DISTRICT NEWS

INDIANA

The Town and Parish Church of St. Mary's in Wittenberg, Germany, is pictured.

At a recent circuit pastors meeting, I had the privilege of participating in a discussion of C.F.W. Walther's *Church and Ministry*, specifically Thesis V on the Church. In that context, along with other witnesses to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, Walther cites Martin Luther at length on "the marks of the church," drawing on the reformer's important treatise, *On the Councils and the Church* (1539).

Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch
District President

That is an important writing for a variety of reasons, but it's perhaps best known for Luther's discussion of those marks or signs by which the holy Christian church on earth is identified. Luther focuses on seven marks, in particular, which he sets forth on the basis of the Word of God in contrast to the medieval notion of "relics." In fact, he repeatedly describes these seven marks of the church as the real "relics," or holy things, which are sanctified by the Word of God and the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word.

To begin with, the first mark of the church is "the holy Word of God," which is the foundation on which everything else is built and depends. "This is the principal item, and the holiest of holy possessions, by reason of which the Christian people are called holy; for God's Word is holy and sanctifies everything it touches." Luther notes that "some possess the Word in its complete purity, others do not," but to whatever extent the Word of God is rightly "preached, believed, professed, and lived," there is the true church, because "God's Word cannot be without God's people, and conversely, God's people cannot be without God's Word." *(Luther's Works AE 41, 148-150)*

The second mark of the church is the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, "wherever it is taught, believed, and administered correctly according to Christ's ordinance." For this, too, is a means of grace, whereby the Holy Spirit sanctifies the people of God. "Wherever you see this sign you may know that the Church, or the holy Christian people, must surely be present." *(Luther's Works AE 41, 151)*

The third mark of the church is "the holy Sacrament of the Altar, wherever it is rightly administered, believed, and received, according to Christ's institution." By this Means of Grace, the people of God "are sanctified so that they also exercise themselves in faith and openly confess that they are Christian, just as they do with the Word and with Baptism." *(Luther's Works AE 41, 152)*

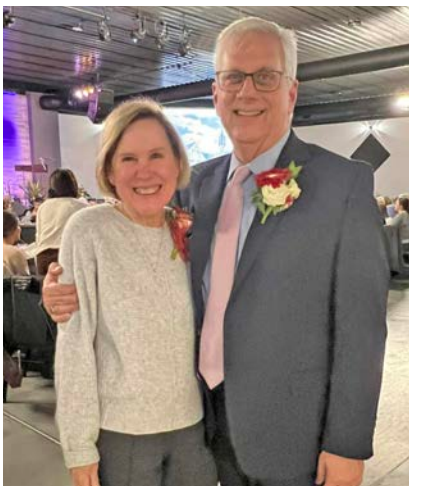
The fourth mark of the church is the public exercise of the Office of the Keys, including both the binding and the loosing key, just as we teach and confess from the Small Catechism. It is interesting to note that Dr. Luther actually begins with the exercise of church discipline, and then also focuses on the absolution, whether with the pastor privately or

See **MESSAGE**, page 8

Rev. Dr. Tom Ahlersmeyer was installed as pastor of Mount Calvary, Fort Wayne, on Jan. 4 The installation was conducted by Rev. Dr. Daniel Brege, Indiana District president emeritus, and the sermon was preached by Rev. Steve Ahlersmeyer, Pastor Tom's brother and assistant pastor of Concordia, Fort Wayne. Pastor Tom steps into this new role after a three-year period of transitional ministry at Mount Calvary, led by Rev. Karl A. Frincke, emeritus, who guided the congregation through a time of renewal and its relocation.

Mount Calvary has served the Waynedale neighborhood of Fort Wayne for 97 years. Pastor Tom is serving part-time at the congregation's new location at 6721 Old Trail Road, near the site of Mount Calvary's original church building. The congregation happily welcomes Pastor Tom and is enthusiastic about continuing ministry in the new location. Blessings to Pastor Tom and all of the members of Mount Calvary.

Pictured are, from left, Revs. Karl A. Frincke, Dr. Tom Ahlersmeyer, Dr. Daniel Brege and Steve Ahlersmeyer.



