

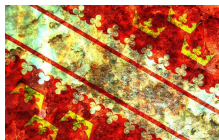
# The Kaiserslautern Lutheran

Nr. 16

*Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr' vergehet nun und nimmermehr*

May 2023

*The following is excerpted from a mission festival presentation, The Spirit of Missouri: Confessional Lutheranism in the Alsace and Germany, presented by Pastor Jensen in Lembach, France, on September 11, 2022. Besides congregations of our German partner church, the SELK, our next closest neighbors are in the Synod of France, with congregations in the Alsace region and Paris. In under an hour, you can drive from Kaiserslautern to several of these congregations of our French partner church. The following explains some of the deep historical ties between our church bodies and our common origins in reaction to the Age of Enlightenment and the Rationalism of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.*



## THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE ALSACE

Many people assume Europe has always been Christian, is Christian, and will remain Christian because they take Christianity and European culture to be one and the same thing. This is understandable because much of European culture has indeed been influenced by Christianity. But that is not the way it always was, is, or will be. As in most of Europe, the Alsace and other German lands were Christianized in the Early Middle Ages. Roman Christians were already here, in part, and then monks from England and Ireland were sent to the continent as missionaries. They established cloisters



## The LCMS and our French Partner Church

By Pastor Jensen

which became seats of learning, pockets of civilization amidst the darkness of Germanic paganism. Other monastic groups and Reform movements, such as the Cluniac Reform, continued influencing the surrounding culture. Over hundreds of years, the culture of the church and the surrounding cultures became synonymous. Christian Europe was born.

For centuries, the church and the state acted as one. Before the Reformation, the church wielded much political control. That's how, after the Reformation, the state took more control over the church. During the French Revolution, of course, so much changed not just in France, but all over

Europe. Anticlerical attitudes and materialist, rationalistic philosophy came together to fight against the Christian Church. In 1789, the French revolutionary government took away the church's power to tax. Church property was confiscated and sold at auction. A program of de-Christianization ensued with the destruction of church artwork and buildings, including crosses and bells. The Revolutionists introduced public worship services of reason and of the supreme being. On November 10, 1793, the "Festival of Reason" was famously held in Notre Dame cathedral.

The persecution of the church in France officially ended with the Concordat of 1801 between Napoleon Bonaparte and Pope Pius VII, a truce between revolutionary France and the Roman Catholic Church (interestingly still in effect in Alsace-Lorraine). Similar rights were granted to Protestants, who were then officially recognized by the state and granted consistories for their governance. In 1802, 27 Lutheran consistories were established for the nearly 220,000 Lutherans. The mission of the church was given room to flourish during the 19th century, even here in the Alsace.



## CONFESSIONAL AWAKENING IN GERMANY

The common origins of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the

Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (SELK), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church—Synod of France, all partner churches, can be traced back to reactions against the French revolutionary and rationalistic spirit taking hold throughout Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It did not take long for the ideals of the French Revolution to enter German lands along with French soldiers. During the 1790s, French forces occupied German territory up to the Rhine River. The Pfalz, the region where my congregation is located, was part of the French Republic from 1798–1804 and part of Napoleon’s Empire from 1804–1814.

In reaction to the French revolutionary spirit and Napoleonic invasions, which destroyed the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, German nationalism became more pronounced. Part of the reaction against the ideals of the French Revolution included a religious awakening. German Christians began to wake up out of the stupor of rationalism. They saw how rationalistic and materialistic thinking sought to exterminate the Church in France and realized how close the church was to being snuffed out throughout Europe. There was a reaction against the Enlightenment and a return to the basics of Christianity: the authority of Scripture, the veracity of miracles, the Atonement, the resurrection of Jesus, eternal life, all these biblical teachings began to be taken seriously again.

