

# Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION  
OF THE WORD OF GOD



**Psalms 119:105**  
**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path.**

December 2019

## Glory to God in the Highest

Pastor Don Salo

New York Mills, Minnesota

*And the angel said unto them, fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

**Luke 2:10-11**

**L**ONG BEFORE THIS, a Savior was promised. In fact, the Savior was already present in creation. John 1:1: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In the fullness of time this Word became flesh. John 1:14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father,) full of grace and truth.*

The all-knowing God knew that the man He would create in His own image would need a Savior. In due time Adam and Eve fell into sin, thus creating the need for a Savior. The eternal God in His love promised them and all mankind a Savior, the seed of a woman that would bruise the serpent's head. After the Fall, all have fallen short of the glory of God and are in need of a Savior.

In the Old Testament, the altar worship was a figure of that which was to come according to God's promise. Much blood was shed in that form of worship, but it was not the true sacrifice God had promised. These sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again. Annually the high priest would take blood and enter into the holiest of all and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat for the sins of the people. The big difference is that Jesus shed His blood once for all. He did not have to repeat the work of redemption yearly.

The time had now arrived for the Savior to be born. Everything takes place according to God's calendar. The angel visited Zacharias as he ministered in the temple. Though he and his wife Elisabeth were old, they had a child. It was here that a son was promised to them. His name would be John, and he would be the forerunner of Jesus the Savior. Luke 1:17: *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

The same angel then appeared to Mary and spoke to her of her part in God's plan of salvation. Luke 1:30: *And the angel*



*The Shepherds and the Angel*  
Carl Bloch, Wikimedia Commons

*said unto her, fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. There had been many years of darkness from the time of Malachi, the last prophet in the Old Testament. The time had come for Light to come into the world.*

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not:*

*for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:7-11)*

There was much joy in heaven that night. Luke 2:13-14: *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

May we always share the same joy because our Savior has come and redeemed us. The very purpose of His coming was that we could be reconciled back to the Father.

Jesus in due time completed the work of redemption on the cross of Calvary. He took all of our sins on Himself and paid for them through His suffering and death. His blood was shed once for all so it does not have to be repeated over and over, as in the Old Testament. When we come to this, in repentance our sins are washed away and God remembers them no more. God who is love, has now set us free to believe unto the salvation of our soul. Now we can rejoice with the angels in heaven because we are born again with a lively hope of eternal life with the Lover of our souls.

The Christian Church has been called to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Not only do we share it at Christmas and Good Friday and Easter, but every day of the year. We are not to be ashamed of the Gospel but to proclaim it loud and clear to all the world. May God bless the gospel message into our hearts this Christmas season. ~

# The Word Made Flesh

C.O. Rosenius

*And the Word was made flesh...*

*John 1:14*

**T**HE ETERNAL WORD was made flesh! The eternal Son of God becomes a true man. But not a sinful man.

Born of a woman. The one born of a true, natural woman He is a true, real human being. The eternal Son of God partakes in humanity. So that His tribe and relatives are counted among the descendants of Adam, as the first page of the New Testament shows. The Son of God is our relative, our kinsman “like unto his brethren” (Hebrews 2:17), except for sin. Inconceivable love of God! He decided on such a strange and gracious way for our salvation!

Reason fails to comprehend the mystery of the eternal Son of God becoming kinsman, our brother! Is it true? Is it possible? I cannot understand it. But I cannot get rid of it either. My thoughts are snared as if by a net of eternal incomprehensibility, but I also cannot escape witnesses. And the matter is so important that all Christianity stands or falls with it. And so does our salvation and eternal bliss. On one hand it is something far too great and glorious that we poor, fallen human children would be so highly esteemed and honored, that the eternal Son of God would be our brother and kinsman. So that I cannot believe it for its grandeur.

On the other hand this stumbling stone is too heavy for me to throw away. There stands an entire world of witnesses to Him. First the long age of prophecies. And thereafter an age of fulfillment at the right time of all that had been prophesied. Can I reject that person altogether — the person that is the object of all these prophecies and fulfillment? “The stone of which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner” (Matthew 21:42). Shall I try to throw it away? Or can I reject what my own eyes see today of His kingdom on earth? Can I reject that I myself have experienced of this faithful Lord?