The congregation of Immanuel, Seymour, gathered on Jan. 18 for a special banquet to honor Rev. James Rodriguez, who faithfully served the saints of Immanuel for 22 years until his recent retirement. He began serving Immanuel upon receiving his M.Div. from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 2003.

The event was well attended, with many sharing heartfelt stories of the meaningful impact Pastor Rodriguez had on the congregation and community.

We extend our richest blessings to Pastor Rodriguez and his wife, Pam, as they begin this new chapter in their lives.

Deaconess Carole Terkula was installed at St. John's, Lanesville, on Jan. 18.

The Indiana District extends its sincere congratulations to Deaconess Terkula as she begins her service in support of the congregation's mission, "Connecting People to God's Love Through Jesus Christ." We offer continued blessings to Deaconess Terkula and to the St. John's congregation as they carry this mission forward.

Deaconess Terkula is pictured with her husband, Rev. Michael Terkula, who serves as St. John's pastor.

Bethlehem marks 100 years of God's faithfulness

Bethlehem, Fort Wayne, joyfully marked the beginning of its 100th anniversary celebration on Jan. 11. The congregation gathered to give thanks for a century of God's faithfulness and to look ahead with hope for the generations yet to come. The theme for the yearlong celebration, "Throughout All Generations," is drawn from Psalm 90:1: "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations."

The anniversary kick-off began with a festive Divine Service that featured guest preacher Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Indiana District president. In his sermon, Dr. Stuckwisch encouraged the congregation to remain steadfast in the ordinary yet holy rhythms of the Christian life — especially the steady exercise of loving one's neighbor through faithful service within the church and the surrounding community. His message echoed the very legacy Bethlehem has sought to embody for a century: a congregation rooted in Word and Sacrament and sent into the world in love.

Following the service, members and guests were invited to take part in several activities leading up to the luncheon. Attendees viewed a newly produced 30-minute Bethlehem 100th anniversary video, explored historical displays highlighting the congregation's rich past, and learned more about current and future Community Center outreach initiatives aimed at serving the neighborhood.

Rev. Ben Ahlersmeyer (right, Bethlehem pastor, is pictured with Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Indiana District president.

More than 150 people gathered for the celebratory luncheon, prepared by the Women of Bethlehem. True to the congregation's spirit of generosity and hospitality, the meal — offered for just $1 — was deeply appreciated. The luncheon also featured a presentation by Nathan Bienz, who serves as archivist for the Indiana District. He provided historical insight into Lutheran life and ministry in Fort Wayne during the 1920s, the era in which Bethlehem was founded.

The day was marked by gratitude for the past and confidence in the future. Stories were shared, memories recalled and new conversations sparked about how the Lord continues to use Bethlehem as His dwelling place in the community. As the congregation looks ahead to its second century, it does so trusting that the same Lord who sustained Bethlehem through times of growth and hardship will remain faithful throughout all generations.

As part of the ongoing centennial celebration, Bethlehem held a Musical Celebration on Feb. 15 — continuing the congregation's joyful reflection on God's enduring mercy and mission.

LENT RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Worship resources are available for LCMS pastors and congregations as they prepare to observe the seasons of Lent and Easter. Visit **lcms.org/lent** to find:

- Suggestions for midweek Lenten services;
- Media kits for Lent, Holy Week and Easter;
- A children's coloring book for the Easter Vigil;
- Lenten and Easter resources from Concordia Publishing House and the LCMS seminaries;
- And more!

A joyful noise at Trinity, Auburn

Trinity, Auburn, joyfully dedicated their new Allen organ on Jan. 25, celebrating with a Hymn Festival that lifted up the song of the church.

This new instrument was installed to support congregational singing and the proclamation of the Gospel through music for generations to come. The congregation gives thanks for all who contributed to this project through time, treasures and prayers, and set this organ apart for service in God's house.

The service featured beloved hymns of the church, rich organ literature, and a formal dedication of the instrument to the glory of God and the edification of His people.

Attendees sang and gave thanks as they praised the Lord who puts a new song in the mouth of His church. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

The featured organist was Audrey Partipilo, director of Parish Music at Trinity. She has served as a Lutheran school teacher for eight years and as a director of Parish Music for seven years. Originally from Riverton, Wyo., she attended Trinity Lutheran Church and School, where she first learned to play the organ.

