

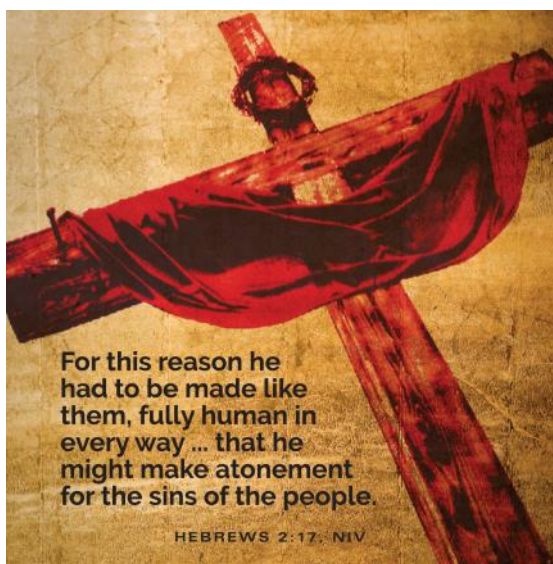


The Vicarious Atonement

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

Note: During this season of Lent we are hearing the story of the passion of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. Soon we will observe Holy Week and watch the Lord Jesus serve the world by giving His life as a ransom for many. Scripture not only describes the historical event of the crucifixion, but attaches to that description the purpose and result of Christ's death. Unfortunately, many churches and religious leaders do not accept Scripture's interpretation of the cross. This month I am re-publishing an article I originally wrote in 2008. Our comfort is that Jesus died "for our sins."

Years ago, I began assigning the memory of definitions in our youth confirmation program because it became evident to me how difficult it is to teach theology without a theological vocabulary. I know it is not impossible to do that, but it is very difficult. This is really true for any academic discipline. Medical students must learn a medical vocabulary to communicate accurately with one another. Law students must learn a law vocabulary, math students a math vocabulary, science students a science vocabulary, etc. The church has developed a special vocabulary to convey God's revelation accurately. We Lutherans ought to be familiar with such biblical terms as justification, sanctification, redemption, gospel, and so forth. We also ought to be familiar with important extra-biblical ecclesiastical terms like Trinity. The term "vicarious atonement" is on my definition list.



My simple definition of the term is "the life and death of Christ offered to God as the substitute for all men." All students who completed the Messiah Lutheran youth confirmation course for the last twenty years or so should be able to recall that definition (but I wouldn't really bet on it!).

The new catechism defines the vicarious atonement this way:

Christ was my substitute. He took my place under God's judgment against sin. By paying the penalty of my guilt, Christ atoned, or made satisfaction, for my sins (vicarious atonement). Luther's Small Catechism, Question #139

This theological term, especially with the above definition, is very controversial in the upper echelons of the ecclesiastical world today. Most mainline theologians, the so called "Bible scholars," scoff at the concept. They actually hate the whole idea, calling it "perverse" or "Divine child abuse." First, the very negative idea that God has wrath is unpleasant and unacceptable in the world of political correctness. Second, the idea that we have "sinned," and sinned to such a degree that we deserve God's wrath or judgment is repugnant to the proud flesh. Third, the idea that God would actually punish an innocent person for the sins of others is unacceptable. Like Peter (Matt. 16:23) they think the things of men rather than the things of God. They place their "wisdom" over God's "foolishness," the preaching of the cross. Thus, if the scoffers are intellectually honest, they will admit this concept is taught in Scripture, but they will

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Latin for Lutherans	3
Youth News	5
Holy Week and Easter Schedule	6
Young Adults	6
Family Read and Watch	7
Miscellany	7

That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

say that we have moved past this primitive notion of God's wrath and need for judgment. In place of the vicarious atonement they will teach a pious "gospel of love." Most of the time this new "gospel" becomes another moralistic religion of "do goodism" that makes no mention and has no need of a blood atonement. Their gospel, like that of the ancient Galatians (Gal. 1:6) is really a "different gospel" which is "no gospel at all" (Gal. 1:7). The vicarious atonement is at the core of the revealed Gospel. It is the heart of the only saving Gospel, for St. Paul writes, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3).