Oh, no! He is a living and present God. We know Him as revealed in the flesh. Because no man knows the Father except the Son (Matthew 11:27). But can I then believe that God has become revealed in the flesh? It is too great and



*Adoration of the Shepherds*  
Gerard van Honthorst, Wikimedia Commons

glorious! But it is an eternal and divine truth — the truth that is certain, no matter what reason has to say. Yes, praise God, that we cannot understand it! That we do not have such a small God that our poor, blind reason can follow Him. May God preserve us from having a god that cannot exceed our intellect! But the problem is that the poor, fallen and narrow heart cannot keep this inexpressible treasure and joy. If I could keep this great truth living in my heart — that the eternal Son of God is our kinsman, our brother — then I would not want

anything more. Then I would have enough. Yes, enough for this present time and enough for eternity. Not even one sad thought would be able to get room in my heart anymore. My heart would want to burst with great joy. Because if fallen mankind has been so honored, that the eternal Son of God has become one of us, become our kinsmen — oh, then I do not want to know more! Then mankind is honored and exalted above all angels and thrones! Than one may say that the damage and debasement we have suffered through the Fall has been abundantly avenged. So now it is an honor to be a human being. Yes, and the blessed angels certainly have reason for desiring: “Oh, if I were a man!” It is true what Luther remarks: “Since the Son of God became man, it should also have the fruit and effect on us that we would sincerely love and rejoice at everything that is called a human being. And we should never more be able to feel ill-affected towards any member of mankind.”

In order to get consolation and encouragement in the contradictions of life, Christians should dwell more deeply into this discourse. They should pray to God for understanding, so that they would be able to say with wonder and joy: “Now I do not want anything more! The Son of God is a man.” Then everything shall be well. If the Son of God has become our kinsmen, then I sense a greater love for us human beings in the heart of God than we usually think. Then it cannot be as it often seems to us, that God is far and indifferent. No, then there must be some deep purpose when He takes such an attitude as if He does not care about us. ~

## 2020 Apostolic Lutheran Church Calendars



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*Corrie Karlsen, ALC Calendar Committee*



# Unto You Is Born a Savior

Martin Luther

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

**Luke 2:10-11**

**T**HIS IS OUR THEOLOGY, which we preach in order that we may understand what the angel wants. Mary bore the child, took it to her breast and nursed it, and the Father in heaven has his Son, lying in the manger and the mother's lap. Why did God do all this? Why does Mary guard the child as a mother should? And reason answers: in order that we may make an idol of her, that honor may be paid to the mother. Mary becomes all this without her knowledge and consent, and all the songs and glory and honor are addressed to the mother. And yet the text does not sound forth the honor of the mother, for the angel says, "I bring to you good news of great joy; for to you is born this day the Savior." I am to accept the child and His birth and forget the mother, as far as this is possible, although her part cannot be forgotten, for where there is a birth there must also be a mother. Nevertheless, we dare not put our faith in the mother but only in the fact that the child was born. And the angel desired that we should see nothing but the child which is born, just as the angels themselves, as though they were blind, saw nothing but the child born of the virgin, and desired that all created things should be as nothing compared with this child, that we should see nothing, be it harps, gold, goods, honor, power, and the like which we would prefer before their message. For if I received the costliest and the best in the world, it still does not have the name of Savior.

And if the Turk were ten times stronger than he is, he could not for one moment save me from my infirmity, to say nothing of the peril of death, and even less from the smallest sin or from death itself. In my sin, my death, I must take leave of all created things. No, sun, moon, stars, all creatures, physicians, emperors, kings, wise men and potentates cannot help me. When I die I shall see nothing but black darkness, and yet that light, "To you is born this day the Savior," remains in my eyes and fills all heaven and earth. The Savior will help me when all have forsaken me. When the heavens and the stars and all creatures stare at me with horrible mien, I see nothing in heaven and earth but this child.