Audrey is a graduate of Concordia University, Nebraska, where she earned a bachelor of science in both Elementary Education and Music Education. She is currently working toward a masters in Church Music from Concordia University Wisconsin.

She is married to Andrew Partipilo, a fourth-year student at Concordia Theological Seminary, and they are the parents of two boys, Ezra, 6, and Eli, 4.

Audrey Partipilo, Trinity, Auburn, Parish Music director, is pictured with her husband, Andrew, and their two children, Eli and Ezra.

Education

Why we worship: shaping mind and spirit

Nathan Wingfield
District Executive for Christian Education

In our Lutheran schools, the rhythm of worship and prayer is not an "extra" added to a busy schedule. It is the center from which everything else flows. We don't gather for worship to check a box or fulfill a requirement; we gather because we are a community that lives by the Gospel, by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

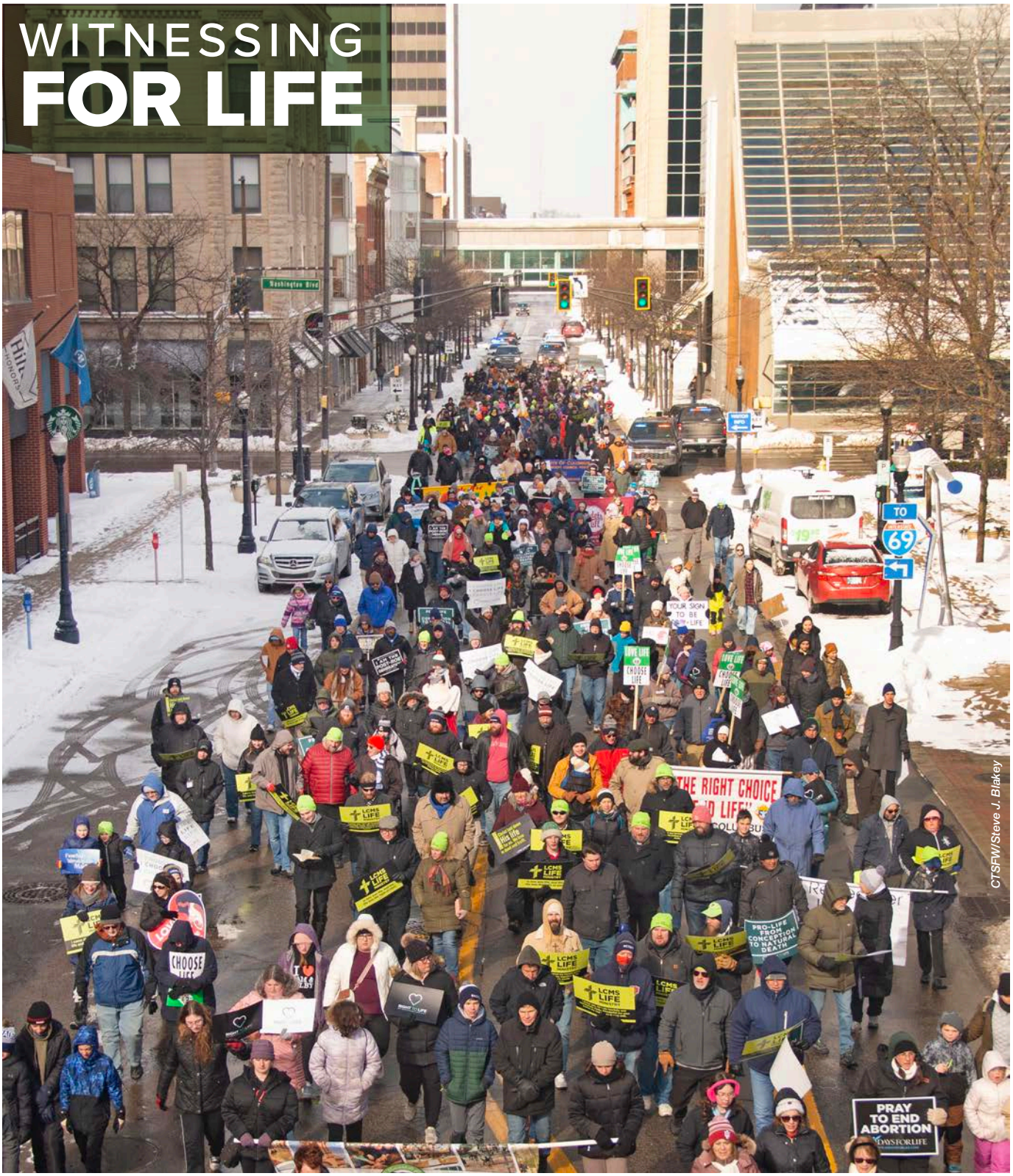
Education is often focused on what the student can achieve, but our daily prayer life focuses on what God has achieved for us. By gathering around the Word, students are reminded daily that their worth is not found in their test scores, but in the cross of Christ. Daily prayer teaches the students the "language of the house."