What do Scriptures teach about Christ's death in relation to our sin? They teach, first of all that it was for OUR sins that Jesus died because He had no sin. "For our sake God made Him to be sin who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). The Apostles did not invent this concept. It was clearly revealed in the Old Testament, especially in Isaiah 53 where "the Servant of the Lord" (Jesus) is described as a substitute for all sinners in these words:

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace

and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned –every one– to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Is. 53:4-6)

Some argue that Isaiah was not referring to Messiah here, but the Spirit clearly reveals in Acts 8:32-35 that this figure in Isaiah refers to JESUS. Also Peter alludes to this verse when he writes "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

All this is to say that we sinners have incurred a debt before the law by breaking the law. This debt is eternal death (Rom. 6:23) and it MUST be paid for justice to be satisfied. In other words God cannot simply overlook it or pretend the debt doesn't exist. The debt for all your sins (original and actual) was imputed to Jesus, the innocent sacrificial lamb. He willingly, in perfect love for you and all people, stood between us and God's justice. He became the scapegoat. All the wrath of God due you, and me, and all the world, was concentrated upon this one person, and the dam broke. He drank the cup of God's wrath against the world. He endured the just penalty for sin, as though He was the only sinner in the world. He became a curse for you, for me, and for all the world (Gal. 3:13, John 1:29). Thus, we see on the cross the

wrath of God in its severity. It terrifies, humbles, and crushes us utterly.

We would be led to despair, as was Judas, if God had not revealed to us, however, that when Jesus bore the wrath we deserve, He removed it from us. He cancelled your debt. God is not angry with you any longer. In Christ you do not stand before Him as a sinner, but as a "beloved son," perfect and holy because the blood of Jesus has cleansed you from all your sins. That is why the Bible says "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10). Having been redeemed by so great a sacrifice, not with gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, how will you now live? If we believe the promises of God, we will no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor. 5:15). The cross is the clearest expression of both law and gospel, the law in its utmost severity and the gospel in its full sweetness. The whole Christian life flows to and from the cross of Christ. That is why St. Paul says, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Welcome to the season of Lent, a season in which the vicarious atonement stands clearly before us for contemplation.

Blessings in Christ the Crucified.



Braille Center News

The Messiah Lutheran Braille Center made another high stack of Braille books this last month. We are continuing to send the book of

Exodus in Swahili to blind readers in Africa. Please join us on selected Sundays after late service; Contact Barbara Piñero at 682-552-3622.

A Brief Latin Glossary for the Lutheran Armchair Theologian

— by Pastor Tom Chryst

Lex semper accusat -----	"The Law Always Accuses"
Lex orandi, lex credendi -----	"The Law of Prayer, The Law of Belief"
Simul justus et peccator -----	"Simultaneous Saint and Sinner"
Ex nihilo-----	"Out of Nothing"
Sola scriptura-----	"Scripture Alone"
Sola gratia-----	"Grace Alone"
Sola fide -----	"Faith Alone"
Fides qua, fides quae-----	"The Faith That Believes; The Faith That Is Believed"
Ex opere operato	
Quia and quatenus	
Oratio, meditatio, tentatio	
Soli deo Gloria	

This month's newsletter article in our series on the "Latin Glossary" is a little different. Instead of an article, I offer a sermon I preached a couple of years ago on the same topic:

Sermon - Mark 1:21-28 - Epiphany 4
Mark 1:21-28
"Fides Qua and Fides Quae"

There are some handy Latin phrases that every good Lutheran pastor and theologian needs to know, and which can also be helpful to laypeople. One of those phrases, which pastor Carlson suggested to me for this week, was "Fides Qua and Fides Quae".