So great should that light which declares that He is my Savior become in my eyes that I can say: Mary, you did not bear this child for yourself alone. The child is not yours; you did not bring him forth for yourself, but for me, even though



you are His mother, even though you held Him in your arms and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and picked Him up and laid Him down. But I have a greater honor than your honor as His mother. For your honor pertains to your motherhood of the body of the child, but my honor is this, that you have my treasure, so that I know none, neither men nor angels, who can help me except this child whom you, O Mary, hold in your arms. If a man could put out of his mind all that he is and has except this child, and if for him everything—money, goods, power, or honor—fades into darkness and he despises everything on earth compared with this child, so that heaven with its stars and earth with all its power and all its treasures becomes nothing to him, that man would have the true gain and fruit of this message of the angel. And for us the time must come when suddenly all will be darkness and we shall know nothing but this message of the angel: "I bring to you good news of great joy; for to you is born this day the Savior."

One who hears the message of the angel and believes it will be filled with fear, like the shepherds. True, it is too high for me to believe that I should come into this treasure without any merit on my part. And yet, so it must be. In the papacy this message was not preached in the pulpit, and I am afraid that it will disappear again. It was the other message that the devil initiated and has allowed to remain in the papacy. All their hymns are to this effect. Among the Turks the devil has completely wiped it out. Therefore, remember it, sing it, and learn it, while there is still time! I fear that the time will come when we shall not be allowed to hear, believe, and sing this message in public, and the time has already come when it is no longer understood; though Satan does not allow it to be spoken with the mouth, as the papists do. But when it comes to declaring that He is born for you and to singing: *In dulci júbilo, [In quiet joy] Now sing with hearts aglow! Our delight and pleasure Lies in a manger, Like sunshine is our treasure In the mother's lap, Thou art Alpha and Omega!* this he is unwilling to allow.

What we have said, then, has been about that second faith, which is not only to believe in Mary's Son, but rather that He who lies in the virgin's lap is our Savior, that you accept this and give thanks to God, who so loved you that He gave you a Savior who is yours. And for a sign He sent the angel from heaven to proclaim Him, in order that nothing else should be preached except that this child is the Savior and far better than heaven and earth. Him, therefore, we should acknowledge and accept; confess Him as our Savior in every need, call upon Him, and never doubt that He will save us from all misfortune. Amen.

***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.***

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

For if the days of a man should be many as all the days of the world from Adam to the end of the ages, and he should sit and meditate upon the Holy Scriptures, he would not comprehend all the force of the depth of the words. And man cannot rise up to the wisdom of God...

*Aphrahat, a Syriac Christian author of the third century*

# Good Tidings of Great Joy

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you. I do hope you are well. If you are not well, I pray you feel better soon.

The year is going by quickly and the season of Christmas is upon us. It is a wonderful time of year when we stop and remember the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Let's look in St. Luke, chapter 2. We will be using verses from there in today's reading.

**T**HE DAY IS GOING ON as usual and there is the sound of hoof beats, soldiers most likely. The people wonder, "What is the meaning of this?" It is a herald bringing news of a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world is to be counted. *St Luke 2:3: And all went to be taxed (counted), every one into his own city.*

Joseph must leave Nazareth with his espoused wife Mary and go to Bethlehem, because he is of the house and lineage (ancestry) of David. Mary is great with child, of the Holy Ghost. (In St. Luke 1:31, Mary is told by an angel that she would have a son, who they shall call JESUS.)

Provisions are made and Joseph and Mary set out for Bethlehem. It will be a long 3-4 day journey for them. I'm supposing they probably took a donkey to carry their things and even Mary so she did not have to walk the whole way.

They stopped along the way with many other travelers and camped each night, weary and so ready to rest. They slept under the stars and I'm sure lay awake wondering about this baby within Mary's womb. When will He come? What will He be like? It was close to the time and Mary was feeling that it could be any day.

Morning comes and they arise, eat from their provisions and begin on their way once again.

Alas! Up ahead, Bethlehem is in view. Just a little more and they will need to look for a place to spend the night. It has been a wearying journey and Mary is in need of rest.

Joseph hears some anxious sounds from Mary; it is time for the baby to come.

Joseph hurries to find a room and asks at many a door, even the INN, "Do you have any room? My wife is in need," only to hear from each person who answers each knock, "No room." BUT wait, one man has a place for them. He has a stable where cattle are fed and here Joseph makes Mary as comfortable as he can.

Night comes, and the quiet of the stable is broken with a mother in travail followed by the sweet sound of a baby's cry.