This means that a student's "academic pursuit" is not merely a secular task, but their current vocation, a holy calling in which they serve God by learning about His creation. When we begin a science lab or a history lecture with prayer, we are acknowledging that these subjects are not ends in themselves, but windows into God's handiwork. By studying the intricacies of biology or the patterns of the past, students are tracing the fingerprints of the Creator, learning to marvel at the wisdom and order with which He continues to sustain the world.

By receiving God's gifts in worship, the student's mind is prepared to see the world differently. Chemistry becomes an exploration of God's orderly creation. Literature becomes an insight into the fallen human condition and the need for redemption. This connection ensures that a student's spiritual life and their intellectual growth are never at odds, but are two sides of a life lived in service to God and neighbor.

The identity of our Lutheran schools is found in the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord. By weaving the Word of God into the fabric of our day, we prepare students not just for a career, but for a life of faith, grounded in the certainty of God's love and the joy of His gifts.

WITNESSING FOR LIFE



Many people braved the winter cold to gather for the March for Life in Fort Wayne on Jan. 31. Their dedication and steadfast support created a powerful witness. A heartfelt thank you to everyone from our LCMS congregations who represented our district and helped strengthen the mission.

PRAYER LIST

WEEK OF MARCH 2
Circuit 23 – Louisville-East
- Divine Savior, Shepherdsville
- Faith, Louisville
- Good Shepherd, Bardstown
- Holy Cross, Shelbyville
- Holy Trinity, LaGrange
- Our Savior, Louisville
- Peace, Louisville
- Risen Lord, Taylorsville

MINISTRY: 4Kenyas Kids, New Haven and Avon
LCMS DISTRICT: Wyoming

WEEK OF MARCH 9
Circuit 1 – Hammond
- Faith, DeMotte
- Good Shepherd, Gary
- Grace, Dyer
- Redeemer, Highland
- St. John, Gary
- St. Paul's, Munster
- Trinity, Crown Point
- Trinity, Hammond
- Trinity, Lowell
- Trinity Memorial, Merrillville

RSO: Lutheran Community Home, Seymour
LCMS DISTRICT: Atlantic

WEEK OF MARCH 16
Circuit 2 – Valparaiso
- Faith, Valparaiso
- Gloria Dei, Valparaiso
- Heritage, Valparaiso
- Immanuel, Michigan City
- Immanuel, Valparaiso
- Prince of Peace, Valparaiso
- St. Paul, Chesterton
- St. Paul, Kouts
- St. Peter, Portage
- Trinity, Hobart

RSO: Lutheran Family and Child Services of IN/KY
LCMS DISTRICT: California/Nevada/Hawaii

WEEK OF MARCH 23
Circuit 3 – LaPorte
- Emmanuel, Wheatfield
- First, Hanna
- Immanuel–Tracy, Hamlet
- Our Redeemer, Knox

- St. John, LaCrosse
- St. John, Wanatah
- St. John's, LaPorte
- St. Luke, Winamac
- St. Mark, Medaryville
- St. Matthew, Hamlet
- St. Paul-Denham, Winamac
- St. Peter, North Judson

