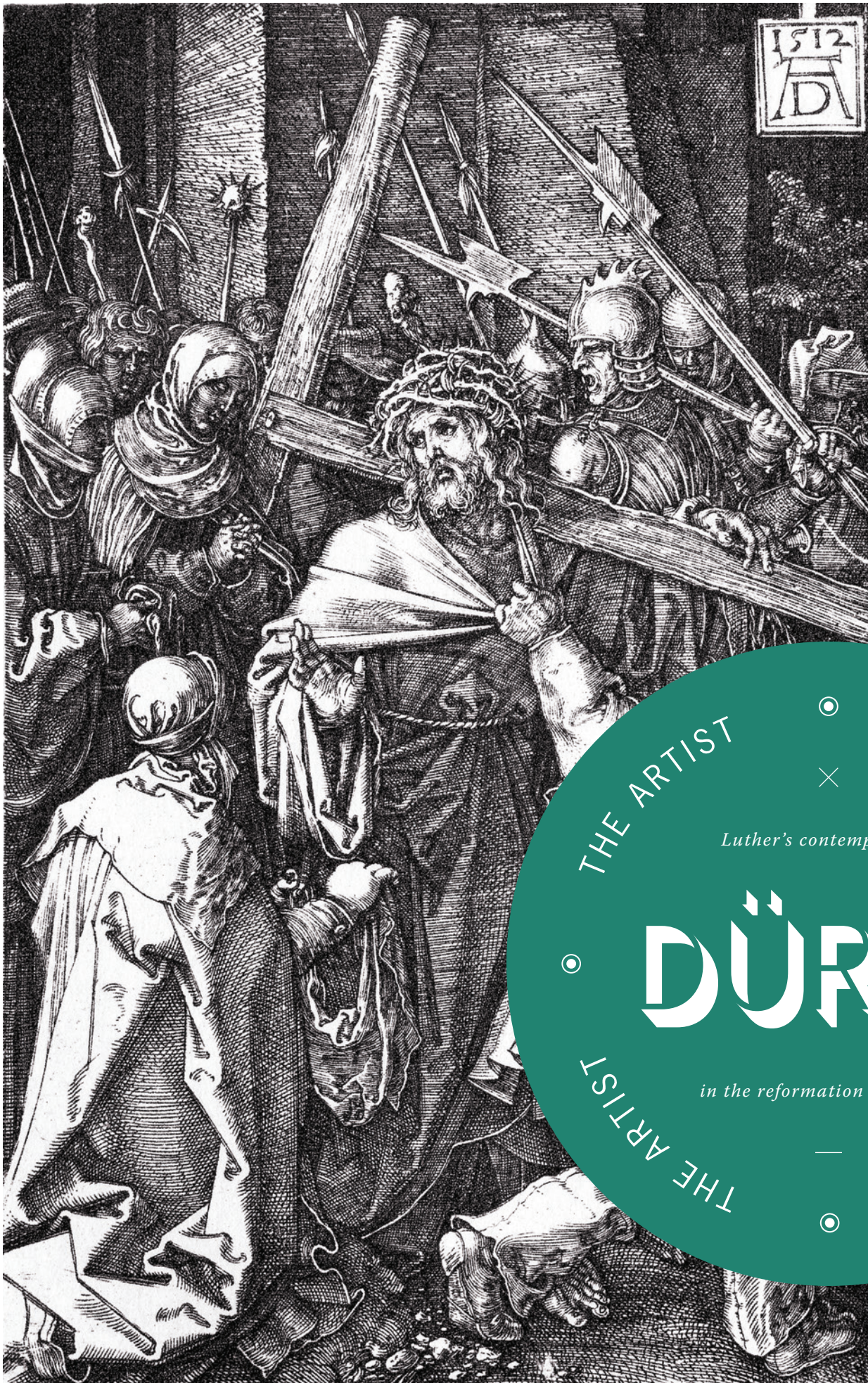
He followed that with a series of 17 cuts entitled *The Life of Virgin* and a large and small series on the *Passion of Christ*. These illustrations were designed to be used especially by teachers and clergy, but in a day before widespread literacy, could also be important devotional tools for Christian laymen. *The Passion of Christ* woodcuts are especially powerful in their communication of the suffering of our Savior.

Another of his most well-known works is *St. Jerome in His Study*, which portrays an elderly Jerome sitting in a room with streams of sun rays coming through the windows. Beside the seated saint are books, timepieces, writings, and many other objects, all of which carry some symbolic meaning. One such symbol in the room is a human skull, which was meant to serve as a reminder to Jerome of the inevitability of death (*memento mori*). If you follow Jerome's line of eye site to the skull there stands a cross of the crucified Savior, reminding him that death has been defeated through Christ Jesus.

Dürer's final great work, a painting, *The Four Holy Men—Sts. John, Peter, Mark and Paul*, was presented to the Nuremberg City Council as a gift. Below the painting Dürer attached a short message which spoke to the danger of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching and at the same time affirmed the Protestant commitment to the authority of Scripture, "All worldly rulers in these dangerous times should give good heed that they receive not human misguidance for the Word of God, for God will have nothing added to His Word nor taken away from it. Hear therefore these four excellent men, Peter, John, Paul, and Mark and their warning."

While there is an extraordinary number of other powerful pieces we could consider, suffice it to say that Albrecht Dürer was a man who was an extremely gifted artist, believed in the good news of forgiveness of sins through Christ by grace through faith, and used his gifts for the proclamation of God's Word and the glory of God.

Ballmann serves Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D.