At the same time, there was a push within Protestant churches to emphasize similarities over differences and unite Lutheran and Reformed churches into “union” churches. After the French Revolution, union state churches came about for a few different reasons in German lands. In 1817, on the anniversary of the Reformation, King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia united the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Prussia. One of his goals was to promote a stronger national spirit, a counter-reaction to the nationalistic ideas in France that led to the French Revolution. The king wanted a united Christian front against the menacing

revolutionary spirit. As a Calvinist, King Friedrich Wilhelm also wanted to commune with his Lutheran wife. In the Pfalz, where Kaiserslautern is located, church union was voted on by the population, the result of democracy promoted since the French takeover of the Pfalz during the Napoleonic wars.

Naturally there was resistance to the forced union of the Lutheran and Reformed Confessions. In 1817, Claus Harms, a pastor in Kiel, set in motion the “Lutheran Confessional Awakening” when he published Luther’s 95 Theses on their 300th anniversary along with his own 95 Theses against Rationalism and church union.

#### Harms’s Thesis 75 reads:

“As a poor maidservant, one now wants to make the Lutheran church rich by marriage. Do not execute this act over Luther’s bones. They will become alive because of it and then – woe to you!”

But this marriage between the Lutheran and Reformed churches was in fact made over Luther’s bones. On the 300th anniversary of the Reformation, 31 October, 1817, the Lutheran and Reformed congregations in Potsdam, the residence of the Prussian rulers, celebrated a joint worship service. Already the evening before there was a joint communion service between Lutherans and the Reformed at St. Nicholas Church in Berlin. Lutheran and Reformed congregations throughout Prussia were encouraged to unite. By the time of the 300th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession in 1830, encouraged union turned into forced union. All protestant congregations in Prussia would be forced to use the same agenda, a same liturgy, which compromised on the Lord’s Supper by allowing ambiguity as to what was actually being received. The Calvinist symbolic representation of Christ’s body and blood was given equal standing with the Lutheran doctrine of

the Real Presence.

As a result of the forced union of Lutherans and Protestants in Prussia, Johann Gottfried Scheibel (1785–1843), professor of theology at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Breslau, Silesia, gathered 300 Lutheran families and founded the first Lutheran congregation not under Prussian state control. There was a crackdown, however, at the hands of the Prussian government. Pastors who continued using the Lutheran agenda were removed from office. Pastors who had been dismissed yet continued acting in the role of pastor were imprisoned. Many Lutheran congregations met in secrecy, at night and in the woods, to evade detection. Between 1830 and 1840, a number of Prussian Lutherans immigrated to Australia and the United States where they were granted freedom of religion.

What occurred in Prussia had an impact in other German lands as well. There were pushes to unite the Reformed and Lutheran churches throughout Germany. But there was also backlash against uniting the Lutheran and Reformed churches leading to an awakening also in the Lutheran church. Lutherans began realizing what they would lose if they joined with non-Lutheran churches.

One pastor who came out of this Confessional Awakening was especially influential for the Missouri Synod, and that was Pastor Martin Stephan (1777–1846), who served St. John’s congregation in Dresden, Saxony, next door to Prussia. Martin Stephan was born in Stramberg, Moravia, which today is part of the Czech Republic. Stephan took a call to St. John’s Bohemian congregation in Dresden where he was responsible for both the Czech speaking and German speaking congregations. Stephan came under the attack of rationalistic churchmen for his confessional stance, but he also gathered a large following of conservative Lutherans. His sermons from the year 1824 were published and distributed quite broadly in Germany. Stephan was also under legal investigation for meeting with members of his



congregation for private Bible study and for philandering with women. Stephan and his followers viewed these accusations as state-sponsored persecution and feared the arrests and other forceful measures which had been used in neighboring Prussia.



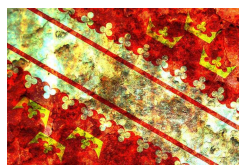
### THE SAXON EMIGRATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MISSOURI SYNOD

Already in 1830 Stephan had considered immigration. The first planning meeting took place in Spring, 1836. In the winter of 1838-1839, Martin Stephan immigrated to the New World with 665 of his followers, including several pastors. Stephan was proclaimed Bishop upon entering the Gulf of Mexico and demanded full obedience in all spiritual and secular matters of the immigration society. Upon arriving in New Orleans, the immigrants took steamboats up the Mississippi River to St. Louis. Some stayed in St. Louis while others got going on the original plan of building a colony in Perry County Missouri, about 100 miles south of St. Louis. Stephan ruled with a heavy hand and spent the society's resources on frivolous things as the people were lacking decent food and shelter. All this along with renewed accusations of philandering forced the pastors and laypeople of the immigration society to oust the leader after less than five months in their new home. Stephan was sent into exile across the Mississippi River in Illinois where he became a pastor to some scattered Lutherans and died in 1846.