MINISTRY: Lutherans For Life
LCMS DISTRICT: Central Illinois

WEEK OF MARCH 30
Circuit 4 – South Bend
- Calvary, Plymouth
- Emmaus, South Bend
- Our Redeemer, South Bend
- Prince of Peace, Goshen
- Redeemer, Warsaw
- St. Paul, South Bend
- St. Paul–Woodland, Mishawaka
- St. Paul's, Bremen
- St. Peter, Mishawaka
- St. Peter's, Warsaw
- Trinity, Culver
- Trinity, Elkhart

RSO: Lutheran Life Villages, Fort Wayne
LCMS DISTRICT: Eastern

Anniversaries *(50 and over)*

Calvary, Indianapolis
Ron and Linda Heckman, 58, March 2

Concordia, Louisville, Ky.
Don and Jan Parson, 56, March 14

Cornerstone, Carmel
Chris and Sandy Keller, 52, March 9
Jeffrey and Janet Lefton, 59, March 11
Bill and Carolyn Fair, 68, March 15
Gayle and Nancy Carlson, 56, March 21
Greg and Ranee Pritz, 51, March 21

Emanuel, Dudleytown
Bill and Debra Acton, 53, March 30

Emmanuel, Fort Wayne
Steve and Janet Mueller, 53, March 3

Epiphany, Westfield
Jack and Maridean Carrington, 66, Feb. 6
Jon and Gwen Dossett, 65, Jan. 28

Grace, New Albany
John and Jackie Lambert, 58, March 1
Robert and Carol Fischer, 63, March 2
Steve and Nan Burton, 56, March 20
James and Claudia Atwood, 54, March 25

Heritage, Valparaiso
Ricky and Carol Skaggs, 52, March 22

Immanuel, Seymour
Rex and Rita Robinson, 52, March 2
Pete and Pamela Moss, 53, March 3
John and Rhea Allman, 60, March 8
Mike and Rita Stuckwisch, 56, March 28
Gene and Linda Emily, 62, March 29
Richard and Barbara Runge, 63, March 30

Redeemer, Seymour
Joe and Debra Hutchens, 51, March 16
Joe and Marilyn Johnson, 66, March 26

Shepherd of the Hills, Georgetown
Rev. Chuck and Elaine Fischer, 58, March 16
Bill and Ruth Pierce, 57, Feb. 21

St. John–Bingen, Decatur
Lynn and Sandy Selking, 54, March 18

St. John, Lanesville
Jim and Joyce Action, 54, Feb. 19
Melvin and Alice Hancock, 67, Jan. 16
Joe and Lula Hiser, 73, Jan. 24

St. John, Vincennes
Ed and Betty Doll, 51, March 15

St. Michael, Fort Wayne
Rich and Linda Kraus, 54, March 11
Jim and Diana Sims, 62, March 29

St. Paul's, Fort Wayne
Jim and Gloria Nash, 60, March 19
Glenn and Janet Hunt, 50, March 20

St. Peter's, Brownstown
Dave and Pam Spurgeon, 56, March 29

St. Peter's, Fort Wayne
William and Sharon Kammeyer, 61, March 28

Trinity, Crown Point
Bryan and Julie Boettger, 51, March 15

Trinity, Fort Wayne
Steve and Marna Davis, 57, March 15
Cliff and Carol Mason, 65, March 25

Zion–Friedheim, Decatur
Jim and Ruth Heckman, 50, Feb. 7
Jim and Cheryl Bultemeyer, 61, Feb. 13

Zion, Woodburn
Dave and Sandy Bradtmiller, 57, March 22

Birthdays *(90 and over)*

Calvary, Bedford
Selma Kluender, 90, Dec. 22

Calvary, Plymouth
Wilma Stamberger, 95, March 20

Christ Lutheran, Woodburn
Paul Goeglein, 93, March 6

Concordia, Greenwood
Helen Judd, 95, March 31

Concordia, Louisville, Ky.
Jo Roehrig, 99, March 24
Ed Durr, 90, Feb. 18

Cornerstone, Carmel
Beverly Dahlmann, 94, March 3
Roland Preuss, 99, March 5
Jean Rump, 92, March 27
Charles Theiss, 90, March 27