THE ARTIST

THE ARTIST

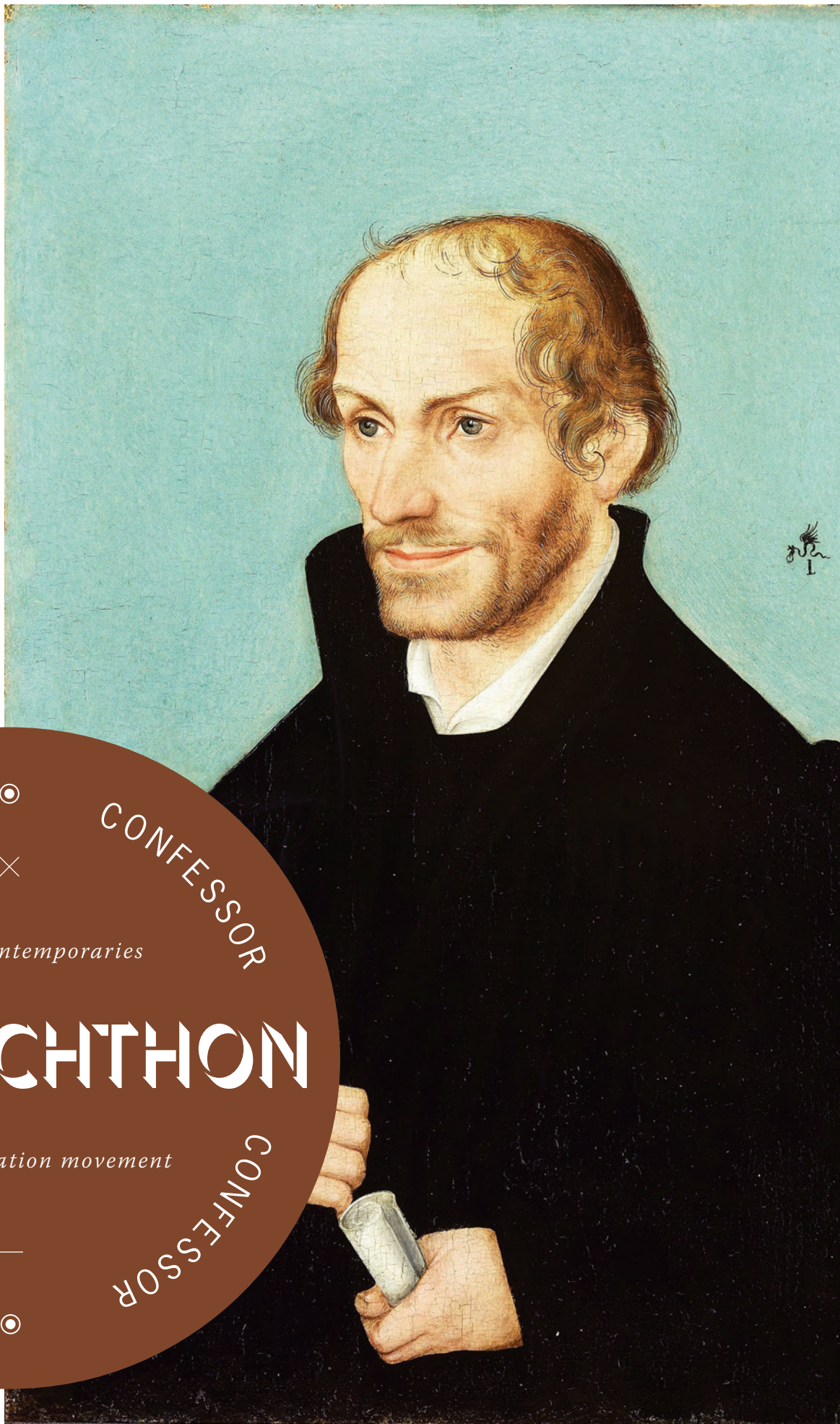
Luther's contemporaries

DÜRER

in the reformation movement

THE ARTIST

THE ARTIST



CONFESSOR

CONFESSOR

Luther's contemporaries

MELANCHTHON

in the reformation movement

CONFESSOR

CONFESSOR

by pastor phill hooper

Luther is remembered as the “prophet” of the Reformation: direct, fiery, speaking to situations and issues without much hesitation—or occasionally, much refinement. Often overlooked is the fact that he worked with several people. Unique among them in contribution and friendship was Philipp Melanchthon.

Melanchthon was quite a scholar. He entered the University of Heidelberg at the age of 12—which was quite young for his day, or for ours. He received his bachelor of arts at 14, and would have probably received his master of arts at 15, but the University was reluctant to grant the degree to someone that young. (He switched schools, and earned it from the University of Tübingen two years later.)

He was, to say the least, a gifted scholar. By temperament, he is usually remembered as having been kind, relatively quiet, perhaps even timid—a careful thinker, who gave careful answers. His personality was nearly a polar opposite to the flamboyant Luther. He began teaching at the University of Wittenberg in 1518, met Martin Luther, and the two became fast friends and enjoyed a close friendship the rest of their lives. Though history does not remember him well (and then, not always kindly) Melanchthon played a tremendous role in the Reformation working alongside Luther.

In 1519, one year after meeting Luther, he accompanied Luther and his colleague Andreas Karlstadt when they went to Leipzig to debate Catholic theologian Johann Eck. At that debate—though not officially part of it—Melanchthon aided Luther by passing him little notes with Bible verses that showed the Catholic position was unbiblical. He taught Luther the Greek language, and he also encouraged him to translate the Bible into German—a work that Luther accomplished while in hiding at the Wartburg castle. During that time of hiding, Melanchthon also took over Luther’s Bible classes at the University of Wittenberg. Afterward, Melanchthon helped Luther improve his translation of the New Testament.

Though they did collaborate on some works, their differences in temperament are evident in what each tended to write about. Luther would write about important issues, anecdotes, or topics that had recently arisen; he would wade into a theological fight, and contend for the faith. The more reserved Melanchthon tended to review what had been written, organize it, word it carefully, and systematize the faith. Whereas Luther had boldly made his stand in 1521 (and had to go into hiding afterwards), it was Melanchthon who wrote and presented the Augsburg Confession in 1530, who later wrote the official defense or *Apology* of the Augsburg Confession against Catholic

critique of that confession, and who wrote the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, all three of which are part of the Lutheran confessions.

Some fundamental teachings or thoughts that are accepted as Lutheran can, in fact, be either credited to Melanchthon, or at least to his influence. Though both men made a clear distinction between law and gospel, Melanchthon may well have been the first to describe it in terms of “law” and “gospel.” Similarly, the description of the law having three uses, as described in the Lutheran confessions, comes from Melanchthon, not Luther.

The Reformation needed a man willing to stand as a prophet, speaking loudly, clearly, and fearlessly to the people and to the times. Luther served well in that capacity. The Reformation also needed a man who would organize the movement’s thinking so that it could be preserved and taught from one generation to the next. From early on, Melanchthon served well in that capacity.

As both men aged, their views and writings shifted somewhat. Toward the end of his life, Luther became increasingly angry and wrote some things from which we now distance ourselves. So also, as time went on, Melanchthon’s theological conclusions slowly drifted somewhat from Luther’s, and we now distance ourselves from these, as well. (This would eventually lead to conflict between Luther’s later followers and Melanchthon’s.) Nevertheless, even as the aged Luther became more temperamental, and the aging Melanchthon began his theological drift, the two men remained quite close; Melanchthon remained the one man to whom Luther showed great patience and gentleness toward, even in disagreement. Melanchthon, writing on the occasion of Luther’s death, remembers him and his temper honestly, but encourages that his life, example, and teaching be remembered alongside such biblical men as Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Paul.

As we remember the Reformation of the Church, it is good to take Philipp Melanchthon up on his suggestion and remember Luther well and honestly. We do that best when we remember and give thanks to God that, in His Church, He raised up Luther, with his many gifts, and had him working alongside men such as Melanchthon, with his gifts, for the benefit of God’s Church. May we similarly encourage each other as God’s Church with our own varied personalities—and gifts.

Hooper serves St. John’s Lutheran, Duluth, Minn.

by ruth gunderson

In our age of hashtag-happy, culture-spinning social media platforms where published opinions fill reams of cyberspace, it may not seem like such a big deal that nearly 500 years ago a woman decided to write a letter to a university, bringing its leadership to task and challenging them to a public debate. So it is no easy undertaking to emphasize the importance of Argula von Grumbach and her influence in Bavaria and the wider world during the Reformation. Long lost in the annals of history, Argula's story has recently taken on new interest as Lutherans dig into their past in preparation for 2017's quincentennial anniversary.

The year was 1523 and the scene was the University of Ingolstadt, a bulwark of Catholicism thanks to theologians such as Johann Eck, infamous Catholic apologist who devoted himself to the overthrow of Martin Luther. The problem arose when a young university teacher named Arsacius Seehofer, fresh from studies under Philipp Melanchthon at Wittenberg, began incorporating Lutheran teaching into his lessons. Arrested and given the option to recant or face certain death, Seehofer was humiliated in a public trial and forced to recant his reforming beliefs.