The theological power vacuum among the Saxon immigrants was soon filled by Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811-1887), a young pastor who had been influenced as a university student in Leipzig by Martin Stephan. C. F. W. Walther had to convince the society that they were, in fact, still the church and did not have to return to Germany, even though they regretted their decision to emigrate. The pastors especially felt guilty for abandoning their calls in Germany. But now they were pastors in America and had

to grapple with the work before them. Part of that work was establishing an educational institution, which they did in December, 1839. The school they founded in the backwoods of Perry County, Missouri moved to St. Louis in 1849 and is today known as Concordia Seminary St. Louis, one of the two seminaries of the Missouri Synod.

In May, 1841, C. F. W. Walther accepted a call to become pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Louis where he remained until he died. Walther was pastor at Trinity and its daughter congregations as well as professor and president of the seminary and later president of the Missouri Synod. In 1844, Walther began publication of *Der Lutheraner* ("The Lutheran"), a periodical which spread rather quickly among German Lutherans in the United States and in Europe. Because of *Der Lutheraner*, Lutheran missionaries in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan who had been sent by Pastor Wilhelm Loehe, an influential player in the Lutheran Awakening in Bavaria, became aware of the Saxons in Missouri and sought to work together. These Loehe missionaries had already established a seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana (which later moved to Springfield, Illinois for a century and is now back in Fort Wayne). After three preliminary meetings, the various groups met in Chicago in April, 1847 and founded the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States, which in 1917 dropped the word "German" from its name. One hundred years after its founding, at the centennial convention in 1947, the church body officially changed its name to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.



### THE CONFESSIONAL AWAKENING IN THE ALSACE

During the Confessional Awakening in Prussia and Saxony and the founding of the Missouri Synod, there was a simultaneous Awakening in the Alsace. The Confessional Awakening in the

Alsace began with a Lutheran pastor named Frederic Horning (1809-1882). Horning served at the church of Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune in Strasburg. Like the other theologians of the Awakening, Horning was initially quite liberal, but later took a more conservative, confessional turn. Horning began advocating for a return to Lutheran identity by way of the Catechism, Lutheran hymnody, and the Lutheran Confessions. In 1848, the Lutheran Church in the Alsace deliberated a union with the Reformed churches, just like what had occurred in Prussia and other German lands. Horning founded the Evangelical Lutheran Society to combat this move. That period of time between 1840 and 1850 was the origin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession of France.<sup>1</sup> Horning and other Confessional Lutheran pastors in the Alsace, such as Weyermüller and Huser, had contact with Lutherans in places like Mulhouse, Lembach, and Wörth. The ground was tilled for the seed of authentic Lutheranism soon to be planted in the Alsace.

Since the French Revolution, for example, the congregation in Lembach had received only rationalistic pastors. Pastor Höpffner Sr. (served 1796-1840) and Pastor Höpffner Jr. (served 1839-1896) together served the congregation for a century! Around 1840 various sects began making their way into Lembach and from 1848 on Confessional Lutheran pastors, such as Horning, Magnus, and Huser were having an impact in the town. In the 1850s, a member of the congregation named Martin Müller requested permission to hold house services on Sunday afternoons from 1-3, Sunday evenings from 7-9, and Thursday evenings from 7-8. The 15 or so members would regularly travel 7 hours to Pastor Huser in Rothbach to receive the Lord's Supper, and later to Pastor Simon in Niederbronn. Martin Müller did not want his son, Georg, to be confirmed by Pastor Höpffner, and instead went to Pastor Simon. There he learned about *Der Lutheraner* and other literature from the Missouri Synod.