But rather than rely on my own explanation I thought I'd start by sharing with you yet another fine pastor's explanation of this phrase:

The expression fides qua means "the faith which believes." Here faith is saving faith which receives and holds the riches of Christ's atonement. He has won for us the favor of God through the merits of Christ. He gives this salvation to us through the word and sacrament and we grab it and hold it by faith. This faith is what the theologians call fides qua – the faith which believes. It's the fides qua which makes you a Christian.

The fides quae is a short-hand way which theologians use to talk about, "the faith which is believed." Here the word faith is like when the pastor says, "let us confess the faith in the

words of the Apostles' Creed." The faith which is believed does not so much refer to the grasping quality of saving faith but to that which faith clings. Fides quae is THE faith. So we could say that Christians have faith in the faith. Although it is usually a bit less confusing to say that we have faith in the gospel. Fides qua without fides quae is emotionalism with all sorts of heartfelt sentiments but no understanding of precisely what Jesus is all about. Fides quae without fides qua is heartless theological abstractions.
(Rev. Klemet Preus+)

So what does Fides Qua and Fides Quae have to do with our Gospel reading from Mark, where Jesus casts out a demon? And just as important, what does all of this have to do with you and me? Bear with me and we'll get there...



Capernaum

Our Gospel reading takes place in the synagogue in Capernaum. This is actually one of the historical sites we are pretty sure we've uncovered. I was there in 2007, and they found the old synagogue that Jesus visited there. On the top level are the imported white stone foundations of the 4th century synagogue. But underneath, the black volcanic rock from the local area that built the synagogue of Jesus' day.

The contrast between Jesus and the teachers of his day could also be described as black and white. They spoke with appeals to the Rabbis who taught before them. Gamaliel quotes Simeon quoting Eleazer, etc... But Jesus spoke with authority. He taught something different, and taught it differently. "You have heard it said, but I say to you." The teachers of men relied on the teachings of men. But he didn't need any other word to rely on, because he, Jesus, is the living Word of God, with God from the beginning but now made flesh and walking and talking among them.

And then something strange happened. An evil spirit spoke out. Which is strange enough. But even stranger is that the demon both knew who Jesus was, and even said so! "I know

(Continued on page 4)

A Brief Latin Glossary, cont.

who you are – the Holy One of God!" This demon, who works for the Father of Lies, is telling the truth! He has confessed rightly who Jesus is, and why he has come – to destroy the forces of evil.

And yet, no one would accuse the demons, or the devil, of being a Christian. And here we come back to the *Fides Quae* understanding. The devil knows the Bible, friends, better than any of us do. Luther called the devil a master theologian. He is an expert in what God's word says. As Scripture says, "even the demons believe – and shudder" You might even say the devil has a "*Fides Quae*" faith in God. He knows the truth, knows it to be true, and believes it. But he has no "*Fides Qua*", no trust in Christ as his savior.

Sometimes we might even be the same. The danger for us, the temptation for some, is to make the faith an intellectual exercise. To be more concerned about getting it right, than that what is right is "for me". We pastors are often susceptible to this problem, especially because we've been called to oversee the public teaching of the church. But just because you have all the right confessions and all the right doctrines and all the right theological proclamations, even in Latin, doesn't make you a Christian. If even a demon can rightly confess Christ, in a synagogue, (to his face!) - then simply getting the teachings right isn't enough, is it? The *Fides Quae* without the *Fides Qua*.

But there is also the opposite error. And here is where many laypeople are tempted. When we think that believing in Jesus is all that is important, and it doesn't really matter what you believe. The *Fides Qua* without the *Fides Quae*. This can lead to all sorts of trouble too. These are the people who think they've already learned all there is to learn about the faith. "I went to confirmation class 50 years ago, pastor!" This is the temptation to put the catechism aside, rather than to continue using it like Luther intended. The temptation to believe in Jesus, but know little of what

Jesus actually said or taught.

