



Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

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✠ THE HOPE LUTHERAN ✠

Vol. 99, No. 3

April 2022

Called to Life in the Church

For the past several months we have been looking at our calling as God's chosen people to practice "holy humanity." Luther expresses this teaching of our "vocation" in all of life in his "Table of Duties" in the *Small Catechism*. After an overview of this calling (Oct. 2021), we looked at our callings in various arenas of everyday life. We are called:

- At home as parents and children (Nov. 2021),
- At home as husband and wife (Dec. 2021),
- In the workplace & the economy (Feb. 2022),
- To serve in society (Mar. 2022).

This month we come to the last, though hardly the least, arena in which we are called to practice our God-given "holy humanity" – the Church.

What is the Church?

To the naked eye the Church looks like any other social institution with its organization, its events, its budgets, its politics, and its schedules. However, at its core, the Church *is* different from social institutions. Social institutions live and work in the "horizontal dimension" of our life. The Church, though, lives and works chiefly in the "vertical dimension."

The Church does what no other institution can – it brings God to us in His Word and it brings us to God in repentance and forgiveness. Our Augsburg Confession gives perhaps the best and most concise description of the Church:

"The Church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered" (VII:1)

Dr. Robert Kolb also gives a good explanation of the Church's purpose and work: "It exists to bring God's Word to bear on people's lives. It preaches the law to call them away from false gods, but it exists primarily to proclaim the Gospel and thus to restore the relationship between God and the broken sinners whom He has brought to perceive their need for Him once again."¹ This is the life and work into which all of us are called in the Church.

Churchly Vocations

In his "Table of Duties," Martin Luther focuses on the chief, though not the only, relationship in the Church – the relationship between pastor and people. Once again, he offers Bible verses to teach us on these vocations. First, he addresses pastors:

To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers

Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive. (1 Timothy 3:2-4)

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:6)

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (Titus 1:9)

The pastor's vocation is chiefly to proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen for the life of the flock that God has given him. God gives the pastor

¹ Robert Kolb, *Teaching God's Children His Teaching* (Concordia Seminary Press, 2012), p. 150.

specific responsibilities: the studying, preaching and teaching of His Word, the administration of His Sacraments, and the pastoral care of His people—visiting the sick and shut-in, hearing confessions and pronouncing Absolution, and encouraging people to lively trust and hope in the God who loves them. The pastor's vocation does not make the pastor any less a sinner than others; it does not make him any more saved or more holy than other Christians. He too lives and works by God's grace and forgiveness.

Dr. Gene Edward Veith explains the pastor's vocation this way: "The vocation of the pastor is a special office indeed. Not that it is more meritorious than any other vocation. God acts and is hidden in other vocations as well. But the pastoral office serves not just the world but God's spiritual kingdom. Christ is active in the pastor's work in a saving way, giving the pastor's words and ministry eternal consequences."²

Next Luther offers Bible verses to instruct on the relationship of laypeople to their pastor:

What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors

In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:14)

One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. (Galatians 6:6-7)

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." (1 Timothy 5:17-18)

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)

Obeys your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

We may summarize Luther's focus for the vocation of every Christian as: hearing, learning, and growing in God's Word, faithfully receiving the

Sacraments of Jesus, and providing for the pastor in order that he may carry out his God-given vocation. In these verses Luther highlights the first calling of Christians in the Church – *to worship*.

But let's not forget the second major calling of all Christians – *to witness*. "Witnessing" is not only the pastor's job, or only the task of certain folks with special interest or training. That would not be accurate. As Dr. Veith says, "Laypeople are especially positioned to reach people *outside* the church, by virtue of their secular vocations, which put them in contact with people who would never darken the door of a church."³

In case you're wondering, "How can *I* witness to Jesus?", remember that our Lord gives you all you need when you hear His Gospel and receive His Sacraments. Every Christian is thus called by God to bear witness to what he or she hears and receives in the Divine Service: the forgiveness, life, and salvation that come from Jesus Christ. Dr. Kolb says it well:

