

RESURRECTION NEWS



January 2025

Pastor's Letter

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Brothers and sisters in Christ,

A new year is upon us. Over the past two years, you have been encouraged to undertake a journey to read through the entire Bible with the assistance of pastoral commentary. For those of you who made it to the end, I pray that you were encouraged and enriched by your reading. For those who did not make it the whole way, I still pray that you were encouraged and enriched by the portions of Scripture you did read.

Having completed this lengthy journey, the natural question is, what's next? It would certainly be a worthy endeavor to start over with Genesis chapter 1 and read through the whole Bible again. If you are so inclined, I would encourage you to do so. You can never read too much of the Bible.

There are, however, different ways to read the Bible. Our two-year Bible journey has been, for the most part, a cursory reading. When it has been my turn to write the commentary, I have made an effort to point out important biblical connections, especially how all of Scripture directs us to Christ. Throughout our readings, we have also had opportunity to consider how God's Word speaks to our lives. Still, this reading has been cursory—merely scratching the surface. To dig deep into the Scriptures requires a commitment of time and a disregard for a scheduled reading pace. Those of you who spent seven weeks with me this fall in the book of Jude got a sense for a truly deep reading of Scripture!

In 2025, I would like to encourage you to join me in a deeper reading of Scripture. No, we won't repeat the Jude study. But you don't have to spend seven weeks on twenty-five verses to consider a text more deeply. This year, I would like to invite you to join me in a year-long study of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. St. Matthew's Gospel is the first book of the New Testament for a reason—the early church saw it as the most fundamental of all the New Testament books. The first Gospel covers all of the important events of Christ's life and invites its readers to see Christ as the fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises. By averaging just over half a chapter per week, we will have opportunity to consider deeply one of the most important books of the Bible. Here is how you can join me in this study of St. Matthew's Gospel:

Beginning January 1st, "the Congregation at Prayer" will contain a reading schedule for St. Matthew's Gospel. The reading schedule will be structured for two possible approaches. There will be a weekly reading from St. Matthew's Gospel (again, averaging just over a half of a chapter). You can do short, daily readings from this assigned section and finish the Gospel by the end of the year. There will also be readings from other parts of Scripture to accompany the readings from Matthew's Gospel. These readings are selected to be a sort-of "Scriptural Commentary" on the assigned reading from Matthew. An Old Testament quotation in the Gospel may be read in its original context, or a parallel account from another Gospel account may offer further details on what was read in Matthew. If you choose to read these additional "Scriptural Commentary" readings, the Scriptures themselves will guide you into a deeper understanding of the text of St. Matthew's Gospel.

Finally, our Sunday Bible studies at both congregations will be dedicated to our weekly readings. I will plan to spend the year reviewing the past week's readings, answering your questions, and (if there's time) previewing the readings for the upcoming week.

I pray that this different approach (depth over breadth) will be a blessing to you in the upcoming year. General familiarity with the Scriptures through a cursory reading is important, but so is a deeper reading of specific texts. It is my hope that this approach will bring a helpful balance to your reading and understanding of God's Word.

May the Lord bless you and your reading of His Word this coming year!

In Christ,
Pastor Akers

Notes from your Deaconess

Dear Brothers and Sisters of LCR,

Our new church year started a full month ago, but as we exchange our calendars for 2025 ones I intend to embark in these notes on considerations of a different sort. Unlike Catholics or Orthodox Christians, as Lutherans we do not pray to believers (the ones referred to in those traditions as saints) to request their intercessions before God and Jesus—knowing that the scriptures instruct us, and the Small Catechism’s first explanation in the Lord’s Prayer reminds us that “we are [God’s] true children, so that with all boldness and confidence **we** may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.”(Emphasis mine.) We do, however observe special days of remembering Christians who have had particular impact on the spread of the Gospel in this world. Near the front of our Lutheran Service Book you will find two pages listing commemorations of particular individuals from the first nineteenth centuries of the Church—and also some individuals who lived before the incarnation of our Lord. Each month features several individuals to be remembered. I plan to introduce you to the ones who lived mostly in the first millennium of the Church and before the Reformation.

January includes three important theologians and one famous preacher who all lived in the fourth century in the region now known as Turkey—just north of locations to which St. Paul brought the gospel in the first century.