This little scene would likely be lost to history if our lady of the moment hadn't caught wind of the affair. Her brother happened to be a student at Ingolstadt, and, along with other interested parties, kept Argula informed of what trans-

pired. Outraged at what she believed to be a corrupt system, where Scripture was used to refute Scripture, Argula waited for someone in authority to respond. None forthcoming, she penned a letter to the rector of the university and sent it off within a fortnight of the trial.

Full of no less than 80 references to Scripture, focusing specifically Matthew 10 and Ezekiel 33, Argula's letter challenged the university authorities to identify the heresy in Seehofer's lectures.

"What do Luther or Melanchthon teach you but the word of God? You condemn them without refuting them," she wrote, "For my part, I have to confess, in the name of God and my soul's salvation, that if I were to deny Luther and Melanchthon's writing I would be denying God and his word. ... You have the key of knowledge and you close the kingdom of heaven."

Context, in our story, is important. Prevalent in the air around Ingolstadt was a growing distrust of the Catholic Church. "In the households among which Argula moved ... there was strident and increasingly angry talk about the indolence and poor education of the clergy," writes Peter Matheson in *Argula von Grumbach: A Woman Before Her Time*. It was an upside down world where indulgences were being sold, peasants revolting, and reform in the air.

Paul Speratus, a well-known reforming preacher with whom she corresponded, was calling for a "root and branch change" of organized religion and warned, writes Matheson, "that this process would be costly and excite fierce resistance; every believer had to make a beginning right now. The time for waiting was over!"

So it is easy enough to see why Argula acted so decisively. Woven into her letter was a treatise on the personal responsibility of a Christian to stand up for Scripture. "The word of God alone should—and must—rule all things," she wrote.

What made her letter so sensational was less the challenge and more the fact that it came from a woman, who, as reformation preacher Balthasar Hubmaier said of her, "knows the divine word better than clergy."

It may not be helpful, though, writes Matheson, "to interpret Argula's actions in today's feminist terms. She did not insist on her inherent right to speak, but rather referred to her inspiration by the Spirit, and to the duty or responsibility that flowed from her standing as a baptized Christian."

Argula hailed from a long line of *Reichsfreiherrn*, free imperial lords in Bavaria who answered only to the emperor. The granddaughter of Hans von Stauff III, who commissioned the Furtmeyr Bible and was knighted in the Holy Sepulcher following a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Argula was educated far beyond a typical female of her time. Following family tradition, she was given her own German Bible when she turned 10, though her Franciscan preachers warned her not to study it as it would likely confound her.

She was sent to the court of Munich at age 17 and became a lady-in-waiting to Duchess Kunigunde, the sister of Emperor Maximilian, well known for her deep personal piety. When Argula's parents both died of the plague in 1509, she was consoled by her friend, Duke William. She married Frederick von Grumbach in 1510, and he became the ducal administrator in the comparatively provincial town of Dietfurt.

Despite her relative exile in rural Bavaria, Argula worked hard to keep up with the changing winds of religious scholarship through correspondence with the great minds of the time, including Luther, Melanchthon, and theologian Andreas Osiander. She also purchased all of





the written works of Luther, Melancthon, and Andreas Karlstadt. Thanks to the printing press and *Flugschrift* (“flying writing,” as pamphlets were called), she was able to not only keep up with current reformation writing, but be a part of it as well.

As soon as Argula’s letter left her hands, it found its way into pamphlet form. Within four months, it had undergone 14 reprints, rivaling the best writers of the time. Soon to come were seven more pamphlets, which included letters to Duke William, the Ingolstadt Council, her uncle (Adam von Thering was among the most vocal in the charge against her), appeals to prominent princes in the realm, and a poetic response to a slanderous—and anonymous—piece directed at her.

In each instance, Argula founded her appeals on Scripture and advocated for the free preaching of the Word of God. “Words like these, coming

from the very mouth of God, are always before my eyes. For they exclude neither woman nor man,” she wrote.

In a time when many were facing strict—often bodily—consequences for their reformational beliefs, it is amazing that Argula escaped martyrdom. Instead, she faced a trial by gossip, her name slandered by university theologians and family members. Her husband, who did not support her, was forced to give up his ducal post and her family was exiled without means. For the rest of her life, she worked to support her family and give her four children a Protestant education. While her writing abruptly ended in 1524, she continued the “slow, unsensational work of helping build up a new reformed church and society,” writes Matheson.

Her words, forgotten for a time, now are recalled afresh in an increasingly challenging cli-

mate for believers. They call all brothers and sisters in Christ—the priesthood of believers—to action.

“Even if I were dead already, the word of God would not be wiped out; for it abides forever. I am persuaded, too, that if I am given grace to suffer death for his name, many hearts would be awakened. Yes, and whereas I have written on my own, a hundred women would emerge to write against them” (*Letter to the Ingolstadt Council*).

Gunderson, managing editor, is a member of Vision of Glory Lutheran, Plymouth, Minn.



FORERUNNER

FORERUNNER

Luther's forerunner

HUS

in the reformation movement

FORERUNNER

FORERUNNER

MILUJTE SE PRAVDY KAZDEMUK REJTE

by pastor jarrod hylden

Six hundred years ago Czech minister Jan Hus (1372-1415) was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake. “Lord Jesus Christ,” prayed Hus, “I will bear patiently and humbly this horrible and shameful and cruel death for the sake of Thy Gospel and the preaching of Thy word.”¹ That’s exactly what Hus did. He faithfully served the Lord in Bohemia, teaching at the University of Prague and preaching at Bethlehem Chapel. For this he was killed.

Historical Context & Wycliffe Influence

The state of the Catholic Church was not well. The Papacy was so fixated on gaining temporal power that it neglected matters of spiritual care. The scandal of the time was the Great Schism. There were two popes. One in Avignon, France, and the other in Rome. The Council of Pisa (1409) attempted to solve this problem by deposing the rival popes and choosing a new one. The result: three popes! The visible unity of the One Holy Catholic Church was discredited. Most everyone agreed that the Church was in need of institutional and moral reform. However, cries for doctrinal reform from men like John Wycliffe (1331-1384) and Hus were firmly resisted.

Hus grew up in an atmosphere of reform. The Czech religious reform movement gave rise to preaching in the vernacular, moral reform, frequent participation in the Lord’s Supper, and the centrality of Scripture. The writings of Wycliffe (from England) reached the University of Prague and were embraced by Hus. Though not endorsing everything, Hus taught what he thought to be biblical in the writings of Wycliffe. According to Williston Walker, Hus taught, under the influence of Wycliffe, “that the true church consists only of the predestined, of whom the head is Christ, not the pope ... The life of the true church is one of Christ-like simplicity and poverty. The only law of this church is the Bible, above all the New Testament.”² Hus taught that the authority of the Scriptures overrule the authority of Catholic Church tradition. Sound familiar? It’s not hard to see how this courageous reformer got into trouble.