"Believers are also called to give witness to their faith and the hope which lies within them. As a matter of fact, we cannot do otherwise. Our peace is reflected in our actions and raises questions from those who do not have it. When it is not reflected in our actions, we still are giving witness. Those who know we are Christians form impressions of Christ from our lives, whether good or bad. Those who do not know we are Christian still see some glimpse of what gives us our ultimate sense of identity, security, and meaning, and whether it is working or not. Our call to witness is one which we can never lay aside or avoid. We can only practice it better or worse. God makes disciples through other disciples (Matt. 28:19); that is His design and plan. He commissions us all to bring law and Gospel to bear on the lives of others as we condemn and forgive sins (John 20:23)."⁴ (*Teaching God's Children*, 8-10).

May our gracious Savior lead and guide us in living out the various callings He has given all of us!

✱ Pastor Randy Asbury

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Blog: <http://rasburrypatch.blogspot.com>

Hope's Website: <http://www.hopelutheranstl.org>

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/hopelutheranstl

² Gene Edward Vieth, Jr., *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* (Crossway Books, 2002), p. 122-123.

³ Vieth, p. 127.

⁴ Kolb, p. 151.

Notes from the Kantor

With Holy Week nearing, let's take a look at beautiful hymn for Good Friday.

Blessed Lent, Holy Week & Eastertide,
Kantor Janssen

Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle (LSB 454)

Introduction

By all outward appearances, the cross of Jesus is not triumphant, beautiful or glorious. The cross looks like defeat, weakness and great suffering and death. No one who judged by common sense would say the spectacle of Jesus dying on the cross was anything but horrible. Yet, the Scriptures and the Christian faith point to the cross as the greatest, most wonderful moment not only of Christ's life but also of ours. It is the supreme moment of Christ's power and the pinnacle and foundation of our life and hope. It is a moment of great victory and salvation. That contrast and paradox is at the center of this hymn. The awful cross is in reality a "trophy," a triumph, a tree of life.

Exploring the Scriptures

The core scriptural idea of this hymn is expressed in the final phrase of the first stanza: "Tell how Christ, the world's redeemer, / As a victim won the day." The message of salvation is not just that Christ saved us from sin; it is that He saved us "as a victim." Christ saved us from sin and death by suffering, by being beaten, by dying, by lying lifeless in the tomb. Christ won a great victory by becoming, for our sakes, a lifeless, dead human being, by suffering and being weak. That contrast and mystery is at the heart of the Gospel. Read Is. 53:5. This passage mentions both what will happen to Christ and to Christians.

Exploring the Hymn

The author of this hymn is known as Venantius Honorius Fortunatus (c. 530-609). He was a prodigious writer of verse, much of which has been lost over the centuries. Two hymns survived, this one and "The Royal Banners Forward Go," both of which have to do with the crucifixion. This hymn became very well-known and has been widely used within the Church. Both hymns were inspired by the appearance of a supposed relic of the cross in the monastery where Fortunatus lived. This shard of wood was regarded as a real piece of the cross on which Jesus was crucified. Fortunatus was commissioned to write a hymn in honor of this relic. "Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious

Battle" is that hymn. While we rightly reject the idea that such relics were genuine and, more importantly, that such relics ought to be honored, the version of Fortunatus' hymn which we sing in LSB 454 points to the saving work of Christ that He accomplished on the cross.