### THE GERMAN MISSOURIANS—AKA THE SAXON FREE CHURCH

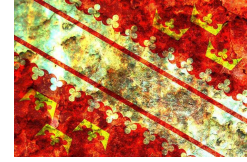
Meanwhile, the young Missouri Synod expanded rapidly in its early years as it evangelized wave after wave of German immigrants coming into the United States. Congregations were established from East Coast to West Coast, from Canada to Texas and even into South America. There was also constant contact with Germany. Pastors from Germany came to the United States and joined the Missouri Synod. Walther himself made two trips back to Germany in his lifetime for health reasons and for theological discussions on controversial topics of the day. On one of Walther's trips back to Germany in 1860, *Der Lutheraner* fell into the hands of Lutherans in various cities in Saxony.<sup>2</sup> The result was the formation of Luther Societies in these cities that promoted God's Word and Luther's teachings. That was the motto of *Der Lutheraner*: "God's Word and Luther's doctrine will never perish, now or ever" | "Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr vergeheth nun und nimmermehr". On the same trip, Walther visited Friedrich Brunn (1819–1895), a pastor in Steeden, Germany, who had separated from the unionistic state church in Nassau. Brunn began training young men to become pastors and teachers in North America. Altogether, he trained over 200 men for the Missouri Synod.

Eventually it came to a split in Saxony between the Luther Societies and the Lutheran state church. Many Saxon pastors allowed Prussian soldiers and officials, who were members of the Prussian state church, a union church, to commune at the Lutheran altars of Saxony.<sup>3</sup> The Luther Societies registered their complaint against such practice numerous times and never received a clear answer. The last straw for the Luther Societies was in 1871 when the Saxon state church altered the oath pastors take, watering it down to allow for a looser interpretation about teaching in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions. The Saxon state church remained a Lutheran church *de jure*, but in allowing

non-Lutheran practices to continue became a union church *de facto*. C. F. W. Walther's pamphlet *Why for the Sake of His Soul's Salvation No Lutheran ought to Join a Union Church* was widely read in the Luther Societies during this time of decision.<sup>4</sup> Professor Walther in St. Louis and Professor Sihler in Ft. Wayne were informed immediately when the decision was made to separate from the Saxon state church and form two congregations.<sup>5</sup>

These Lutherans in Saxony, however, had no pastors. Having foreseen a split from the state church, the congregation in Dresden sent a letter to Dr. Walther months before asking for a pastor. Now that they had separated, the congregations wrote to Walther again. Before the second letter reached Walther, he had already written a letter to the congregations in Saxony letting them know he was aware that the Saxon state church had changed the confessional oath and therefore ceased to be Lutheran. Walther recommended the Saxon congregations call Pastor Friedrich Ruhland (1836–1879), a pastor in Collinsville, Illinois who had immigrated from Germany.<sup>6</sup> Ruhland accepted the call and returned to Germany, arriving in Saxony in April, 1872. The Saxon Free Church was then officially established in 1876.

Most pastors of the Saxon Free Church studied in the United States, attending the St. Louis seminary. The St. Louis seminary was the only seminary for the Saxon Free Church until World War I. All the German students who studied in the United States and returned to Germany were so influenced by the Missouri Synod that they were called the "German Missouriians."<sup>7</sup> Because of the war and the fact that English began replacing German as the language of instruction at the St. Louis seminary, the Saxon Free Church set up their own institution for training pastors in Leipzig in 1920. In 1922, the Saxon Free Church purchased property in Berlin with funding from the Missouri Synod. The seminary of the Saxon Free Church remained there until the end of World War II.



### THE SAXON FREE CHURCH IN THE ALSACE

In 1880, a member of the Saxon Free Church congregation in Dresden, Johannes Preiss, moved to Strasbourg to work as a gardener and married there. His first child was born in 1881 and baptized by Pastor Friedrich Brunn in Steeden, the pastor who was training all the German students for work in North America. The Preiss family was visited periodically by pastors of the Saxon Free Church, otherwise holding reading services in their apartment until a permanent pastor could be called. Soldiers who belonged to the Saxon Free Church and were stationed in Strasbourg would also attend (Wöhling 43).