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field (tending sheep in the surrounding fields for a long time), keeping watch over their flock by night. (Luke 2:7-8)*

All of a sudden an angel of the Lord appears in the sky above them, and *the glory of the Lord shone round about them.* What is happening? The shepherds are very scared. This is something they have never seen before and it certainly shakes up their peaceful night.

Then they hear the angel speak: *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, which shall be to all*

*people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is CHRIST THE LORD. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (v. 10-12)*

The shepherds with their cloak-covered heads listen to the salutation, thinking on it and wondering. They are quite amazed. As they taking it all in, SUDDENLY in the sky there are a large number of heavenly messengers praising God, and saying, *GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.* As quickly as they came, the angels went away from them into heaven. The darkness of night once more is all around them and the stars shine overhead. It is far from quiet now as the sheep bleat and the shepherds talk with excited voices over what they had just seen and heard. They say to one another, *Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass. Which the Lord hath made known unto us. (v. 15)*

These shepherds did not walk, they run, and they find Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. It is just as the angel had said. They slowly come near to witness this amazing scene and bow the knee. They are bowing before Christ the Lord. In awe they come, and in wonder and joy they go back to the sheep in the fields.

They tell everyone they meet along the way about what they have seen and heard. It is all too wonderful to keep to themselves. Everyone who hears them tell it, wonders at those things. *But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. (v. 19)*



*Angels Announcing the Birth of Christ to the Shepherds*  
Govert Flinck, Wikimedia Commons

What a night that must have been! The people at this time did not know that the wonder of this child's birth would change the world for all time.

The remembrance of this wonderful happening would turn to sadness when Christ the Lord would be crucified. Then joy would return when He would rise again having victory over death, hell and the grave, with the joy of a promise of eternal life for ALL who will believe on JESUS.

**Rejoice all you who believe, for our Lord is come and He came to save. The best Christmas gift is JESUS!**

We can be happy and free with Jesus in our hearts.

I want to wish you a very blessed and happy Christmas!

*God's peace to you all.*

# The Purpose of Holy Scriptures

Paul Kretzmann

*But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* 2 Timothy 3:14-17

**T**HESE WORDS PLACE Timothy in direct opposition to the hypocrites and false teachers; for his faith and the work of his ministry are emphasized: "Thou, however, remain in the things thou hast learned and hast been convinced of, knowing from whom thou hast learned." Timothy is not to think that there is any such thing as development of doctrine, advancement in the truth by means of human philosophy and investigation. He has learned the truth of the Word of God, and that truth is an eternal truth. Of this Gospel-message he has been made certain; as Paul had taught it, he had been so fully persuaded of its truth that his faith rested upon it as upon the most solid foundation. Moreover, Timothy knew who it was that had taught him, he was convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that Paul was a teacher sent from God, who did not disseminate his own ideas and opinions, but knew exactly what the content of the Gospel was, namely, the message of redemption through the merits of Jesus Christ.

But Paul, in his great humility, does not take all the credit for Timothy's instruction, but, as in chapter 1:5, refers also to other teachers: "(Knowing) also that from infancy thou knowest the Holy Scriptures, that are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." From his earliest childhood, from his infancy, Timothy had enjoyed the glorious privilege of being instructed and trained in the words of salvation. The term used by the apostle is one which was commonly used to designate the writings of the Old Testament, as they were in use among the Jews at that time. Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, had taken special care to have the boy learn these writings, as was the custom among the faithful Jews in those days. The knowledge which Timothy had was taken from the Word of God and rested upon the Word of God; his learning had given him a thorough familiarity with the wonderful truths of God. Note that the instruction of Timothy in religion was not postponed to late childhood or youth, but was undertaken as soon as he was able to learn. No wonder he had the knowledge which could give him the proper wisdom, namely, that which leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. In the Word of Holy Writ there is the power of God unto salvation, because it teaches that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. Through this knowledge and certainty, however, which assures every individual believer that Christ is his Redeemer, he gains that knowledge which gives him salvation. The apostle expresses himself in such a manner as to imply that Timothy and every true Christian uses the Gospel continually. The joyful confidence of faith will remain firm and unmoved only if the Christian continues in the Word of the Lord day after day, always refreshing and deepening his knowledge, always providing new fuel for the lamp of his faith.