The Road to Martyrdom

When the majority of professors at the University of Prague condemned the teachings of Wycliffe, Hus and a minority came to Wycliffe’s defense. Later, the Archbishop was ordered to eradicate all of Wycliffe’s teachings in Bohemia. Hus protested and was thus excommunicated. Curiously, he was excommunicated a second time for denouncing Pope John XXIII’s scheme to raise money for a crusade by selling indulgences. Hus taught “that a pope has no right to use physical force, that money pay-

ments effect no true forgiveness, and that indulgences are superfluous since forgiveness is freely given to those who are truly penitent and confess their sins.”³ Like Luther after him, Hus was willing to risk his life for the sake of the gospel. He further upset Church authorities by calling their judgment into question due to their own wickedness. Instead of obeying orders, “he appealed his case to ‘God and Christ’ alone, not to a pope or to a church council.”⁴ This flippant attitude toward the pope and councils was deemed heretical.

The Council of Constance

In 1414 the Council of Constance convened in order to heal the Great Schism, reform the Church (though not doctrinally), and to deal with Wycliffe and Hus. Wycliffe, who had died 30 years earlier of a stroke, was condemned as a heretic and his remains ordered to be dug up and burned. The council then charged Hus with 30 erroneous teachings and ordered him to recant. He promised to do just that if they would only instruct him from Scripture. The council’s response: “Recant first, and then you will be informed!”⁵ For about a year this pattern ensued: The council called Hus to recant, he refused unless corrected from Scripture, Hus lingered in prison, the council called him to recant, and so on. Finally, on July 6, 1415, the council turned him over to the Emperor to be burned as a heretic. As the flames rose he sang an Easter Hymn. His last words: “God Father, forgive me my sins.”⁶

Legend has it that a dying Hus also cried out, “Today you are burning a goose (*hus* in Bohemian); in a hundred years will come a swan you will not burn.”⁷ True or not, the legend bespeaks the fact that although the doctrinal reform called for by Hus did not have the widespread impact for which he prayed, the one called for 100 years later by Martin Luther lives on today.

Hylden, a 2015 graduate of AFLTS, serves Skrefsrud Lutheran, Beresford, S.D.

¹ William Dallmann, *John Hus A Brief Story of the Life of a Martyr* (Project Gutenberg, 2008), Kindle edition.

² Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Scribner, 1985), 382.

³ Ibid, 383.

⁴ Ibid, 384.

⁵ William Dallmann, *John Hus A Brief Story of the Life of a Martyr* (Project Gutenberg, 2008), Kindle edition.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

by pastor terry olson

suppose nothing new can be written on Martin Luther's discovery of the gospel. It has been well documented and discussed in papers, essays, and books. And yet every year in the church, much to our encouragement and need, we remember the Reformation that ignited an evangelical and mission spirit in the church.

The key to spiritual life in the individual soul and in the congregational pursuit of freedom is found in the biblical and eternal truth of justification by grace through faith in Christ. The importance of not only understanding this foundational teaching but also of keeping this doctrine sure and foremost in our congregations is crucial. For Luther this teaching became the cornerstone of his assurance of salvation and his peace with God. He sought to restore the central truth in the church that he loved, knowing the power of the gospel to release the captives from their sins and works of the flesh.

Luther had sought to do what was right according to the church but had found no peace for his soul; He believed that God rewarded people for good deeds; however his conscience would not let him rest. What if his works were not pure or enough? What if his God, who is holy, would not approve of his offerings? What if this just God demanded full payment for all his sins? He couldn't rest in his works and sacrifices. None of these could give him peace with God.

In Matthew 13:44 we read, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." We are reminded of Paul when he came to know Christ. All that he had, his tremendous future as a spiritual leader in the Jewish synagogue, his self-righteousness, all his intellectual abilities, he was willing to sell in comparison to the value of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord (Philippians 3).

And so it was for Martin Luther, a devoted and serious young priest looking for peace with his God and Creator. He found the treasure of a gracious and forgiving God

right where the Lord had put Himself—in His written Word. Suddenly Luther found something that he recognized was of great value, something that he did not have. And so he sold all that he had of his sins and of his works to purchase this treasure which was really a gift (Isaiah 55:1-3).

Now why was the kingdom of heaven so valuable to Martin Luther? It was because he had experienced the pain of guilt for his own sin. He knew what it was to always be under the fear of God's judgment. His God was demanding moral perfection, which he by the flesh and his own efforts could not satisfy. Living in constant fear of this holy God only drove him to counter balance the scales with the Catholic Church's teaching of works and more works. What he discovered in the Word was a gracious and forgiving God, and nothing was more wonderful than this. Nothing was of greater value than Christ and the cross. There he had peace with God because God declared it.

Oh, everyone knew Luther was a sinner, including himself. But there was one place where he was just, and that was before the Father in heaven. There he stood in Christ and His righteousness. And this he had by faith. What a discovery! What good news! He was saved by grace, through faith in God's Son (Romans 5).

Therefore nothing was more important to Luther than this life-giving word: forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Christ. Along with the congregation in Laodicea, he had "purchased the gold by fire and white garments that clothed him" (Revelation 3:18). And along with Paul he desired that nothing but "Christ crucified" be proclaimed in the congregation. Nothing was more important to Luther than Christ and His grace. This was the treasure that was discovered by Luther.

Today we dare not lose this eternal truth. Oh, what a valuable treasure we have in Jesus. And we have Him by faith. We are saved by grace. It has always been that way.

Olson, Grafton, N.D., is the assistant to the president of the AFLC.

IN CONTEXT

IN CONTEXT

The treasure of the

GOSPEL

discovered by Luther

IN CONTEXT

IN CONTEXT



OUR SUPPORT

WMF
WOMEN'S
MISSIONARY
FEDERATION

The National WMF has a fund set up to help short term assistants (STAs) as they serve on a foreign mission field. Emalynn Dahl served in India this summer and wrote the following.



BY EMALYNN DAHL

I opened my eyes for a minute. Three orphan girls were curled up beside me on the cot sleeping. My entire arm was draped over them and the girl on the end clung to my hand. I closed my eyes again, breathed the Indian air coming in from the window, and held my inhaler close as I monitored my breathing for a while. More importantly, my thoughts shifted to the ministry.

Am I doing enough? That thought echoed throughout the walls of the school as I taught Bible stories and helped with English in the classroom. It showed up during periods of waiting. Along with it came bondage and an unhealthy motivation to always be doing more. My energy level began slowing down as my asthmatic lungs encountered an infection. A double



dose of Amoxicillin and two weeks later, I was still sick and very discouraged.

Former AFLC missionary Pastor David Nelson reached out to me with these words, "God can do everything; we cannot. That gives us freedom. The needs around you are overwhelming. You cannot meet them all. But trust that God will work through you as you serve your neighbors in

your current vocation."

What encouragement that brought me. A constant and refreshing verse came to mind, found in Psalm 46:10, "Cease striving, and know that I am God."

How great is our God that we have freedom to serve Him and the people around us without having to rely on our own strength. My mind-set and prayer began to change. "Lord, help me be faithful to whatever work You have called me to today." That became my prayer everyday as I continued in the ministry in India and trusted that God would carry out His work through me.

Dahl, a 2015 AFLBS graduate, is a member of Our Saviour's Lutheran, Thief River Falls, Minn.



BY ANDREW OLSON

The National WMF also provides scholarships to full-time seminarians who meet World Mission Board criteria. Seminarian Andrew Olson wrote the following.