In 1905, the faithful Lutherans in the Alsass turned to President Otto Willkomm (1847–1943) of the Saxon Free Church for help. They urgently desired their own pastor. Pastor Otto Willkomm sent his son, Pastor Martin Willkomm (1876–1946), who accepted the call on March 22, 1905. From 1895–1898, Pastor Martin Willkomm, like all pastors in the Saxon Free Church until World War I, studied at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Willkomm then served the congregations in Mulhouse and Strasbourg and until 1910 did vacancy work in Frankfurt and Wiesbaden, Germany.

At one point, a Pastor Ernst at St. Thomas in Strasbourg, wrote an article in a secular paper attacking the sects and the free-church Lutherans, throwing them altogether. Johannes Preiss responded with a letter to the editor articulating the teachings of the Missouri Synod and its German partner church, the Saxon Free Church. Georg Müller in Lembach read the article and became aware of the Saxon Free Church in the Alsace. Müller visited Preiss in Strasbourg and brought Missouriian literature back with him to Lembach for use among the laity refusing to attend the liberal state church. In 1906, Pastor Willkomm and Mr. Heinrich Kreiss from Mulhouse visited the saints in Lembach.<sup>8</sup> Willkomm also regularly visited scattered



Lutherans in Freiburg, Germany, in Basel, Zofingen, and Zürich, Switzerland and even in Milan, Italy. The three congregations in the Alsace, in Lembach, Strasbourg, and Mulhouse, were regularly visited by members of the Saxon Free Church fighting on the Western Front during World War I, showing how closely these congregations were connected with the Saxon Free Church (Woehling 44).



### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SYNOD OF FRANCE

After World War I, the Alsace again became part of France, at least politically speaking. Pastor Willkomm, a German citizen, was forced out of the country. The three congregations in the Alsace could no longer be part of the Saxon Free Church, although in spirit they still felt themselves connected (Festschrift 96). The Missouri Synod's representative in Europe, Pastor Hagen from Detroit, Michigan visited the Alsace along with Pastor Schlacke and recommended they call Pastor Fred Mueller. It is then that "the synod in Alsace became the mission of the Missouri Synod" (MF 431). In 1919, the Missouri Synod sent Bibles, prayer books, and devotional material to the Lutheran churches in the Alsace, along with financial resources (Moving Frontiers, 427). From 1921 on, Pastor Dau from the Missouri Synod visited the Alsace periodically while supporting the work of the Saxon Free Church seminary in Berlin. That same year, in 1921, a Missouri Synod pastor, Paul Scherf, was called from San Diego, California to Heiligenstein. Another pastor in those early years was G. Wolff, who had

studied theology in institutions of the Missouri Synod and had worked among the African Americans in North America.

In 1920, a Free Church congregation was established in Woerth. For some time Lutherans in Woerth had been attending Müller's services in Lembach. At Christmas, 1920, Müller held his first preaching service in Woerth. Lembach and Woerth then together turned to the Missouri Synod for a pastor and received Candidate Martin W. Strasen. Together, the congregations also had a joint Mission Festival since 1926. That same year, Pastor Strasen accepted a call to Strasbourg and. In 1927, Pastor Strasen became the first President of the Synod of France. In 1930, he returned to the United States for health reasons.

At that time there was only one French-speaking congregation, in Paris. In 1928, an American family living in Paris requested services from the Free Church. Mr. Henry Schuette worked for the U.S. embassy. Pastor Martin Strasen visited in Spring, 1929. In 1930, Candidate Frederic Kreiss (son of Henri Kreiss in Mulhouse), came to Paris from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis as a missionary to Paris. As an interesting personal aside, Pastor Kreiss graduated in the same class as my great-grandfather from Concordia College in Milwaukee, an institution of the Missouri Synod. It was a pleasure to meet his son, Jean-Marc, when I was visiting Woerth a few years ago.



