

THE BEACON

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, LELAND

Spring 2017

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PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS

Dear members of Immanuel,

As Christians, we hear the word 'disciple' a lot. We can read books about discipleship. We can hear sermons about being a faithful disciple. Churches often follow programs that are designed to help Christians be better disciples. We can be exhorted to "be a disciple who makes disciples."¹ Whether we agree or disagree with this kind of approach to discipleship, we know that as Christians we are disciples of our Lord Jesus.

But what exactly does that mean? **What is a 'disciple'?** How do we define one? In this article, we will answer these questions so that we might more fully trust Jesus to lead us as His followers. To answer these questions, we turn to the New Testament.

The Greek word often translated 'disciple' is *matheiteis* (μαθητής). The word occurs only in the four Biblical Gospels and the Book of Acts. There are at least three things to consider regarding the intended referent of *matheiteis* in each occurrence. First, it can refer to either a male or a female (Luke 6:17; Luke 19:37). Second, even after Jesus' resurrection, a follower of Jesus was called a *matheiteis* (Acts 9:1). Third, in the Book of Acts, *matheiteis* refers almost exclusively to those who believe in Jesus. In the Book of Acts, 'disciple' is almost equal to 'Christian'.²

This leads us to two primary ways the word is used. First, *matheiteis* can refer to "one who engages in learning through instruction from another."³ That is, the word is used to refer to a pupil, student, or apprentice. Second, *matheiteis* can refer to "one who is constantly associated with someone who has a reputation as a teacher."⁴ Disciples are students of a teacher or rabbi. So in the New Testament we encounter disciples of primarily two rabbis, John and Jesus (John 1:35-42).

What then does a disciple of Jesus do? Although there is a clear distinction in the New Testament between all disciples of Jesus and 'The Twelve' who are sent out as His Apostles (Matt 10:1-14; Matt 28:16-20; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:12-26), the four Evangelists give three general characteristics of 'following Jesus' as a disciple. First, Jesus calls His disciples to follow Him. They do not choose to be His disciples. Second, disciples of Jesus receive His divine revelation. By hearing with faith His teaching and preaching they receive it. Third, disciples of Jesus are suffering servants. They follow Jesus by denying themselves and picking up their crosses (Matt 16:24).⁵ The life of a disciple is a cross-shaped (cruciform) life.



¹ See especially *Growing Up: How to be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (Paris, ON: B&H Books, 2013).

² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W., *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 609.

³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W., *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*, 609.

⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W., *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*, 609.

⁵ These three characteristics of a disciple in the Biblical Gospels are drawn from Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 129-45.

In summary, a disciple of Jesus is called to belong to Him (Rom 1:6). The Spirit of God “calls through the Gospel.”⁶ This means that only God can ‘make a disciple’. Called by the Gospel, a disciple of Jesus is “enlightened with His gifts” and “kept in the true faith.”⁷ A disciple of Jesus follows Jesus and receives Him and His eternal gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation as God, the Father reveals Him and His gifts in a word of teaching, preaching, as well as through a sacramental word. The disciple who follows Jesus and receives His eternal gifts in Word and Sacrament, is formed not only as a disciple, but as a suffering servant in the image of Jesus, *the Suffering Servant* (Rom 8:29). Such a disciple then trusts Jesus to lead however difficult and treacherous the path.

“Lord, help us seek your living Word, the food Your grace imparts” (“O Christ, You Walked the Road” in the *Lutheran Service Book*, 424, vs. 2).

In Christ,

Pastor LaFave

MUSICAL MEANDERINGS

One of the big things I plan over the winter is the concerts for the upcoming summer. Our series for next summer will not be near the size of last year’s concert series! But we will be featuring 3 wonderful concerts that I hope you, as a congregation member, will come out and enjoy.

The first will be in June and will be a hymn festival. Dr. Steven Egeler, professor of organ at Central Michigan University and parish organist, will be our guest organist for the hymn festival.

In July, I will play an organ concert featuring sacred and secular music for Christmas - Christmas in July!



The August program will invite our guests back-the Freshwater Brass Quintet! We had hosted them back in 2014 as part of our organ fundraising concert series. The group consists of two trumpets, French horn, trombone and tuba. The concert will be as excellent as the previous one. The only difference will be the organ! (Should be quite the difference.)

We hope to have as many of our congregation at these events as possible!

In addition to all of this, I have been quite a busy boy outside of church. As many in the congregation know, I am apprenticing with Jim Cox to become a piano tuner and to someday take over his business. This is giving me the necessary work outside the church.

I have also been in contact with our Synod’s publishing house, Concordia Publishing House, on a project that started with our Circuit. CPH has noticed my YouTube channel where I record videos of hymns on the organ and have offered to take the channel over for me. What this includes is them paying me a small amount per video to continue recording, and to then edit and publish the videos to a larger audience through their channel. I need to use their materials exclusively, but this also helps with copyright issues and other legal matters. So, our new organ is already becoming a blessing to more people than just our congregation. It is being used weekly to share the Gospel through music to a worldwide audience! To find these new videos, please search for “Concordia Publishing House Music” on YouTube.com. To God be the glory.

In Christ,

Mark Peters

⁶ *Small Catechism*, “The Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed” in the *Lutheran Service Book*, 323.

⁷ *Small Catechism*, “The Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed” in the *Lutheran Service Book*, 323.