There's an island calling us in Tanzania where 100,000 people are without a full copy of the Bible. There are 100,000 people without the knowledge of God, or the saving gospel of Christ. There are 100,000 people waiting for the hope that only the Lord can give. For this reason, my wife, Alexis, and I have been pursuing Bible translation work in Africa. We are hoping that God would work through us

to bring that good news to a language group that has never had it before. This year we have been corresponding with Lutheran Bible Translators as they undertake sending missionaries to these remote parts of Tanzania. We have been very thankful for the support of the



Andrew Olson

WMF of the AFLC as they have generously supported us, both assisting me in seminary tuition and assisting Alexis through Bible school. We couldn't do it without your encouragement and generosity. Please pray for us as we look toward applying for visas and preparing for full-time missions work.

Olson, a second-year seminarian, graduated in 2011 from AFLBS.



A

t last year's Annual Conference, Micah Berger was commissioned as an AFLC Missionary

to Uganda. He had been in Uganda as a short-term assistant before helping out with the work of Ambassador Institute in Jinja. He had become the focus of much prayer from the Ambassador Institute of Uganda Leadership Team in regards to his common ailment known as singleness. Their prayers were answered when Micah married Famke Hekkenberg on June 4. Famke, originally from the Netherlands, has an adopted Ugandan girl, Naomi, so Micah not only gained a wife, he gained a daughter! The Bergers are planning to move from Jinja to a more remote area where the gospel has not yet taken root. Be praying for them as they seek the Lord's direction and make the transition.

We were also blessed to have the Raan family (Brent, Emily, and baby Amaleah) join us in Uganda for the second half of Brent's seminary internship. Brent was especially interested in observing how the Ambassador Institute operates in Uganda as they are planning to move to India and work with the Ambassador Institute

UGANDA FIELD UPDATE

BY PASTOR NATE JORE

there. The Raans were commissioned as AFLC Missionaries at this year's Annual Conference and plan to head to India at the beginning of next year.

There are changes in store for our family as well. We were initially given a 10-year plan to begin a Bible training program in Uganda and hand it over to equipped nationals. Upon our leaving Uganda to go on furlough, the leadership of the Ambassador Institute of Uganda was handed over to the seven-member Leadership Team. The Leadership Team will continue to oversee the Ambassador Institute even when we return to Uganda.

Upon our return to Uganda we will be entering a new phase. We are planning to build a home and move to the rural area just north of the town of Jinja where we have been living. The plan is quite simple: make disciples who make disciples. Agriculture will be our common ground with the locals as virtually all of the villagers in our area are small-scale farmers. In our day-to-day interactions with people, we plan to invite them

to study the Bible with us and become disciples of Jesus. We will encourage simple churches where money is used to love people instead of buy bricks. Gatherings will be small and shepherded by church elders. The vision is that these groups would be evangelistic, praying for the lost and inviting friends and neighbors to join in following of Jesus. As churches grow, they can then multiply into new areas.

What I have described will not take place unless God opens the door. We would invite you to join us in prayer for the door to be opened to the gospel in this area. There is much spiritual darkness at present; pray that the light of Jesus would shine forth. "Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ ..." (Colossians 4:3).

Jore is an AFLC missionary serving in Jinja, Uganda, with his wife, Rhoda, and five children.



BY LOIELL DYRUD

WOLD: A LIFE DEVOTED TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Judith Wold was born March 28, 1918, the granddaughter of Rev. August Bredeson, pioneer Lutheran Free Church pastor in northwestern Minnesota. She grew up attending Satersdal Lutheran of rural Thief River Falls and graduated from Bemidji State College. After teaching in several area rural schools, she came “home” to teach in Thief River Falls, where she lived the rest of her long life.

Judith was an inspiring woman. Fascinated by the power of words, I would sit in awe listening to Judith effortlessly weave powerful sentences. What was also so remarkable was her gift of delivering speeches on the spur of the moment. Without any time to prepare, she always sounded polished and articulate.

Her work ethic and focus was another God-given talent. Never one for small talk on the telephone, Judith cut off idle chatter in a hurry. One got the impression she had better things to do for God’s Kingdom than waste time on the phone. If you didn’t know exactly what you were going to say or exactly what your question was, you were out of luck.

That devotion to be doing God’s work and not wasting time epitomized Judith. All her life she was a tireless organizer and worker in His Kingdom. I still remember her as my vacation Bible school teacher in Satersdal Church. She was a master teacher and made Paul’s missionary journeys in Acts come alive.

In 1954, she transferred her membership to Our Saviour’s Lutheran in Thief River Falls and became the Sunday school superintendent in 1955, a position she held for 23 years. Judith had an enduring concern for the souls of children and canvassed the neighborhood on Sunday mornings bringing them to Sunday school in her own car. Famous for her Sunday school programs, Judith filled the church each year for her Christmas programs.

But her God-given talents were not limited to Our Saviour’s. In 1969, she was called to the position of Executive Secretary for the AFLC Board of Parish Education



and Publications. Challenged by John 21:6, she resigned her position as an elementary school teacher in Thief River Falls to explore “new fishing grounds,” or as she once told me, to become “a full-time fisher of young boys and girls.”

During this time, the AFLC Parish Education office was moved to her home in Thief River Falls where she, the board, and a large number of volunteers began writing and publishing a Sunday school curriculum unique to the AFLC. For 12 tireless years, she traveled across the country, putting on workshops in various AFLC districts, including the West Coast where driving through the Rocky Mountains provided unique experiences for her adventuresome spirit.

She also was the first part-time executive secretary of the AFLC Women’s Missionary Federation, serving from 1970 to 1987. While serving in this capacity, she traveled to our mission field in Brazil to see the work first hand. Having been raised on a farm, Judith was never hindered by rugged conditions. Yet she was shocked when she came back from visiting rural churches in Brazil and looked in the mirror. She hardly

recognized herself—her dress, her face, and blonde hair had all turned bright red, covered in Brazilian dust!

After retirement, she continued teaching Wednesday Release Time class for elementary school children and taught “The Gleaners,” one of the adult Sunday school classes at Our Saviour’s well into her 80s. To this day, her former classroom is still affectionately known as “Judith’s Room.”

Four years ago at the age of 93, Judith was asked what her favorite Bible verse was. This was her response:

“One school noon I opened my Bible and here was the Bible verse that has become my Bible verse. ‘I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a thick cloud, thy sins. Return unto me for I have redeemed thee.’ [Isaiah 44:22] The entire Bible verse is such a blessing to me. It’s one that I’m holding on to as the assurance of my salvation. And I especially like the last part, ‘I have redeemed thee.’ It’s nothing that I have done. It’s what God has done for me through the death of Jesus Christ.”

Trusting in the finished work of Christ sustained her all her life and, no doubt, was the reason why Judith remained such a positive witness for Christ well into her 90s—“I have redeemed thee.” And so in her declining years when people would ask her, “How are you doing, Judith?” Her response was always, “Remarkably well.”

She passed away September 18, 2015, at the age of 97.

Hers was a life lived “remarkably well” in tireless devotion to Christian service. As she moved through her 80s and 90s, she never lost her zeal for sharing the beautiful message of salvation. And though she physically slowed down, her concern for the lost never diminished.

Dyrud, a member of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees, is a member of Our Saviour’s Free Lutheran, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Letting go of something in which you have invested time, prayer, and sweat for several years is not easy. Parents watch their children leave to start their own chapter in life. A small business owner sells her company to a larger company. A teacher experiences the loss of his influence over students as the culture shifts. A pastor is called away from the congregation he serves. All of these life changes have their difficulties and struggles.