### POST WORLD WAR II MISSOURI SYNOD WORK IN EUROPE

After World War II, the Missouri Synod sought a "long-range program of physical and spiritual reconstruction in Europe" (MF 428). The work concentrated in Germany, especially in attempts to bring together the independent Lutheran churches. A joint seminary was founded in Oberursel in 1948 and in 1972, the Saxon Free Church and Old Lutherans, among other churches, formed the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (SELK). But France was also affected. The congregation in Strasburg turned to the Missouri Synod for a pastor. Pastor Peyser of St. Paul's, Westport, Connecticut, arrived in 1948. The church in Lembach, destroyed during the war, was rebuilt in 1948 with financial aid from the Missouri Synod

Also after World War II, Pastor Jean Bricka surveyed prospective mission fields throughout France and Belgium. The 1950 Proceedings of the Missouri Synod state that: "Preliminary reports on several locations which have been surveyed show such promise that France (in the French-speaking areas) should definitely be placed in the category of a field for immediate missionary expansion" (MF 430).

The Missouri Synod also sponsored theological conferences for Lutherans across Europe in Bad Boll, a German spa town near Stuttgart. The three Bad Boll conferences during the summer of 1948 were intended to build bridges between the Missouri Synod partners and European Lutherans with whom we were not yet in fellowship. Theologians came together to debate and discuss the differences between the churches. The initial meetings were so successful that the Missouri Synod continued hosting annual conferences in Europe, including in England, France, and Sweden.<sup>9</sup> Many of the contacts made at such conferences had lasting impact for European Lutheranism.

<sup>1</sup> Moving Frontiers, 430

<sup>2</sup> M. Willkomm, *Eine Kleine Kraft* (Zwickau: Concordia Verlag, 1996), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Willkomm, *Eine Kleine Kraft*, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Willkomm, *Eine Kleine Kraft*, 30.

<sup>5</sup> Willkomm, *Eine Kleine Kraft*, 33.

<sup>6</sup> Willkomm, *Eine Kleine Kraft*, 48-49.

<sup>7</sup> Werner Klän, *Theologische Ausbildungsstätten selbständiger evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchen in Deutschland* in "Lutherische Theologische Hochschule Oberursel 1948-1998: Festschrift zum 50 jährigen Jubiläum" (Oberursel: Oberurseler Hefte, 1998), 20.

<sup>8</sup> This information is from Woehling. But according to the 1952 Festschrift, Mueller wrote

the article in the Strasburger Post, read by Kreiss and Willkomm. Kreiss and Muller began correspondence. Mueller b/c member in Strasburg in 1907. In 1908 Willkomm held his first service in Lembach. The congregation was established in 1909 and was a filiale of Mulhouse, visited every three weeks.

<sup>9</sup> Paul M. Bretscher, "Review of 'Bad Boll' Conferences" in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 25, Nr. 11 (Nov 1954), 834).

A Letter from the Mission Field  
Pastor Christian Tiews



A few days ago, was the second anniversary of when my missionary career began. I landed at Frankfurt/Main airport on Apr 27, 2021—straight from Tulsa, Oklahoma—beginning five plus years of missionary work in Eurasia, lugging two very heavy suitcases and one backpack. Former KELC congregational president Dawn Werner was kind enough to pick me up and drive me to Kaiserslautern, where I moved into an Airbnb a few blocks away from St. Michaelis. I had the privilege of serving as your interim pastor until I handed over the baton to Rev. Nathaniel Jensen in October of that year. I treasure the six months with you all, in which I was privileged to share with you the Lord's gifts of Word and Sacrament and be part of

your fellowship. You were all so gracious and hospitable, opening up your homes to me, bringing me food, and showing me around the area. I even had the opportunity to confirm five youth. It was a blessed half a year. One of the highlights was also to witness how many of you were active in assisting and providing care for the several 10,000 Afghan refugees who were evacuated out of Kabul that August. And you did all of that in the middle of COVID! Also, I was very blessed to be able to live on the fringes of the

Kaiserslautern Military Community. You see, I spent part of my childhood near U.S. military in Munich in the 1960s and 70s and so, in a way, living in the KMC was like revisiting part of my childhood and coming home. I have made some life-long friends in the KELC community and treasure the time that I was allowed to



spend in your midst. May the Lord continue to bless you all—whether you are still in the KMC or have since PCS'd elsewhere!