- January 10 we remember Basil the Great of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and their close friend Gregory of Nazianzus (who ended up as Patriarch of Constantinople and also a famous preacher in his time). These three, born around AD 330, have been called the Cappadocian Fathers as they grew up together in that region. (You can find Cappadocia on Bible maps of Paul’s missionary journeys.) These three ardently defended the orthodox confession of the Trinity which continued to be under attack during the decades after the Council of Nicaea (AD 325). In one of St. Basil’s works, he likened himself and these friends to the three Hebrews in Babylon from the book of Daniel who had to take their stand for correct worship of God.
- January 27 we remember St. John Chrysostom, preacher and liturgist. He was born in Antioch a decade or more after the men mentioned above. He faithfully, powerfully, and with beauty and clarity preached the truth of God. He was elected bishop of Constantinople in AD 397 and worked to reform the church and ruling court. His outspoken opposition to certain practices of the rulers led to exile, during which time he died. I have copies of and love translations of one Easter sermon he wrote, and one he gave about marriage.

I plan to hold Saturday women’s Bible studies on January 4 and 18. We will be concluding our study of Paul’s epistle to the Romans. We meet in room 103 downstairs (entering in the back door). I send an email during the week prior to each Bible study meeting including a Zoom link if you’d prefer to join us that way. We begin around 8:30 a.m. with our time of fellowship, Bible study, and sharing of prayer concerns. We try to wrap up around 10. We’d love to have you join us!

Under his mercy,
Sharon M. Conover

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:1

Thursday Bible Class

Mid-Week Bible class resumes on January 9. We will meet on Thursday mornings at 10:30 a.m. and will study the book of Revelation.

Men's Breakfast

The next men's breakfast is scheduled for January 18 at 8.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will be studying Daniel chapters 7 and 8

LWML

LWML will meet on January 23 at 9:30 a.m. We will decide how to disburse the proceeds from the craft fair which totaled \$1,800.70.

Missions

The handicap ramp we used at the Carrano house is available for use at another location. If you know of anyone in need, let someone on the Mission board know or call Rachel Anderson at 845-706-1967.

Thank You

Your support will go a long way in helping us to continue our mission of providing warm meals, essential nourishment, and a sense of community to individuals and families facing hunger and hardship.

Warm regards,

Carla Caron

Waterville Area Soup Kitchen

Thank you for your support and commitment to Garuna. May God richly bless you as together we continue to partner in the service of our Savior in Southeast Asia.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Jeffery Ehlers, Chairman

Garuna Ministries

Thank you for your gift to the Student Food Co-op in support of future pastors, deaconesses, and missionaries who will serve the LCMS and our partner churches worldwide.

Your servant in Christ,

Martin Lewis

Concordia Theological Seminary

Thank you for your donation of many hundreds of pounds of food collected during your recent Thanksgiving food drive. This was a great help to us for our Thanksgiving food distribution.

Sincerely,

Sandra Hammond, President

Waterville Food Bank

January Stewardship

	<u>January 5</u>	<u>January 12</u>	<u>January 19</u>	<u>January 26</u>
<u>Acolyte</u>	Hayley Farr	Elizabeth Akers	Evan Farr	Matthew Akers
<u>Subdeacon</u>	Chris Batson	Jared Goldsmith	Steve Farr	Mark Larsen
<u>Usher</u>	Rick Drageland	Mike Hein	Mo Cote	Brian Watson
<u>Greeters</u>	Avis Grant & Christine Thomas	Kemp & Rachel Anderson	Julie Kohl & Gail Maestas	James Breslin & Adolph Galonski
<u>Altar Care</u>	Andrea Watson	LeeAnne Larsen	Julie Kohl	Lydia Bendas
<u>Flowers</u>	The MacPherson	The MacPhersons	The Pelletiers	The Pelletiers
<u>Fellowship</u>	Darryll Zahner	Darryll Zahner	Open	Open

Please consider signing up for fellowship.
 The signup sheet is in the Narthex on the bulletin board.
 Please see Sharon Klipp if you have questions.



Defending the Faith

Sometimes the Best Defense is a Good Defense.

This is the third and final (at least for a while) article on how Lutheran beliefs and practices compare to the Roman Catholic Church. This month, I'll tackle (metaphorically) the Pope.