Emmanuel, Fort Wayne
Edith Lesh, 92, March 10

Epiphany, Westfield
Jack Carrington, 92, Feb. 21

Grace, New Albany
Joyce Matthey, 90, March 3
Rev. Henry Loppnow, 91, March 6

Holy Cross, Fort Wayne
Richard Kierstead, 92, Feb. 19

Immanuel, Seymour
Ora Lee Schwade, 96, March 1
Elvira Schafer, 94, March 5
Elvera Duwe, 91, March 11
Harold Kysar, 105, March 16
Harold Hackman, 90, March 29

Redeemer, Seymour
Mary Duncan, 91, Feb. 1
Rolland Rebber, 95, Feb. 25

St. John–Bingen, Decatur
Lora Hormann, 91, March 2

St. John's, Lanesville
Bernice Barnickle, 97, March 17

St. Paul's, Fort Wayne
Ernestine Morrison, 92, March 10
Roland Kerr, 90, March 20

St. Peter's, Brownstown
Frances Holle, 94, March 7

St. Peter, North Judson
Beverly Wallace, 90, March 31

St. Michael, Fort Wayne
Darrell Jenkins, 93, March 29

Trinity, Crown Point
Bethany Smith, 94, March 7

Trinity, Fort Wayne
Lorene Hilgemann, 93, March 26

Zion–Friedheim, Decatur
Delmar Heckman, 98, March 4
Doris Conrad, 96, Feb. 14
Merilyn Stoppenhagen, 92, Feb. 18
Marilyn Buuck, 93, Jan. 27
Jim Crosby, 96, Jan. 29

Zion, Woodburn
Gary Krueger, 91, March 7
Verdonna Woebbeking, 91, March 31

LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

CSP offering free tuition for church work students

Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP), Minn., is strengthening its commitment to the church through an expanded Church Work Tuition Guarantee, offering $0 tuition for all students preparing for full-time church work vocations. This initiative affirms CSP's long-standing mission to prepare workers for the church wherever and however they are called to serve.

"This commitment reflects who we are and what we value — affordable tuition, outstanding faculty and a robust, confessionally Lutheran curriculum," said Rev. Dr. Mark Koschmann, CSP chief mission officer. "Our prayerful hope is that this removes financial barriers so that more students can joyfully prepare for lives of service in the church, strengthened by the gifts God has entrusted to them."

Through this commitment, CSP seeks to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent students from responding to God's call into church work. "We pray that this commitment to ensuring an affordable, Christ-centered Lutheran education will bless countless students now and in the years to come," said Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, CSP president. "We are grateful to CSP's many friends and alumni who generously support our students through scholarships and endowments, which help us underwrite their educational costs."

Read *Book of Concord* online for free

Concordia Publishing House (CPH) recently announced the launch of an online version of the Book of Concord (BOC), available at no cost at **bookofconcord.cph.org**. The reaction across social media after the announcement was uniformly enthusiastic:

- "A beautiful gift for the church!"
- "Way to go, CPH! Thanks for another wonderful resource for life and ministry."
- "This is awesome! Thank you, CPH!"

"What sets the *Book of Concord Online* apart is that it features the text of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*," said Jonathan D. Schultz, CPH president and CEO. "For over 20 years, this has been the most widely used and trusted version of our Confessions. We are thrilled to be making it freely available online."

The new *BOC* website makes the historic documents of the *Book of Concord* — containing the foundational writings of the Lutheran confessors — available to all on a user-friendly, digital platform. The text provided on the website is from *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, second edition, by CPH. A press release from CPH describes it as "a revised and updated version of the translation originally prepared by William H. T. Dau and G. Friedrich Bente for the *Concordia Triglotta* to ensure both theological fidelity and readability for today's readers."

"The *Book of Concord*'s faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures allows it to be central to the teaching and witness of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod," said the Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine, vice-president of publishing for CPH. "By making it available online, we hope to encourage faithful teaching and study, and bold confession of the Christian faith."

Some key features of the new website include:

- The ability to easily copy and paste text with a single click. When pasted, the excerpt automatically includes a proper citation.
- A clear sidebar menu that allows users to quickly locate specific documents and sections, with simple toggles to move between previous and subsequent sections.
- The ability to search by word, phrase or article/paragraph number. Users can also filter results by individual confessional document for more precise study.
- Scripture passages, displayed in the English Standard Version (ESV), that appear directly on the page when the citation is hovered over, allowing readers to engage biblical references without leaving the text.