LENT AT IMMANUEL LUTHERAN, LELAND

Ash Wednesday

March 1 at 7:00 PM

Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

Lenten Midweek Services

March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5 at 7:00 PM

Meditations based on the hymn "My Song is Love Unknown"

Maundy Thursday, April 13 at 7:00 PM

Service of Holy Communion

Good Friday, April 14

Tre Ore Service, Noon to 3:00 PM at Trinity, Traverse City

Service of Tenebrae, 7:00 PM at Immanuel

Holy Saturday, April 15

Easter Vigil at Trinity, Traverse City starting at 7:00 PM

Easter Sunday, April 16

Divine Service at 9 AM

Easter Breakfast and Children's Activities at 10:30 AM

Hiking Club News!

- **March 4:** Stroll the Indiana Woods! This is a hike on a paved plowed road through Indiana Woods in Leland. Plan to meet at 8:45A by South Beach in Leland.
- **April 1:** Get ready for the big one! We will be hiking up Awful Awful at Sugar Loaf. This is a 400' ascent to the top of Sugar Loaf and then we will run down and repeat a couple of times. This is our cardio-hike. It would help if you get in shape for this strenuous hike.
- **May 6:** Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail. We will meet in Glen Arbor at the Heritage Trail and hike approximately 2.5 miles.

NOTE: Information on each hike will come out the month before the hike with the specifics as to directions and meeting times, etc. Any questions please call Diane and Don at 231-883-6861 or 231-883-6860. Thanks!

Quilter's Den

The quilters have all worn many hats as we continue without Lenore and her broken shoulder.

We want to thank the congregation members for the sheets, pillow cases, etc. you have given us to continue our mission for World Relief Quilts. Please keep us in mind when you are spring cleaning.

-Immanuel Quilters

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BOOK REVIEW

In Defense of Jesus; Investigating Attacks on the Identity of Christ

By: Lee Strobel

Note number 1: This book was previously titled The Case for the Real Jesus.

Note number 2: Lee Strobel has written a different book called The Case for Christ. The titles are similar but the books are different.

Atheists are currently working very hard to raise doubts about the Bible and the Christian faith. They do this by making logical sounding statements and Satan is there whispering, "Go ahead-believe them. They are speaking the truth." The temptation is to start thinking, "What if they are right? What if everything I have been told in Sunday school, Catechism, and Adult Bible Study is wrong?" Poisonous seeds are being spread and some of those seeds are taking root in the culture around us. The focus of this book is to pull out those evil seedlings before they mature and produce poisonous seeds of their own. Strobel selects six of these weeds. His style is not so much that of a lecturer as it is of an interviewer. He interviews leading theologians and asks them questions connected with these weeds (he calls them challenges).

The challenges (weeds) are:

1. Scholars are discovering a different Jesus than the one in the four Gospels. The problem is that the books these scholars are using were written decades after the four Gospels and so have no value.
2. The Bible's portrait of Jesus is wrong because of the mistakes that came in. Atheists use the "Telephone Game" as an illustration of how mistakes creep in. Strobel and his experts

show why this is not a valid comparison.

3. New explanations have refuted Jesus' resurrection. They have not. Strobel lists five points the atheists cannot answer away. For example, if Christ did not rise bodily from the dead, why did the disciples believe it so firmly that they were willing to die proclaiming that message?
4. The Christian message is plagiarized from pagan religions. It is the other way around. Those pagan religions copied Christianity.
5. Jesus failed to fulfill the Messianic Prophecies. If He failed, no one will ever fulfill them. But did He fail? Strobel and friends say no.
6. People should be free to pick and choose what they want to believe about Jesus. In this section there was a discussion of relativity vs. objectivity.

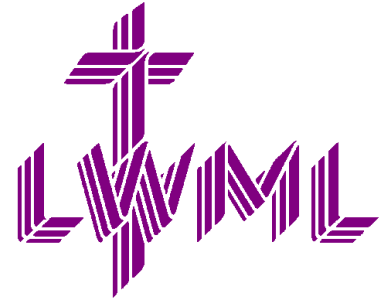
If we listen to Atheists, their position seems logical, unbeatable, and unstoppable. But the question comes up, "Why in the world should we listen to them?" There is a field of study in theology called "Apologetics". Simply understood, that phrase means "defending the faith. This book is a work of apologetics. With this book and others on apologetics there is no reason to listen to atheists as if they had anything meaningful to say. There is a copy in the Church library. Christ is risen! Russell Egeler



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WOMEN IN MISSION

WIM stands for Women in Mission at Immanuel. We are a part of the Lutheran Women Missionary League – LWML, which is a world-wide organization. They assist us in affirming our relationship with God and that enables us to use our gifts toward our congregation.



We contribute and serve for funeral luncheons, and send cards to shut-ins and members who need a cheer! We host the annual Christmas luncheon which is always special. We support the quilters in their World Relief Mission and sending baby quilts to Haiti. We contribute many quilts to the Salvation Army for our local homeless folks.

Our meetings start with coffee and goodies, then open with prayer, a hymn and a short devotion. Next is the “business” part. Our meetings are about one and a half hours long but always supportive, filled with love and laughter!

It’s a comfortable way to get to know other gals in a small group setting. We meet the second Thursday of each month at 9 AM.

Karen Konieczny, president

HANDCHIME CHOIR MEMBERS NEEDED!

We are always looking for new members for our Handchime choir. Right now, we could really use 2 more eager folks to fill some gaps during the Lenten season. Being in the choir does not necessarily require any music reading ability. We will help you out and find a way for you to be musical with us! Come ring with us!

YOUTH GROUP TRIP PLANNED

The Youth Group, with members of our church and other friends, are taking a trip to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum in Kentucky from May 5 through May 7. Cost is \$75 per person or \$200 per family maximum. There are still a few spaces available, if any church members would like to go on the trip. Please contact Tanya Popp at 231-271-6428 if you have any questions about the trip.