This is the kind of emotionalism that is all too common in the church. The idea that it's all about the heart. That we don't need any of these objective truths or these doctrines which divide. Let's just love Jesus and that's good enough. But it's a shallow and ultimately a false faith that pays no attention to what Jesus teaches in his word. If you're looking to believe in a Jesus who doesn't teach anything of substance, then you're looking for a false Jesus. If your kind of Jesus is one who doesn't care about whether you baptize babies, or whether you receive his true body and blood in the sacrament, or whether you think your good works get you into heaven... well, then you have the wrong Jesus, my friends.

There's plenty of guilt to go around when it comes to the *Fides Qua* and the *Fides Quae*. We are sinners, after all, and we will get things wrong. Maybe we'll focus too much on the doctrine, or we'll focus too little. We'll think too much of our own personal faith, or we will think too much of our own right doctrine. We will break the 1st commandment by turning our teaching itself into a god to be worshipped. Or we will break the 2nd by claiming to love God but despising preaching and his word. There's only one way out of the *Fides Qua*/*Fides Quae* Quandry for sinners, and that way is Jesus himself.

Jesus who died on the cross, and by it destroyed the powers of darkness. Jesus the Holy One of God who makes us holy by his blood. Jesus the one with authority over the demons, and authority to forgive sins. Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith – and of our *Fides Qua* and our *Fides Quae*.

He gives his spirit, who works through his word, to create saving faith where there was none. Whenever we try to measure and examine our faith we will find it lacking. But whenever we look to Christ for forgiveness, life and salvation – it is always enough. Faith

in Christ, trust in Christ, is a gift from him. Even the smallest faith, of a mustard seed, if that faith is in Christ, can move the mountain of sin from us.

And Christ gives us his word, the content of our faith. We don't develop our doctrine, but like all things of God, we receive it as a gift. We are the recipients of the Bible, and the creeds which summarize it, the catechism which teaches it, and the confessions which – confess it.

That he calls you to believe in him is good news! That he tells you what to believe about him is good news! That despite your lack of faith, weak faith, failing faith – he still saves, is good news! For he died for all your sins. He covers all your unholiness with his holiness. He silences all your enemies with his authoritative word.

Thank God, for the *Fides Quae*, the "what" of our faith. And thank God for the *Qua*, the "in whom" of our faith, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Praying through the Passion of Christ

Join us at 7:00pm during
the season of Lent
for Vespers.

Each week's reading from the
passion according to St. Luke
will be framed in a petition of
the Lord's Prayer.

Lenten suppers will be
offered every Wednesday
evening at 6:00 p.m., for a
free-will offering. Various
groups in the congregation are
sponsoring these suppers.

Youth News



WAY Valentine Dinner

The Youth Valentine Fundraiser Dinner was so much fun! We sorted all the chaos into order at exactly 6pm on February 13, here a line had already formed in the hall. Guests were welcomed into the Parish Hall with a view of a sunset beach with rolling waves and elegant live piano music. The dessert table could hardly fit all of the custom desserts: chocolate covered strawberries, rice crispies, cheesecake, chocolate cake. Tables were set with real silverware, heart folded napkins, chocolates, and a glowing ice centerpiece. Also arranged on the red tables were beautifully colored paper hearts, designed by our preschoolers.

As guests were seated, vegetable cups and drinks were delivered. We opened with a greeting, then a brief study on the history of Saint Valentine presented by Pastor Chryst. After our dinner prayer, the feast began. The Youth were busy portioning and serving each plate of food, starting with salad and breadsticks, then lasagna with more breadsticks! As guests finished plates clean, they gave their personal dessert ticket to a Youth server to have their selected dessert delivered.



For after dinner entertainment, we had a few trivia questions based on facts

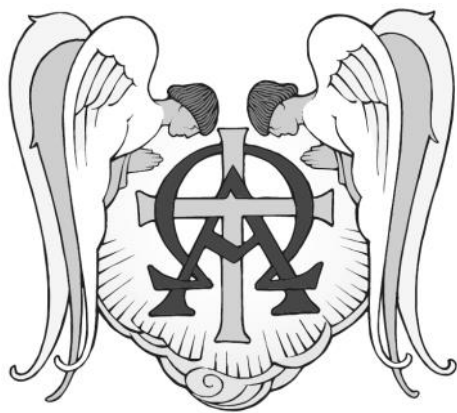


from our attendees. Did you know that the Cornelius couple have been married almost the same number of years as all three pastors combined? Over 60 years! Thanks be to God for the love he has given us and continues to provide!