Stanza 1 concludes that Christ "as a victim won the day." This little phrase brings us right into the heart of redemption and atonement. It is Christ's cross that is our victory and salvation, and yet the cross is apparent weakness and suffering and defeat. Read Gen. 3:22. There God mentions that eating of the tree of life brings eternal life. How do we "eat" the cross, our tree of life, for eternal life? Making the Connection This hymn presents to us Christ's suffering and cross as a victory and a triumph. Scripture also reminds us that we are baptized into Christ. Our lives are connected to His. The fact that Christ's suffering is a victory over sin and death allows us to see our own suffering in faith. Christ suffers with us and weeps with us and, since we are connected to Him, leads us through our suffering to eternity and life. This hymn also gives a glimpse of Christ's "passive obedience." He obeyed and fulfilled the Law though He had no need to do so, since He is the Giver of the Law. Stanza 3 emphasizes the willingness of Christ to die on the cross for our sakes and for our forgiveness. What does such willingness indicate about Christ's attitude toward us? Such an attitude calls forth from us just the type of praise and singing this hymn invites us to offer to God. In Closing The cross of Jesus is a triumphant sign, though it is a disgraceful one to the world. A dying man's blood, suffering and death seem like foolishness or worse to those without faith. To us it is glorious, a sign of conquest, a noble and beautiful tree. The more we consider the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, the more we keep in mind His great love for us in giving Himself into death, the more the Spirit will lead us to sing of the glorious battle and to tell how Christ, the world's redeemer, won the day.

Prayer

Almighty God, graciously behold this Your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinful men to suffer death upon the cross; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (Collect for Good Friday).

Basement Renovation Update

It seems a long time ago the sanctuary renovations were completed. The updated and improved space has been a true blessing to the congregation and our life together.

You may remember that the original Voters Assembly proposal was a Tri-Fold Legacy Renovation Program. Phase I (organ) and Phase II (sanctuary) are now complete. The pandemic disrupted the next two steps:

1. The Building Committee of Hope Lutheran Church recommends the Voters Assembly direct the Basement Committee to reassume clarifying the scope of work and gathering bids on Phase III (basement) of the Tri-Fold Legacy Renovation Program.
2. The Building Committee of Hope Lutheran Church recommends the Voters Assembly reaffirm that a capital campaign be moved forward by the Building Committee to attain the funding necessary to complete Phase III of the Tri-Fold Legacy Renovation Program in a timely manner.

We are happy to share this work is being taken up again. The basement renovation committee is working toward a presentation for the April voters meeting. Part of this effort has been to develop a *Program Statement* that will guide the work of the committee throughout the process, and it is included below for your information and review.

The architects have produced a basic schematic based on the information we provided about the congregation's use of the basement areas. The schematic will be presented at the April voters meeting with a general estimate of what the project might cost should the congregation approve going forward.

Presently, no other work is planned or authorized and all decisions about the renovation are yet to be made with the congregation's approval and guidance.

Committee members: Julie Vigil, Julie Day, Kay Shoemaker, Nathan Maichel and Pam Nielsen

Hope Lutheran Basement Program Statement

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2:42)

The Hope Lutheran Church basement renovation effort is grounded in the words of Acts 2:42 as we seek to renovate the church basement for the primary purposes of providing a space that enables and encourages Christian education for both children and adults and provides an attractive and comfortable place to gather for meetings, meals and activities.

The aim is a modernized, up-to-code space that is both flexible and functional for gathering in large and small groups for a variety of uses that will serve the congregation's needs for decades to come.

Key Uses for the space:

Bible Class
Sunday School
Coffee Hour
Church Meetings
Church Dinners
Parent University
Receptions

Necessary updates:

Electrical
Lighting
Floors
Ceilings
Bathrooms
Kitchens
Furnishings
Storage space

The basement renovation committee takes seriously its charge to represent the interests of the congregation as we guide and inform the architects and builder. Thus, we will seek congregational input and feedback through a variety of means and will provide regular updates on the progress of the effort through the

newsletter, bulletin and/or verbal reports.

While the Basement Committee is continuing its work, the Board of Finance with approval of the Church Council at its April meeting, will reconstitute the Building Committee to oversee the scope of the Phase

III (basement) project, associated costs, and how the project will be funded. Expect additional information and conversation in the coming months as more is known about the project and funding matters are considered. Building Committee members include: Kevin Robson, Diana Brown, Bill Truebe, Carol Spyers, Paul Vigil, Bart Day, and Pastor Asbury.

When the Tri-Fold Legacy Renovation Program was launched, we knew we were standing on the shoulders of faithful stewards who funded much of the project. We knew at some point the current members would be called upon to consider our own sacrificial stewardship to complete the project. Now is the time. The opportunity is near.