Luther has quite a lot to say about the Pope. In fact, searching the 95 Theses, the term "Pope" comes up 34 times. "Papal" comes up 10 times. "Indulgences" 45 times.¹

As we begin, I have to go back a step and talk about Purgatory. This will become important in a moment. According to the Roman Church, Purgatory is a place that the souls of those who either did not die in a "state of grace" or did die in a state of grace, but were "imperfectly purified"² were sent to suffer for a period of time to become purified. Once purified, they were then fit to enter Heaven.

This doctrine completely disregards the Grace found through faith in Jesus, which cleanses the faithful of all of our sins.³ We reject this dogma because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was entirely sufficient for our salvation. He doesn't need our assistance. To suggest otherwise is simply blasphemous.

Under the authority of the Pope, the church sold "indulgences". The theory was that by purchasing an indulgence, you could reduce the amount of time that a loved one spent in Purgatory, or free them altogether.

While early in his ministry Luther believed in the doctrine of Purgatory, his views evolved to the point that he condemned it completely, and said that it came "*from the father of lies, the Devil who has deluded people in the name of the dead.*"⁴

He argued that if the Pope could free people from Purgatory and send them to Heaven, he should do so without hesitation.⁵

As an Augustinian monk-turned-reformer, Luther came to realize that the Pope unjustly – and unbiblically - claimed a lot of power for himself. This realization came slowly, but Luther eventually came to call the pope the Antichrist. However, he was far from the first to do so.

One of the earliest to label the pope as the Antichrist was Bishop Arnulf of Orleans in the year 991.⁶ Describing papal murder, lust and intrigue, asked "*Are there any bold enough to maintain that the priests of the Lord over all the world are to take their law from monsters of guilt like these?*"⁷

In 1537 Philip Melancthon, one of Luther's close friends and allies in the Reformation, wrote "The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope", which is part of our Book of Concord.⁸ Melancthon argues that the power and authority that the Pope claims for himself are unwarranted, unbiblical and in section 39, calls the Pope the Antichrist. Let's look at the first four articles from the Treatise:

¹ *The Roman Pontiff claims for himself [in the first place] that by divine right he is [supreme] above all bishops and pastors [in all Christendom].*

² *Secondly, he adds also that by divine right he has both swords, i.e., the authority also of bestowing kingdoms [enthroning and deposing kings, regulating secular dominions etc.].*

³ *And thirdly, he says **that to believe this is necessary for salvation.** And for these reasons the Roman bishop calls himself [and boasts that he is] the vicar of Christ on earth. [Emphasis mine]*

⁴ *These three articles we hold to be false, godless, tyrannical, and [quite] pernicious to the Church.*

The Treatise says about all that needs to be said there. Many of the Pope's claims are found nowhere in Scripture. They are entirely created out of whole cloth for the purpose of aggregating power to himself.

Fast forward to the modern day and we find Pope Francis, who has strayed from orthodox Christianity on more than one occasion. Just last December, he allowed priests to bless same-sex couples, hoping to "broaden the appeal of the Catholic Church".⁹ He has also stated in a letter to the *La Repubblica* newspaper that atheists can go to Heaven if they simply follow their consciences.¹⁰ This is in direct contradiction of John 14:6.

These are just a few of the many reasons that confessional Lutherans part ways with our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters when it comes to the Pope.

If you want to explore further, I strongly recommend reading the "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope".

As always, I'm open to comments, suggestions and especially criticisms at charles.j.macpherson@gmail.com.

Defending the Faith,
Charlie MacPherson, SDG

¹ <https://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>

² Catechism of the Catholic Church – CCC 1030. Pp. 269

³ Ephesians 1:7

⁴ A Sermon by Martin Luther; Taken from His Church Postil, 1524

⁵ 95 Theses – Thesis 82.

⁶ Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, third ed., rev. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910, repr. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1985-1986), vol. 4, pp. 290, 291.

⁷ Martin Luther and the Antichrist. Dennis Pettibone, Southern Adventist University. Perspective Digest, 2008, Vol. 13, Issue 2.