The Youth concluded the evening with Parade Charades, a rotating group action game. Pastor Cholak led us in an evening prayer before we departed. Children returned to their parents from a very active childcare and the cleanup was completed in less than an hour. This was an exciting and enjoyable evening shared with our members and guests.

This successful fundraiser dinner helped raise funds for the Willing Active Youth (WAY) group to attend the Higher Things summer conference in Colorado. Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped this event. We look forward to seeing you at our next gathering; see you then!

Messiah VBS 2016



"Angels: God's Messengers" VBS Starts JUNE 27

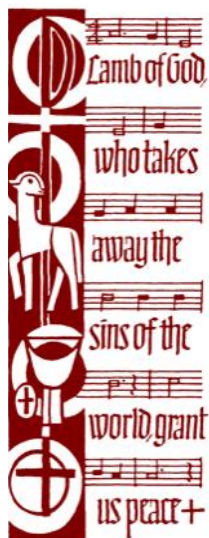
Messiah Lutheran VBS registration and events begin this month. We enjoyed serving you at our recent fundraiser breakfast and look forward to the Lent dinner on Wednesday March 9. Church members will be able to register early on the website at MessiahKeller.org/VBS or find it through the church website under the Education tab.

VBS will be June 27 to 30 from 9AM to noon, we are expecting to fill up and have a wait list. If you would like to contribute, volunteer or donate, please email Messiah.VBS@messiahkeller.org; Contact Tamarra Liddle.

WAY EVENTS

March 6	Sunday School Breakfast, 9am
March 12	Ronald McDonald House, 5-7pm
March 13	Braille and Games/Movie, 12:30pm
March 19	HOLY Saturday Work Day, 9am
March 26	Prayer Vigil Gathering 4pm - 7pm
March 27	Registration Due for Colsen's FROG 5K Walk/Run

Worship Schedule for Holy Week and Easter



Palm Sunday, March 20,	8:00 am, Congregational Processional (beginning outside)
	10:45 am, Children's Processional (meet in the Reception room at 10:30am)
Maundy Thursday, March 24,	7:00 pm, Divine Service with Holy Communion
Good Friday, March 25,	7:30 pm, Service of Darkness (<i>Tenebrae</i>)
Saturday, March 26,	8:00 am, Prayer Vigil begins (8:00am—7:00pm)
	7:00 pm, Service of Confession and Absolution
Easter Sunday, March 27,	7:00 am, Easter Sunrise Service with Communion
	8:15 am, Easter Breakfast (Freewill offering)
	9:30 am, Sunday School
	10:45 am, Easter Worship

Holy Saturday Prayer Vigil—Sign Up!

We will observe Holy Saturday, March 26, with an all-day Prayer Vigil beginning at 8:00am and ending at 7:00pm. We hope to have at least one person praying in our sanctuary

at every moment during these hours. To participate you may sign up for a particular time slot during the day. The sign-up sheet is posted on the copy room door. Please join us for

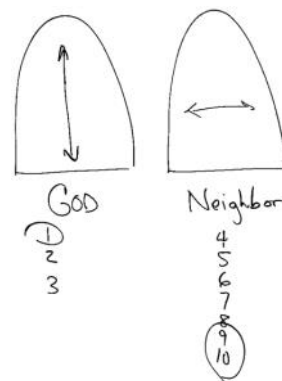
this significant event. *We have so much to pray about and for!* The day concludes with a Service of Confession and Absolution in the sanctuary at 7:00pm.