Send questions to **publicity@cph.org**.

Stewardship

LENT IS FOR YOU

Ken Schilf
Holy Cross,
Fort Wayne

We are in the heart of Lent. Just as Advent prepares us for Christ, we should use the 40 days of Lent to draw us closer to our Savior.

A Christian steward can prepare our hearts in a variety of ways. Here are three ways to learn more about Jesus and come closer to Him:

- **READ** about Jesus in the Scriptures. In the New Testament, we find firsthand accounts of Jesus Christ's ministry and examples of what to do.
- **WORSHIP** Him in church, a place to find refuge from the chaos and distractions of the world.
- **SERVE.** Christ "...went about doing good" (Acts 10:38b). He was constantly serving others. He spent time with the sick, the afflicted, the poor and the hungry. He did this because He loved all. We can strive to treat others like Jesus did.

In essence, this last one involves the 3 T's of Stewardship, which are Time, Talent and Treasures. You can serve in a number of ways. You can give to your church, which may reach out to the community through a food bank, clothing bank or gift cards, among other initiatives. You can personally do things for your neighbor, such as mowing the yard, changing the oil, running errands, painting the inside or outside of their house, or reading Scripture or devotions to them. The list is endless (ref. James 2:14-26).

All of these are good works. But the purpose is to draw you closer to your Savior and give you an opportunity to share the Gospel. Happy serving, servant!

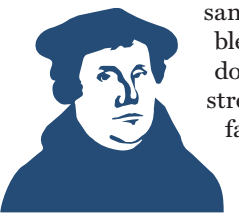
MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

within the public gathering of the congregation. Luther recognizes the necessity of both keys, according to Christ's institution (St. Matthew 16, 18; St. John 20). "Where you see sins forgiven or reproved in some persons, be it publicly or privately, you may know that God's people are there." *(Luther's Works AE 41, 153)*

The fifth mark of the church is the Office of the Holy Ministry, to which ministers of the Word, bishops, pastors or preachers are called and consecrated. For such men "publicly and privately give, administer, and use the aforementioned four things or holy possessions in behalf of and in the name of the Church, or rather by reason of their institution by Christ." *(Luther's Works AE 41, 154)*

The sixth mark of the church, as Dr. Luther describes, is "prayer, public praise, and thanksgiving to God." Note that such "prayer" encompasses the Word of God that is first of all taught, which is then echoed back to Him and to others as a confession of faith in what He has spoken. So, for example, Luther cites the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Our Father and the Psalms, all of which are taught and then prayed, confessed and sung to the praise and glory of God. Where you see these precious things "and the catechism used in public, you may rest assured that a holy Christian people of God are present," as all things are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (1 Tim. 4:5). *(Luther's Works AE 41, 164)*



> "This is the principal item, and the holiest of holy possessions, by reason of which the Christian people are called holy; for God's Word is holy and sanctifies everything it touches"
>
> **— Martin Luther, on the Word of God**

The seventh mark of the church is "the holy possession of the sacred cross," whereby Dr. Luther indicates the trials and tribulations that Christians endure "from the devil, the world, and the flesh," all for the sake of Christ and His Word. Paradoxically, this bearing and suffering of the holy cross "is a holy possession whereby the Holy Spirit not only sanctifies His people, but also blesses them." For not only does it mortify the flesh and strengthen repentance and faith within heart, mind, body, soul and spirit, but it is also a privileged sharing in the glory of Christ Jesus. *(Luther's Works AE 41, 164-165)*

These seven marks Luther identifies with the first three commandments of the Decalogue, that is, with those pertaining to our relationship with the one true God. He then goes on to describe "other outward signs that identify the Christian Church, namely, those signs whereby the Holy Spirit sanctifies us according to the second table of Moses." Here Luther has in mind that, by the Word of the Law we "discern how far the Holy Spirit has advanced us in His work of sanctification and by how much we still fall short of the goal." For in this life under the cross, "we must constantly grow in sanctification and always become new creatures in Christ." *(Luther's Works AE 41, 166)*

However, God's people do not rely upon the fruits of repentance, faith and sanctification, but solely upon His Word and promises in Christ.