Earlier this year I faced the truth that God was calling me away from one congregation to serve another. I had been at Maranatha of Glyndon and Ulen (Minn.) for nearly six years. I loved the people, especially the youths I had the opportunity to point to Jesus. We had a strong youth ministry team that I could rely on to help extend the influence of the youth program. A strong core of youths had risen to the challenge of leading within the youth group. I saw teenagers who had moved beyond letting Jesus “save them from hell” to serving Him as Savior and Lord. We had also just formed a loosely connected young adult ministry team.

Now that this had been established, why would God call me away? Why wouldn't He have me stay on and con-

tinue the work? Regardless of how I felt, as time progressed He made it more and more clear that He wanted me to leave Maranatha to serve somewhere else and that was Christ the King in Pipestone, Minn.

When I arrived at my new call back in August, I witnessed a fervent desire to reach not only the youth of Christ the King, but the youth of the Pipestone area. I witnessed teens who knew the basics of their faith, but wanted to know more. I witnessed a hunger among the young families for a stronger spiritual connection with others in the congregation. I witnessed parents who were unsure of what to do, but still willing to step up to serve in the ministry to youth. I witnessed empty nest adults asking how they could minister to the young families.

As I sit in my church office in Pipestone I think I understand why the time had come to leave Maranatha. God had called me there for a time. During that time He used my gifts to train others to do Kingdom work. The training had been accomplished, the people were ready

to work, and the time had come to move on to where He wanted me next. When I arrived at Christ the King I realized that my experience at Maranatha had prepared me for the needs of the new congregation and what He wanted me to do here.

As I reflect I am thankful for my calling to serve Maranatha, but I am just as thankful for my calling to serve Christ the King. It may have been hard to let go of Maranatha, but I know it was the right thing to do.

As time goes on I know God will call me to let go of other roles, people, and things. As I do so I will remember this transition and instead of doing it grudgingly, I will instead seek to be thankful for what God has done and be thankful for what He is calling me to do next.

Forness is the pastor of youth and families at Christ the King Free Lutheran, Pipestone, Minn.

THANKS FOR THE CALL

BY PASTOR SETH FORNESS

PEOPLE & PLACES

Pastor Frank Cherney has accepted a call to serve Ebenezer Free Lutheran, Humboldt, Tenn. He will be installed Nov. 15 by Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president.

Pastor Connely Dyrud is providing part-time interim ministerial service at Zion Lutheran, Silverhill, Ala.

Pastor Mark Molstre was installed Oct. 11 at Ebenezer Lutheran, Northwood, N.D., with Pastor Terry Olson, assistant to the president, officiating.

George Winston, a 2015 graduate of AFLTS, was ordained Sept. 20 at Christ Community Church, Hagerstown, Md., with Pastor Terry Olson officiating. Winston serves Grace Free Lutheran, Bruce, S.D.

Pastor Michael Flechsig was installed Oct. 4 at Faith Lutheran, Blackduck, Minn., with Pastor Terry Olson officiating.

Members of **Tamarack Lutheran**, Tamarack, Minn., celebrated the congregation's centennial anniversary on Oct. 10. The congregation organized on May 2, 1915 under the Suomi Synod as Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is served by Pastor Ron Staudinger.

Members of **Stavanger Free Lutheran**, Garden City, Iowa, celebrated the congregation's 125th anniversary on Oct. 11. The congregation is served by Pastor Earl Korhonen.

Pastor Brad Novacek will be installed Nov. 8 at Mt. Zion Lutheran, Kasson, Minn., and Zion Lutheran, rural Dexter, Minn., with Pastor Terry Olson officiating.

Luke Berntson will be ordained Nov. 22 at Maranatha Lutheran, Ulen, Minn., with Pastor Terry Olson officiating. Berntson graduated from the Lutheran Brethren Seminary, Fergus Falls, Minn., in 2007. He was accepted onto the AFLC Fellowship roster in March. He serves Maranatha Free Lutheran, Ulen.

Correction: FLY Beyond has been scheduled for July 18-22, 2016. The date was printed incorrectly in the October issue.

The AFLC **Home Missions Retreat** will be held Feb. 1-4 at Calvary Free Lutheran, Mesa, Ariz.

Schools to host leadership seminar

Four-day event will be held in January in Schools' chapel

The AFLC Schools is hosting a four-day seminar on "Healthy Leaders, Healthy Congregations" in January at the AFLC Schools chapel in Plymouth, Minn. Participants will learn simple but crucial secrets to thriving rather than just surviving in life and ministry.



"Our passion is to enrich your intimacy with Jesus and help you find balance in your everyday life," the SonScape Ministry website reads. "We believe healthy ministries are led by healthy leaders who have learned to follow the Jesus model of balancing work, worship, rest, and

play." Leaders play a crucial part in producing healthy, effective churches. When leaders are overwhelmed, stressed, and deeply fatigued it will impact their church's health and vitality.

The seminar will be held from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Jan. 18-21. Presenters are Larry and Barbara Magnuson of SonScape Ministries. Based in Colorado, SonScape Ministries provides guided retreats to ministry leaders to refresh and revitalize their lives, marriages, and ministries.

Since 1984, the ministry has hosted more than 4,800 guests from 30 countries over the course of 525 retreats. For more information about SonScape Ministries, visit their website at www.sonscape.org.

Register as an individual for \$75, or as a married couple for \$125. For more information or to register, call the seminary office at 763-544-9501 or email marilee@afcl.org.

Lutheran Ambassador 2016 schedule

Below is the 2016 schedule for *The Lutheran Ambassador*. Please be in prayer for each issue. Note the deadlines and special emphasis of each issue. If you have an idea regarding a general article, a certain issue, or have an interest in writing, please contact the editors. E-mail us at ruthg@afcl.org or call (763) 545-5631.

ISSUE DATE	DEADLINE	ISSUE THEME
January	November 30	Life
February	December 30	Christian Ed
March	January 25	Lent/Easter
April	February 29	AFLC Schools
May	March 28	The Church
June	April 25	Evangelism
July	May 30	Prayer
August	June 27	Conference Review
September	July 25	Youth
October	August 29	Missions
November	September 26	Reform./Thanksgiving
December	October 31	Advent/Christmas

Please note, information regarding the Annual Conference, scheduled for June 14-17 at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis., will be featured in the May issue, with a deadline of March 28. The May issue will include the conference schedule, board and committee nominees, registration, and WMF convention schedule and registration information. The registration will also be printed in either the March or April issue. Housing information will be printed as soon as it is available.



In Memoriam

Pastor Rolf and Evangeline Heng

Pastor Rolf Heng, 81, died Sept. 30 at Woodland Lodge, Fergus Falls, Minn., under the care of Lakeland Hospice. His wife, Evangeline Heng, 72, of Moorhead, died Sept. 27 at her home under the care of her family and hospice of Red River Valley.

Rolf Heng was born Feb. 3, 1934, in Minneapolis, the son of Knute and Olga Heng. He attended the Minneapolis public schools and graduated from Augsburg College in 1955. He entered Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, graduating in 1961 after serving two years in the United States Army. He served his internship at Our Saviour's Church, Canby, Minn., and was ordained in June 1961.