## Elder's Corner

Insights, thoughts, and inspirational messages

### Luke 10:38-42

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." (v 41-42)



It is very easy for us to criticize Martha in this well-known dialogue between Martha and Jesus. How did she not realize that the Messiah Himself was sitting in her very living room? What could have been more important than 'sitting at the Lord's feet and listening' as her sister Mary was doing (v 39)? Clearly she missed the whole point, right?

But perhaps there is more of Martha in each of us than we would like to admit. What activity was she doing that made her lose sight of the most important thing? Most illustrated children's Bibles show pictures of a harried, distraught Martha with one hand pulling something out of the oven and the other hand stirring something in a bowl, as though her cooking was all that kept the apocalypse from coming that very night. But what does the Bible actually say? "But Martha was distracted with much serving" (v 40).

Much serving? In other words, Martha really did know that the Messiah Himself was sitting in her living room, and she was doing everything she could to serve Him! If Jesus Himself were sitting on our

couch, would we look any different as we prepared a meal for Him? Interestingly enough, Jesus does not criticize the task she is performing, but rather the attitude with which she approaches it: "You are anxious and troubled about many things" (v 41). Was her service good? Yes! Was it necessary? Absolutely! But she approached it from a spirit of anxiety, rather than from the overflow of joy and peace that she could have had if she had first sat at His feet and listened.

As we go about our daily service, we are also doing good and necessary things. Moreover, we "work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" (Col. 3:23). We should be striving to work as though Jesus himself were actually receiving the benefits of our labors. But even if we work with this fervent passion, we miss the point if we do not first sit at His feet, learn from Him and let Him fill our cup to overflowing. It is only by first receiving His Word that we can then go out and serve with joy and peace instead of anxiety and a distracted heart.

How do you sit at Jesus' feet each day before you go forth and serve?

—Stephen Young

# LCMS MINISTRY TO THE ARMED FORCES

*A Ministry of Presence*

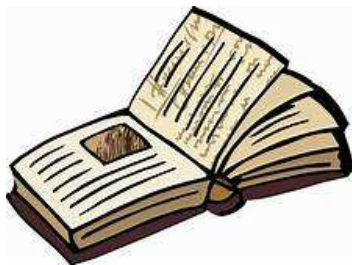


KELC Members and LCMS Chaplains Ray Ayers (U.S. Army) and Sol Grosskopf (U.S. Air Force) made a visit to a local German Army unit (the 26th Parachute Regiment in Zweibrücken) chaplain and chapel facilities. Join us in praying that God would continue to use these chaplains for His good in Germany.