⁸ <https://bookofconcord.org/power-and-primacy/> (also available at LCMS.org under the "documents" tab)

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-67751600>

¹⁰ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-francis-assures-atheists-you-don-t-have-to-believe-in-god-to-go-to-heaven-8810062.html>



Monthly Worship

January 5

Epiphany of Our Lord

Prophecy: Isaiah 60:1-6

Epistle: Ephesians 3:2b-12

Holy Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

January 12

Baptism of Our Lord

Prophecy: Isaiah 25:1; 26:11a; 28:5a;

35:1a,2b,10a; 41:18a,c; 52:13b;
12:3-5

Epistle: Ephesians 1:13b-18

Holy Gospel: John 1:29-34

January 19

Epiphany 2

Prophecy: Amos 9:11-15

Epistle: Romans 12:1-16a

Holy Gospel: John 2:1-11

January 26

Epiphany 3

Prophecy: 2 Kings 5:1-15b

Epistle: Romans 12:16b-21

Holy Gospel: Matthew 8:1-13

BIBLE QUIZ

- The first mention of snow in the Bible is Exodus 4:6 and it's used to describe the dread disease leprosy. What is the name of the man who was afflicted with leprosy for an ever-so-brief period of time on his hand?**
 - Joshua
 - Aaron
 - Moses
 - The Pharaoh
- Numbers 12:10 tells of a woman suddenly becoming leprous, "as white as snow". What was the woman's name?**
 - Achan's wife
 - Achan's wife
 - Miriam
 - Asenath
- 2 Kings 5:27 tells of when snow is used to describe leprosy. What is the name of Elisha's servant who developed leprosy and was "as white as snow"?**
 - Achan
 - Gehazi
 - Elijah
 - No name is given.
- 1 Chronicles 11:22 tells of one of David's 'mighty men' killing a lion "in a pit on a day when snow had fallen." Who was the lion killer?**
 - Jehoiada
 - Benaiah
 - Jonathan
 - Samson
- Psalm 51 is one of the more famous Psalms written by David. Verse 7, states: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Shortly after what event in his life did David write the words?**
 - After his son Absalom staged an unsuccessful coup.
 - After he slew the Philistine giant Goliath.
 - After Saul threw a javelin at him and almost killed him.
 - After he committed adultery with Bathsheba and killed her husband.
- Complete the missing word from Proverbs 26:1: "Like snow in summer and rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a ____."**
 - Fool
 - Liar
 - Adulterer
 - Murderer



- 1/8 Candace Schorr
- 1/10 Joan Drageland
- 1/12 Cianan Morris
- 1/17 Caden Fitzpatrick
LeeAnne Larsen
- 1/22 Steve Love
- 1/23 Jon Boschen Jr.



- 1/11 Elizabeth Akers
Benjamin Schiebel
- 1/20 Joan Drageland
- 1/30 Maira Goldsmith
- 1/?? Yvonne Batson



- 1/14 Ken Zahner
- 1/21 Laverne Pelletier
Wayne Pelletier

BIBLE QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1. C
- 2. C
- 3. B
- 4. B
- 5. D
- 6. A



The Frugal Lutheran

The frugal Lutheran walked into the house panting and almost completely exhausted. “What happened, honey?” inquired his wife.

“It’s a great new idea I have to be a better steward of our resources,” he gasped. “I ran all the way home from the stewardship committee meeting behind the bus and saved \$1.50.

“That wasn’t very bright,” replied his flustered wife. “Why didn’t you run behind a taxi and save \$10?”

No Fish Here

Arne and Peder decide to go ice fishing. They head out, find a nice spot, cut a hole in the ice, and stick in their poles.

Suddenly, a loud voice booms from above, “THERE ARE NO FISH HERE!!!”

Arne and Peder look around, look at each other, and look up, and they don’t see anyone.

“I suppose we’d better move then,” says Peder. They get up and find another spot on the ice, cut a hole, and stick in their poles with great hopes of fresh Walleye. Once again, the voice booms from above, “THERE ARE NO FISH HERE!!!”

They look around, look at each other, then look up. Again, they don’t see anyone. “We best find another spot,” says Arne. So, they gather up their equipment, choose another promising spot on the ice, cut a hole, and stick in their poles.

Once again, the loud voice booms from above, “THERE ARE NO FISH HERE!!!”

They look around, look at each other, then look up, again seeing no one. Peder calls out, “God in Heaven, is that you?”

The voice responds, “NO! THIS IS THE SKATING RINK MANAGER! THERE ARE NO FISH HERE!!!”