In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (Ephesians 1:7-10).

...O LORD, we pray, give us success!" (Psalm 118:25).

SERVING IN GOD'S MISSION In February, we completed a Sunday morning Bible study series—thank you to everyone who participated and shared. Your hopes, prayers and thinking about the future of our congregation as a family, journeying on the same road together—all under God's grace and provision—are cherished treasure. What's next in Hope's strategic planning process? **A series of congregational workshop sessions, in which all members of Hope are invited to participate.** Using *Re:Vitality* resources developed in the LCMS Office of National Mission, the outcome of these lively sessions will be a comprehensive strategic ministry plan that will include Hope's vision, mission and purpose statements, as well as a set of specific goals designed

to extend the proclamation of the Gospel to the communities that God has called us to serve. **IMPORTANT: Please mark your calendar now and plan to join your fellow Hope members in our fellowship hall on the following dates.** ALL are welcome and encouraged to join us; we need your input.

Saturday, September 10, 9:00-11:15 am

Saturday, September 24, 8:00-11:45 am

Saturday, October 8, 9:00-11:30 am

Saturday, October 22, 8:00 am-Noon

Saturday, November 5, 9:00-10:30 am

More details (previews of agenda and content) to follow, but for now, please mark your calendar and plan to join a vital conversation that we pray will impact our congregation's mission and ministry for the coming generations, to the glory and praise of Christ our Lord!

P.S. Mark your calendar now with the dates/times shown above...and then come. Unable to make a specific session? No worries...plan to join us for the others.

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter Article – April 2022

Blessed Shall You Be

“Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.” (Deuteronomy 28:3-6)

This is God’s promise to the Israelites as they stood beyond the Jordan outside of the Promised Land. He promises blessing to His people. He will make them prosper, whether they are in the city or the field. He will make their fruit of their work to prosper, whether from the ground, their wombs, their flocks, or their herds. He will make them to prosper in all things, whether upon their coming in or their going out.

But there’s a catch. He would do this for Israel only “if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.” (Deut. 28:2b) If they did that, He would cause that “all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you.” (Deut. 28:2a). If they didn’t obey the voice of the Lord, if they didn’t keep the commandments of the Lord and “walk in his ways” (Deut. 28:9), they would be met with curse and woe. The blessings would be replaced with curses. Everything that the Lord promised to prosper and bless would be cursed and fail.

Thanks be to God that our Lord Jesus Christ has come into our flesh and fulfilled the law for us – in our place and for our benefit. Our Lord Jesus Christ died for us – in our place and for our benefit. Our Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead for us – in our place and for our benefit. By this we have justification before God. We are forgiven, clean, holy, and righteous. The blessing of God is promised to us in Christ Jesus. It depends upon his work, not ours.

All this is ours in Holy Baptism. For in Holy Baptism, God claims us as His own, makes us His children, His heirs, and His holy people. And so it is that the work of our hands and its fruit is holy because we are holy in Christ. It is pressed into His service, and it thereby becomes a blessing to us and to our neighbor.

For this great gift, our reception of the blessings of God because of Christ Jesus our Lord, it is our duty to thank and praise, serve, and obey Him. This is not in order to receive the blessings but because in Christ we already have. With this in mind, we sit down on the first day of the week and set aside as He has prospered us to give to His church for His work of blessing in our midst (1 Cor. 16:2).

LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship

Rejoice in the Lord Always!

The past two years have certainly been rough for all of us. In March 2020, we locked down and had to forego in-person worship services for a time, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then we have been slowly returning to normal – returning to in-person services, adding Sunday School back to the weekly routine, opening more pews and trusting one another to respect our needs for space, resuming in-person meetings, and getting back to using hymnals for services. We thank our gracious Savior for His faithfulness in seeing us through these unprecedented times.