What the apostle has stated concerning the Holy Scriptures, of the power of God in them, of their glorious purpose and blessing, he summarizes in a powerful sentence, which is a strong bulwark for the inspiration of the Old Testament: "All Scripture, inspired by God, is also profitable." The term used by the apostle is so general it seems to include not only the books of the Old Testament, as in use in the Jewish Church, but also the writings then being penned by inspiration of God, the gospels and the letters of the various apostles and evangelists. At any rate, there can be no doubt the so-called Old Testament canon is the inspired Word of God. St. Paul writes that Scripture was inspired by God, not in the manner of a mechanical transmission, but in such a way that God breathed His holy Gospel, His Word, into the minds of the writers, incidentally making use of their intellect, of their mental ability and equipment, in producing a series of books which plainly show the peculiarities of the writers, and yet are, word for word, the product of God Himself.

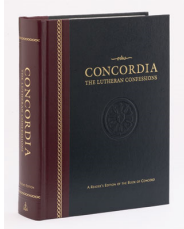
Of this Scripture, which has the unique distinction of having been inspired by God in the manner just indicated, the apostle writes that it is profitable for doctrine, for teaching. Its truths are so clear and simple that this Book is a textbook of eternal truths for all time. It is profitable and should be used for reproof, for the refutation of error, for the exposure of transgression. Because so many heresies are continually arising, because false doctrine persists in rearing its head, it is necessary that the Christian, and especially the teacher, be able to point out the falseness of all claims of that kind, from clear texts of the Bible itself. Holy Writ should be used for correction, for setting men right after they have fallen, to bring them back to a normal condition. It is the duty of Christians to reveal the transgressions of God's holy will, to insist on the removal of sins and weaknesses, always in the manner prescribed by the Word of God. For instruction in righteousness Holy Writ should be used, it should enable a person to lead a life in thorough conformity with the righteousness of life that pleases God. The Word of God in this respect performs the function of a good schoolmaster, one that not only shows the right way, but also trains, encourages, urges the pupils on in their efforts to make headway. Day after day a Christian is sitting at the feet of the Holy Spirit, receiving from Him all the instructions which he needs to enable him to walk in the paths of rectitude.

In this way the final object of the Word of God in this life will be realized, namely, that perfect be the man of God, toward every good work fully equipped. It is not that the apostle is dreaming of moral perfection, but that he wants every Christian, and especially every Christian teacher, to live up to the requirements of his office and station according to God's will. The man of God, every person that bears the honoring title of a man of God, every believer that has become the special property, the child of God, through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, is here included. Thoroughly instructed, furnished, equipped toward every good work, that is the ideal which the apostle holds before our eyes. Believers find their greatest delight in performing the will of God, in doing such works as will please Him. That is the wonderful value and power of the inspired Word of God. ~



# Book Recommendation: *The Book of Concord*

Pastor Gene Mixon  
Pasco, Washington



DR. C.F.W. WALTHER WROTE: “The *Book of Concord* should be in every Lutheran home. If a person isn’t familiar with this book, he’ll think, ‘That old book is just for pastors. I don’t have to preach. After working all day, I can’t sit down and study in the evening. If I read my morning and

evening devotions, that’s enough.’ No, that is not enough! The Lord doesn’t want us to remain children, blown to and fro by every wind of doctrine; instead of that, He wants us to grow in knowledge so that we can teach others.”

Several years ago, Concordia Publishing House released *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader’s Edition of the Book of Concord*. Their website says this book “is a remarkable achievement in Lutheran publishing. Find helpful introductions, insightful notes and annotations, and new tools and guides to aid your reading and comprehension. Encounter the dramatic history and heroic persons associated with the various documents in the Lutheran Confessions. The *Book of Concord* is the authoritative collection of the Lutheran Church’s statements of faith. It contains documents which Lutheran Christians have used since the sixteenth century to explain, defend, and advance their witness to the truth of God’s Word.

“Nothing is more important than clearly confessing and bearing witness to the truths of God’s Word, which reveals the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That is what the *Book of Concord* is all about. This edition of the Lutheran Confessions will instruct, inspire, and educate all who use it and help them learn what it means to be, and to remain, a confessing Christian.”