He married Shirley Olson in August 1960. His first parish was in Edberg, Alberta, Canada, where they lived for five years. He served a parish in Taylor, N.D., for 12 years. In June 1978, he accepted a call to serve the Beltrami Lutheran Parish, Beltrami, Minn., and Resurrection Free Lutheran. Shirley passed away in September 1989. Heng retired in 1996, and began serving interim positions.

Evangeline was born Feb. 10, 1943, in Hawley, Minn., the daughter of Andrew and Evelyn (Estrin) Fureby. She was raised in the Hawley and Rollag area, and graduated from Barnesville High School in 1961.

She married Noel Nelson June 22, 1963, in Rollag, where they made their home. Evangeline owned and operated The Blue Willow, a home décor boutique, in Rollag. Noel died in 1995.

Rolf and Evangeline married in February 1997 in Hawley. They lived together first in Rollag, Minn., and then in Moorhead, Minn. Rolf and Evangeline were active in Maranatha Church in Glyndon, Minn., where he served as the congregational care pastor.

Surviving are Evangeline's children: one son, Andrew Nelson, Moorhead, two daughters, Steffanie (John) McCarthy, Boulder, Colo., and Erika (Jeff) Kokal, Chesterfield, Mos.; Rolf's three daughters: Kirsten (Brad) Hutchison, and Karin (Burton) Stoesz, both Mountain Lake, Minn., and Kathryn (Tim) Enderson, Fergus Falls, Minn.; Evangeline's 19 grandchildren; Rolf's 12 grandchildren; Evangeline's two great-grandchildren; Rolf's two great-grandchildren; Evangeline's siblings: Adeline (Robert) Wolfe, Moorhead, Robert Fureby, Stan (Melen) Fureby, and Duane (Nancy) Fureby, all in California, and Gloria Bellefeuille, Fargo, N.D.; and Rolf's sister, Nancy (Glen) Adams.

Evangeline's service was held Oct. 2 at Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon. Burial was held in Rollag Lutheran Cemetery. Rolf's service was held Oct. 4 at Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon. Burial was held in Minneapolis.

Gloria Thorpe

Gloria M. Thorpe, 84, Eau Claire, Wis., died May 5 with her family at her side. She was married to AFLC Pastor Gordon Thorpe, and shared his ministry in Barton, N.D.; Escanaba, Mich.; Green Bay and Eau Claire, Wis. From the Book of Proverbs, chapter 31: "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her." [Editor's Note: Gloria was our pastor's wife during my high school years, and I remember her gracious support of her husband's ministry while always seeming to place her family first. Blessed be her memory.]

Pastor Harvey Jackson

Pastor Harvey Jackson, 78, died Sept. 28, 2015, at the Good Samaritan Home in Park River, N.D. Born Dec. 31, 1936, in Madrid, Iowa, he was the son of Harry and Mabel (Nelson) Jackson. He married Shirley Bonnallie in 1961.

He attended the Lutheran Bible Institute, Minneapolis, graduating in 1957. He graduated with an associate's degree from Luther Junior College, Wahoo, Neb., and earned a bachelor's degree from Augsburg College in 1961. He graduated from Northwestern Lutheran Seminary in 1964. He dedicated his life to loving and sharing Jesus Christ, serving for 40 years in pastoral ministry, including AFLC congregations at Hatton, N.D., and Ishpeming, Mich.

Surviving are his wife; one son, Brad (Carla) Jackson, Edina, Minn.; two daughters, Linda (Pastor Jim) Johnson, Camarillo, Calif., and Beth (Pastor Tom) Olson, Golden Valley, N.D.; 15 grandchildren; and one great-granddaughter.

The service was held Oct. 2 at Victory Free Lutheran, Park River, with Pastor Mark Antal officiating. Burial was held in Memorial Park Cemetery, Park River

Schools' Christmas concerts set for Dec. 4-6

The AFLC Schools will host the annual Christmas Candlelight Concerts at 7 p.m. Dec. 5 and 4 p.m. Dec. 6 in the Hans Nielsen Hauge Memorial Chapel. Come hear the AFLBS Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Proclaim Choir, Concert Choir and AFLTS Seminary Chorus share "Jesus Christ, the World's True Light." Also, at 8 p.m. on Dec. 4 the AFLBS gospel teams will share a Family Weekend Concert. All are invited, and a free-will offering will be taken.

Join the Luther Reading Challenge

In preparation for the 500th anniversary of the posting of the 95 Theses, the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, France, is hosting the Luther Reading Challenge, an online forum for a variety of Martin Luther's writings, from personal letters to hymns and doctrinal treatises. Visit the web site (lutherreadingchallenge.org) and access Luther's writings for free. Register to participate in online discussions.

Campus visit day planned

The AFLC Schools is hosting a Friends of the Schools Visit Day November 4-5. This two-day event aims to thank those who have expressed support and interest in the Schools by providing an in-person look at the campus. Guests will enjoy a tour and have opportunities to meet and talk with students, staff, faculty, and members of the Board of Trustees.

Plan to arrive at a hotel Wednesday evening and participate in a day of campus life on Thursday, including classes and a chapel worship service.

The AFLC Schools extends this invitation to anyone interested in being a part of the campus ministry. Come learn about how God is blessing the AFLC and see firsthand the kingdom growth happening at the Schools.

For more information, contact the seminary office at (763) 544-9501 or email marilee@afc.org.

SEPTEMBER MEMORIALS

AFLBS Don Fors Marge Ackerson Ruth Claus Becky Valdez	Vivian Holter Alden Skoglund Elaine Nygaard Dennis & Jeanne Holman Louis Kilpela	Don Kocks	Judith Wold	Dennis & Jeanne Holman
AFLTS Jeffrey & Adelaide Nygaard Don Fors Gordon & Carley Olson	Pastor Kenneth & Clara Jacobson (2)	Evangelism Kathy Carlson Florence Hiepler Dennis & Jeanne Holman	FLAPS Harvey Hoops	... in honor of
	World Missions Norm Tout	Parish Education Dr. Gale Valtinson Ernest Nash	General Fund Ernest Nash	AFLBS Kenny & Ruby Broten Ruth Horn
			Home Missions Florence Hiepler Kathy Carlson (2) Ernest Nash	FLAPS Lavon Bohling

Astoria congregation turns 125

Members of Bethany Lutheran, Astoria, Ore., celebrated the congregation’s 125th anniversary on Oct. 4. Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, and Pastor Martin Horn, Kenyon, Minn., were special guest speakers for the Sunday school and worship service. Horn previously served the congregation.

The congregation formed with the help of Georg Sverdrup, at that time a professor at Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis. After receiving a letter with 25 signatures on it from people in Astoria, recent graduate Hans Olson was sent to begin the new work. The first meeting was held Oct. 6, 1890, at what was to be named Betania Norwegian Lutheran. Olson died suddenly in 1892, but the congregation pressed on, facing many challenges throughout the years, all with the help of God.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-September 30, 2015			
FUND	REC'D IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$27,484	\$258,739	\$245,017
Evangelism	9,589	104,159	105,225
Youth Ministries	8,654	82,278	96,556
Parish Education	21,735	104,954	98,309
Seminary	22,435	201,520	205,952
Bible School	56,172	407,613	369,341
Home Missions	52,397	332,499	334,876
World Missions	50,017	315,759	344,624
Personal Support	57,136	407,626	321,240
TOTALS	\$305,620	\$2,215,148	\$2,121,140
Contact the individual departments for further information about specific financial needs.			