We can also rejoice in some new features to our life and work together at Hope. We continue to provide

live streaming of our services (on Hope’s Facebook page). This benefits brothers and sisters at Hope as well as fellow Christians living in elsewhere. We continue hygienic practices at Holy Communion – washing hands and alcohol-soaked purificators. We have also adopted some new procedures for Communion: the continuous flow at the rail and the single dismissal after distribution. The continuous flow provides a noble simplicity. The single common dismissal provides a sense of unity as we all together hear the good news of God’s gift in the Sacrament.

“Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!” (Psalm 105:1)

“All ceremonies should serve the purpose of teaching the people what they need to know about Christ” (Augsburg Confession, 24:3). This month we start celebrating the season of Easter – the most important time of the Christian year. The Church celebrates Easter not just on one day (Easter Sunday), but for a whole “week of Sundays,” that is, seven Sundays. Christ’s resurrection life is our new life. Each week we hear more of that wonderful Good News. Christ Jesus is the first fruits of the dead. He gives us His victory over sin, death, and hell. What great news! It gives us Christians a whole new purpose and outlook for life. Here’s what’s coming up in Divine Services for the month of April:

Date	Day in Church Year	Gospel Reading	Gospel Focus (Theme of the Day)
April 3	Fifth Sunday in Lent	John 8:42-59	The Great High Priest – Christ reveals the “secret” of His office of High Priest: before Abraham was, He is. Whoever hears and clings to Christ gains a share in the life that is stronger than death.
April 10	Palm Sunday	John 12:12-19 & Matthew 27:11-54	The Man of Sorrows – Jesus the Christ enters Jerusalem in triumph and is crowned as our meek and lowly King.
April 17	Resurrection of Our Lord	Mark 16:1-8	THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST – Our Lord Jesus rises from the dead and gives us His victory over sin and death. We rejoice in His gift of eternal life.
April 24	2nd Sunday of Easter	John 20:19-31	IN WHITE GARMENTS – Christ authorizes His Church forgive sins (Holy Absolution), Thomas confesses Jesus to be the Savior.

OFFERING SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED UKRAINIANS

Gifts to the LCMS, including Mission Central, are restricted to providing aid and assistance to persons displaced by the war in Ukraine. To support those displaced Ukrainians, you may call LCMS Donor Care: 1-888-930-4438 or mail: The LCMS, PO Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861. Please write “Help for Displaced Ukrainians” in memo line. More information: <https://www.lcms.org/ukraine>

SEEKING HOUSING

The Missouri District Office has been contacted by Pastor Makelin at Saint Paul in Freeman, South Dakota who is trying to help a family in his congregation. This family has a

7th grade aged child whose name is on a liver transplant list. The situation has arisen that this family needs to be close to Barnes Jewish Hospital. The family would prefer to move sometime in late April. The stay may be for one or more months. Ideally the living situation would include 2 or more bedrooms and be furnished.

If you are able to help this family with housing please contact the pastor at the below information:

Rev. Terry Makelin
makelint60@gmail.com

402-336-7819 (phone is best contact method)

Phone: 314-352-0014

April 2022

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Elder: 3 – Chad Rolland 10 – Scot Kinnaman 14 – Jim Frost 16 – Scot Kinnaman 17 – Chad Rolland 24 – Scot Kinnaman	Altar Guild: 3 Spyers/Truebe 10 Asburry/Bergdolt 17 Brown/Patton 24 Keller/Janssen				1	2
3 Lent 5 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	4	5	6 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal 7:00 pm Lent Evening Prayer	7 6:00 pm Thrive Parent University	8	9 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
10 Palm Sunday 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	11 7:00 Church Council	12	13 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	14 Holy Thursday 7:00 Divine Service	15 Good Friday 7:00 Passion of Christ	16 Easter Vigil 8:00 Easter Vigil
17 Resurrection of our Lord 9:00 Festal Divine Service	18 Church Office Closed	19	20 NO Kantorei rehearsal	21 6:00 pm Thrive Parent University	22	23 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
24 Easter 2 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:45 Voters' Assembly NO Schola/Confirmation	25	26	27 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	28 6:00 pm Thrive Parent University	29	30 <i>Pastor's day off</i>