Messiah Young Adults—YAG



YAG – Exodus Study

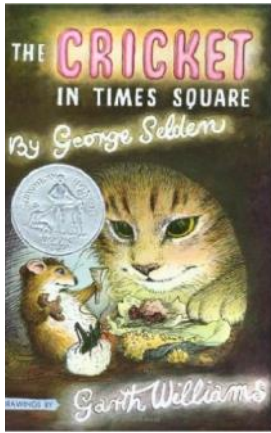
This month in the Young Adults Group (YAG), Pastor Cholak led a study further into Exodus. We read through the giving of the decalogue in chapter 20 and compared verses across Scripture. Psalm 115 describes the first commandment and our idolatry, “they have hands but cannot feel, feet but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, as so will all who trust in them.” We read how the Israelites trembled with fear when the glory of



God descended on Mount Sinai in smoke with thunder, lightning and trumpet blasts. God speaks to his people and reminds us, “I carried you on eagles wings and brought you to myself.” (Ex 19:4) He continues to care for us and protect us through the wilderness in life. Let us pray in faith that “We will do everything the Lord has said.” (Ex 19:8)

Join the YAG down the hill in the MAC building on Mondays at 7PM; Contact Daniel Sweet 817-454-7057.

Family Read and Watch



Many parents regularly read to their children but, all too often, the reading time ends when the kids begin reading on their own. However, **family reading time is still important!**

“Family Read and Watch” is our way to encourage our families to read together. We will select a family-friendly book for you to read with your children at home. Then, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall to watch a movie based on the book, complete with popcorn!

Our first book is *The Cricket in Times Square*, by

George Seldon. This rather short, light-hearted, Newbery Honor book,

is a great way to get started. It's story can appeal to all ages, yet it is simple enough to engage our smaller readers. The book is available on Amazon.com, and may also be found in your public library or used book store.

**We will gather for the movie, a Chuck Jones cartoon, on
Saturday, April 9, at 3:00 p.m.**

**Our reading program officially begins today!
So, find yourself a copy, snuggle up together, and READ!**

If you have any questions, contact Marcia Huebel at marcia.huebel@mlcatexas.org

Miscellany (/ˈmɪsəˌlānē/) *noun.* —a mixture or collection of different things

Our library has a wide selection of books on Holy Week, Jesus' Passion and His resurrection—for all ages. Come, check one out!

Square Room by Daniel Sweet

On a recent Tuesday, I found myself sitting in a square room with several of my friends and I felt like the tallest of them all. Across from me sat Max Hedman with several of his friends, too. We started a silent conversation; thoughtful, simple,

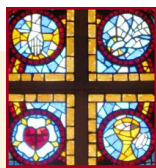
black and white. We introduced our friends to each other, but it did not stay friendly. Each of our friends started pushing each other out of their places. I tried to stay polite as my friends left Max with only one friend, but Max was not concerned. He took his one last friend and made sure that I would not feel rude or polite, victory or defeat. Max had given something that could not be counted; Max gave us each a draw in a game of chess.

You are invited to join the Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy **Chess Club** on Tuesdays at 3:30pm. There are two groups: beginner and

advanced. For more information, to volunteer or participate, please contact Pastor Chryst.

Spring Clean Church

Garage Sale: Coming soon on Saturday April 9, we will be having a Church Garage Sale. Bring your donation items each Sunday starting March 13; the north side shed will be open at 9:00am for drop off. Have a heavy item? Have a strong will to help? Contact Barbara Brewer 817-897-4460 and Carolyn Harris 817-891-1269.



Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Academy Office: (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor
Rev. Thomas Chryst, Associate Pastor
Rev. Steven Cholak, Assistant Pastor

www.messiahkeller.org

Watch for the Lions



A pride of lions has taken over the MLCA art room!

Each class, from Preschool through 9th grade, is painting and decorating a lion in a theme which corresponds to the world history, art history, or literature being studied by the class.



The lions will be on display around the campus in early April, then sold to the highest bidder at the MLCA Spring Auction on April 22. Be on the look-out!