Statement of ownership

The Lutheran Ambassador Publication No. 588-620, Filed 10-6-15 Issued monthly. Twelve issues annually. Annual subscription price \$20.00 Mailing address of Office of Publication and headquarters of General Business Office: 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. Publisher: The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Editor: Pastor Robert Lee, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441 Managing Editor: Ruth Gunderson, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441 Owner: The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders: None. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes has not changed during preceding 12 months.	Publication Name: The Lutheran Ambassador. Issue date for circulation data: October 2015 Total number of copies (net press run): Avg. copies each issue during past year: 3300 Copies October 2015 issue: 3300 Paid circulation: Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on Form 3541: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 2196 Copies October 2015 issue: 2132 Mailed inside-county paid subscriptions stated on Form 3541: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 11 Copies October 2015 issue: 12 Through outside mail sales: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 512 Copies October 2015 issue: 515 Total paid and/or requested circulation: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 2719 Copies October 2015 issue: 2665	Free distribution by mail: Free distribution outside the mail: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 145 Copies October 2015 issue: 150 Total free distribution: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 145 Copies October 2015 issue: 150 Total distribution: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 2864 Copies October 2015 issue: 2815 Copies not distributed: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 436 Copies October 2015 issue: 425 Total: Avg. copies each issue during past year: 3300 Copies October 2015 issue: 3300 Percent paid and/or requested circulation, average and October 2015 issue: 94% Publication is required and will be printed in the November 2015 issue of The Lutheran Ambassador. /s/ Ruth Gunderson, Managing Editor
---	---	--

THE SINGING REFORMATION

Some of our readers may have viewed a film entitled *The Singing Revolution*, recounting the remarkable story of the national music festivals and their role in the ending of the Russian occupation of Estonia. We should also be aware of the important place that music holds in the story of Martin Luther and the 16th century Reformation ... what can rightly be called a “singing Reformation.”

In 2017 the 500th anniversary will be observed of Luther nailing his 95 Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Saxony. The great reformer is remem-



Pastor Robert Lee

bered for his challenge to the corruption in the church of his day and to his rediscovery of the scriptural and evangelical teaching of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

He also deserves to be remembered for his promotion of evangelical hymnody. He was not the first to encourage congregational singing, but the normal practice of medieval Catholicism was to deny worshipers the privilege of participation (unless they were in the choirs). Luther and his followers, however, not only sought to involve the whole congregation in singing, but also produced a new type of song, the “Lutheran chorale,” to be sung in the language of the people, filled with solid scriptural teaching. Hymns were to be expressions of worship and instruments for instruction.

Luther’s most famous hymn, of course, is “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” which has earned such well-deserved acclaim that it is even included in current Roman Catholic hymnals. (A former student of mine recently heard it chimed in an Iowa small town by the bells of a Catholic church!) The first hymn that he wrote for congregational singing was “Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice,” which unfortunately is not in our *Ambassador*

Hymnal. Perhaps some find its ten verses to be too long for the average church service, but its content deserves consideration. There is a sense of Luther’s personal spiritual journey in verses two, three and four:

*Fast bound in Satan’s chains I lay; Death
brooded darkly o’er me.
Sin was my torment night and day; in sin my
mother bore me.
Yet deeper and deeper still I fell; life had
become a living hell,
So firmly sin possessed me.*

*My own good works availed me naught, no
merit they attaining;
My will against God’s judgment fought, no
hope for me remaining.
My fears increased till sheer despair left
naught but death to be my share
And hell to be my sentence.*

*But God beheld my wretched state before the
world’s foundation,
And, mindful of His mercies great, He
planned my soul’s salvation.
A Father’s heart He turned to me, sought my
redemption fervently;
He gave His dearest treasure.*

The next verses summarize the gospel message, centered in the life and death of Christ, and the hymn concludes with a reminder of the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, and a final word of warning: “Take care that no one’s man-made laws should e’er destroy the gospel’s cause. This final word I leave you.”

The clear combination of worship and teaching cannot be missed. The first Lutheran hymnals, in fact, were intended primarily for instruction rather than congregational singing. But they were only the beginning, and we read that in Luther’s lifetime almost a hundred hymnals were produced, and eventually thousands of new hymns were composed. It was truly a singing reformation, indeed!

Martin Luther’s influence on church music cannot be exaggerated. In fact, part of the success and spread of the Reformation movement may even be credited to the use of hymns, which spread the gospel as they were sung in the homes as well as the churches. (No, in spite of rumors to the contrary, he did not utilize tunes from tavern songs.) His influence opened the door for others, such as Bach, Handel, Haydn—the list seems endless—plus, he elevated the work of church musicians as a calling of great value. He was the only reformer who encouraged congregational singing, and so strong was his conviction that he wrote: “Next to the word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our hearts, minds and spirits. A person who does not regard music as a marvelous creation of God does not deserve to be called a human being; he should be permitted to hear nothing but the braying of asses and the grunting of hogs!”

How does the singing reformation shape our church worship today?

*Hymns were to be
expressions of worship
and instruments for
instruction.*

Congregational singing is certainly a central part of our services, with some hymns and spiritual songs addressed to God, and hopefully others instructing us with a solid foundation of scriptural truths. Thank you, Brother Martin, for this wonderful legacy of ministering through song to both heart and mind!

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Periodicals

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

building the base

GOD'S COMMON GIFTS

BY PASTOR WES LANGAAS

The dog is the most faithful of animals and would be much esteemed were it not so common. Our Lord God has made His greatest gifts the commonest" (Martin Luther).

Martin Luther lists many of God's common gifts in his explanation to the first article of the Apostles' Creed. He says of God, "Who created me," that, "He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul, together with food and clothing, home and family and all my property ..."

We take these common gifts for granted, but Luther tells us that our Heavenly Father provides them out of His "fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me ..." Therefore we are "in duty bound to thank, praise, serve and obey Him."

Luther lists more common gifts in the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer when asking what is meant by our daily bread: "Everything that is required to satisfy our bodily needs such as food and clothing,

house and home, fields and flocks, money and goods, pious parents, children, and servants; godly and faithful rulers, good government; seasonable weather, peace and health, order and honor, true friends, good neighbors, and the like."

In his introduction to the *Small Catechism* Luther describes the lack of basic spiritual knowledge in his day. We should be grateful that we are not quite so lacking in this biblical knowledge today (thanks largely to Luther). Luther's language would be politically incorrect for our time, but he writes without fear:

The deplorable conditions which I recently encountered when I was a visitor constrained me to prepare this brief and simple catechism or statement of Christian teaching. Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country, have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfit for teaching. Although the people are supposed to

be Christians, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments, they live as if they were pigs and irrational beasts, and now that the Gospel has been restored they have mastered the fine art of abusing liberty. (*Book of Concord*, pg. 338, Fortress Press, 1959)

If you have the opportunity this year to sit around the thanksgiving table as a family and count your blessings, see how many of Luther's common gifts you can remember. Think of what he said about the spiritual conditions of his day and the fact that some of these same conditions exist even today. Then give thanks to God for raising up Martin Luther and other reformers to restore the Holy Christian Church to its biblical roots. And let us in our day urgently "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3).

Langaas, a member of the Board of Publications and Parish Education, lives in Karlstad, Minn.