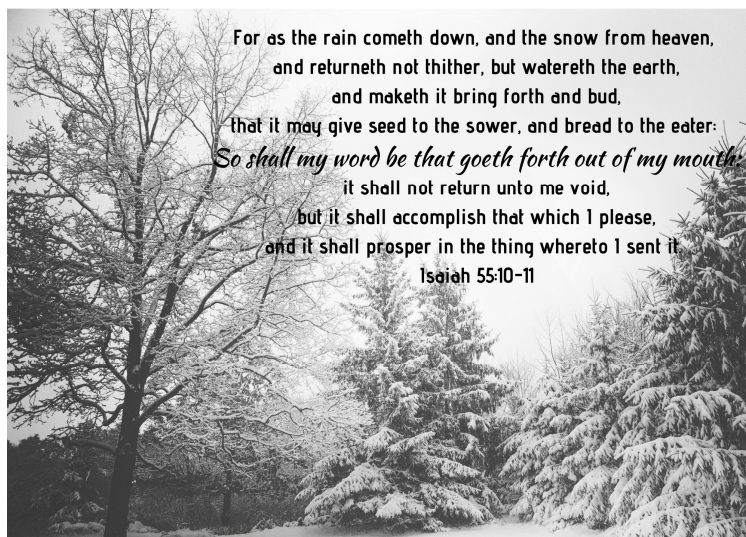
Our confession must be a biblical confession, not based on our own opinions or dictated by our emotions in the face

of persecution. *1 Peter 3:15: But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.* Our blessed Lord during His earthly ministry indicated the importance of a faithful confession, *Matthew 10:32-33: Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.* The Hebrew writer directs us to consider the words of our spiritual fathers, *Hebrews 13:7-9: Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

Dear brothers and sisters in faith, I encourage you to familiarize yourselves with the *Book of Concord*. The three Ecumenical Creeds and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church uphold God’s Word as the highest authority. They do not replace the Word of God, they elevate God’s Word above men’s opinions and emotions as God’s eternal means of grace, Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit Himself establishes this truth in our lives as our Lord promised us, *John 15:26: But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.*

As you continue to grow in grace and the knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by exercising yourselves in the eternal Word of God, I encourage you to avail yourselves of the clear biblical statement of Christian faith that is found in the *Book of Concord*.

God’s peace!



For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven,  
and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth,  
and maketh it bring forth and bud,  
that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:  
*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:*  
it shall not return unto me void,  
but it shall accomplish that which I please,  
and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.  
Isaiah 55:10-11

**T**HIS PARAGRAPH IS spoken in part for the confutation of the stubborn, in part for the consolation of the weak. For consolation, because the Word seems so weak and foolish that there appears to be no strength in it. How can it be believed that all the power, victory, and triumph of God are in the word of a feeble human mouth? And so He comes to meet this scandal of the weak and the stubborn. For all the enemies say, “Do you really think that everything depends on the Word? We must act, work, and think.” Here the text confounds their thoughts. He does not say, “Our works and our thoughts do this,” but, “My Word.” It is therefore a consolation for the purpose of listing up the weak, lest they be offended at the lowliness of God, who has every victory in His Word.

At the same time He provides an illustration: As they come down. Rain and snow are not useless, but they water the earth, giving seed to the sower. The rain can

achieve everything for the earth. “So also My Word accomplishes everything.” The effect is the same. For neither one is understood. Reason says, “The strength belongs not to the rain and snow but to the earth.” But when we experience the absence of rain, we see what the earth produces. So He takes away the glory of the earth and shows that it is not the earth that does it but that it is accomplished by the rain. So our building and promotion of the church is not the result of our works but of the Word of God which we preach... Here you see that everything is produced by the Word.

Martin Luther

# Fear, Love, and Trust in God

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

**“I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.”**

In the first article of the Apostles' Creed, we see God's majesty and glory in creation. These first article gifts teach us to fear, love and trust God in His divine power and works. When we consider our great God we find that He is Almighty, we are powerless. He is divine, we are human. He is holy and sinless, we are sinners.

And this may bring fear to our hearts.

*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. **Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.** For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalm 33:6-9)*

**“I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD; WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY; SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED; HE DESCENDED INTO HELL; THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD; HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY; FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK (LIVING) AND THE DEAD.”**

In the second article of the Apostles' Creed, we see God's humility in His Incarnation. These second article gifts teach us to fear, love and trust God in His mercy. God becomes human. Jesus Christ takes on flesh. He becomes one of us, yet without sin. He fulfills the Law that we cannot keep. He takes our sin upon Himself, and pays the debt we could never pay. He is crucified for us, dies for us, is buried for us. The third day, He rises from death, victorious over sin, death and the devil. He ascends to the right hand of the Father, interceding for us, and, in due time, He will return to judge the living and the dead.

And we fear, love and trust Him, because He first loved us.

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God,*

*but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. **We love him, because he first loved us.** (1 John 4:7-19)*

**“I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST; THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS; THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY; AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.”**

In the third article of the Apostles' Creed, we see God's continual goodness toward us. These third article gifts teach us to fear, love and trust God in His daily grace and goodness. His Holy Spirit abides with us. He calls us by the Gospel and enlightens us with His gifts. He keeps us in faith and in fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the saints — both the believers who live today and those who have gone before. He forgives us, day after day after day. He promises, in the resurrection at the Last Day, that our bodies will rise from death to live eternally.

And we fear, love and trust His goodness and rejoice in it.



*Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. **The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.***

*Psalm 28:6-7*

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Send **articles for publication** to:

Lois Matson, Editor

Email: [cm@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:cm@apostoliclutheran.org)

Phone: (360) 904-6951

Postal Mail to:

CHRISTIAN MONTHLY

PO Box 2126

Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA

Address **subscriptions, payments, and Book Concern orders** to:

Anders & Clara Sundqvist, Managers  
THE BOOK CONCERN

PO Box 2126

Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA

Phone: (360) 896-7344

Email: [books@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:books@apostoliclutheran.org)

**Apostolic Lutheran Church of America**

[www.apostoliclutheran.org](http://www.apostoliclutheran.org)

Western Mission: [western@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:western@apostoliclutheran.org)

Eastern Mission: [eastern@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:eastern@apostoliclutheran.org)

Foreign Mission: [foreign@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:foreign@apostoliclutheran.org)

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## Not Knowing

Shirley Lampinen  
Marysville, Washington

**T**HIS MORNING I HAVE BEEN THINKING quite a bit about the subject of “not knowing.” What stress this can bring to our lives. We humans want to know, we want to be in control of things, but we cannot control what we really don’t know about. It is then that we must leave the future in God’s hands and realize that we have joined a very elite group—the group who realize they don’t know. Just think of one of the members: Abraham. This morning I could call him the President of our group. In *Hebrews 11:8* it says: *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, NOT KNOWING whither he went* (emphasis mine).

In the Word it says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We do not understand all that goes on inside the body that our God made for us; only He, our Creator, does. Since we do not understand the things that go on, seen externally sometimes and other times hid from our sight, we find ourselves in that group who know the stress of “not knowing.”

So, how can we find help when we are almost overwhelmed with the fears and concerns which those who belong to this group experiences? The answer is found in the beginning of the verse just quoted: *by faith*. Faith in the Creator, that He does KNOW, that He does understand our fears and our concerns, and wants us to *cast thy burden upon the LORD and He shall sustain thee*. (*Psalm 55:22*) That is a promise we can cling to as we wait, “NOT KNOWING,” that “He shall sustain thee.”

So, whatever we face in this life, known or unknown, we shall be sustained and carried by our God who cares and loves us so much. I would close with a poem, written by Norman J. Clayton:

If we could see beyond today  
As God can see,  
If all the clouds should roll away,  
The shadows flee;  
O’er present griefs we would not fret,  
Each sorrow we would soon forget,  
For many joys are waiting yet  
For you and me.

If we should know beyond today  
As God doth know,  
Why dearest treasures pass away  
And tears must flow;  
And why the darkness leads to light,  
Why dreary paths will soon grown bright,  
Some day life’s wrong will be made right,  
Faith tells us so.

If we could see, if we could know;  
We often say,  
But God, in love, a veil doth throw  
Across our way;  
We cannot see what lies before,  
And so we cling to Him the more,  
He leads us til this life is o’er,  
Trust and obey. ~



*For unto us a child is born... Isaiah 9:6*

*A Blessed and Joyous Advent and Christmas Season to you all!*