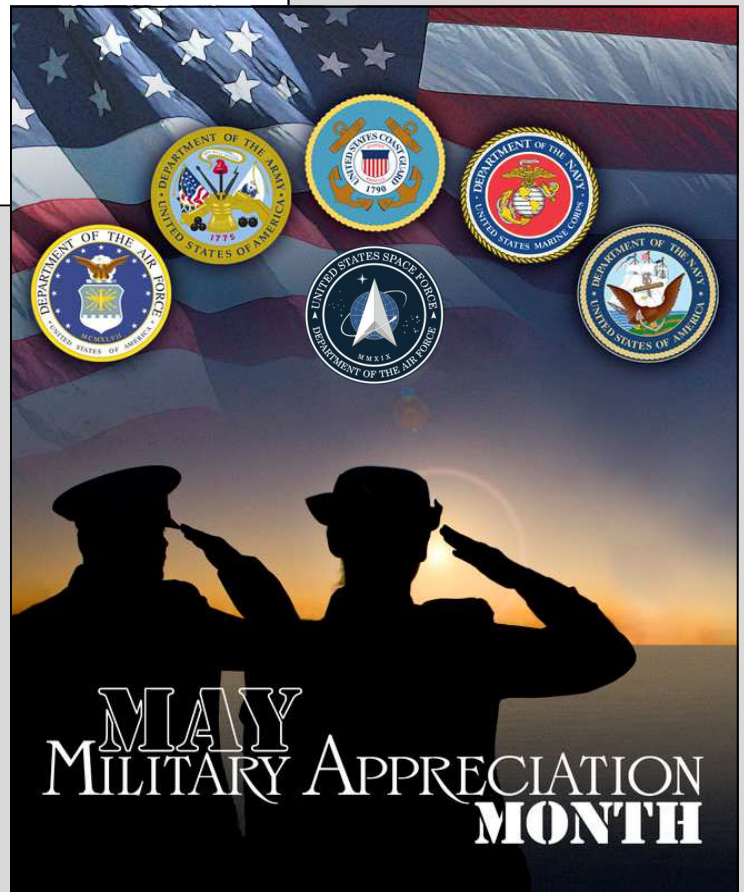


Please join us in praying for the important work of the Kaiserslautern Military Resiliency Center in Landstuhl, Germany.

## CONFESSIONS STUDY



On Thursday nights at St. Michael's







A Pastor, Professor,  
Chaplain, Missionary, and  
a sem student walk into a  
bar.....  
or maybe it's just a Winkel  
in Frankfurt, Germany  
with the largest  
concentration of LCMS  
Pastors in Europe.

## KELC Volunteer Schedule

**5/7/23:** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday

Usher: Jared Anderson

Greeter/Elder: Paul Hester

Altar Guild: Lorraine Hester

Acolyte: Mark Hester

**5/14/23:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday

Usher: Mason Westphal

Greeter/Elder: Stephen Young

Altar Guild: Annie Shelton

Acolyte: Leah & Ryan Young

**5/18/23:** The Ascension of  
Our Lord (7PM)

Usher: Mason Westphal

Greeter/Elder: Jeff Peterson

Altar Guild: Emma Jensen

Acolyte: Volunteer needed

**5/21/23:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday

Usher: Paul Hester

Greeter/Elder: Jeff Peterson

Altar Guild: Emily & Eloise Ponziano

Acolyte: Jonathan Ponziano

**5/28/23:** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday

Usher: Jeff Peterson

Greeter/Elder: Stephen Guzik

Altar Guild: Christina Peterson

Acolyte: Volunteer needed





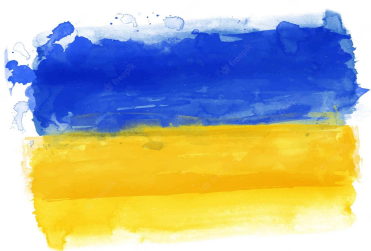
KELC volunteers will be serving dinner to the Ukrainian refugees on

**Friday, May 19th,  
at Rhema Café,  
beginning at 5:30 PM.**

We hope to see you there!

If you are unable to attend but would still like to help, please consider donating individual chip bags, Capri Sun drinks, or craft supplies. Donations may be brought to church this Sunday or dropped off directly at Rhema Café.

Thank you to all who came out and helped with the April BBQ Potluck dinner at Rhema.



## May Birthdays



- 8 Emma Jensen
- 12 Brian Jefferies
- 13 Sally Corey
- 14 Lorraine Hester
- 19 Tobias Röhrs
- 24 Marcus Arrington
- 25 Mark Hester
- 30 Maxwell Worley

## Sundays at KELC

### Divine Service

Sunday Mornings  
8:30-9:30 AM

### Fellowship Time

Sunday Mornings  
9:30-10:15 AM

### Sunday School & Bible Study

at Kirche Mittendrין  
10:15-11:15 AM

### Catechesis

St. Michael's Basement  
11:30 AM-12:30 PM



## May Wedding Anniversaries



Happy 2nd Anniversary to  
Pastor & Emma Jensen on  
the 1st.

Happy 6th Anniversary to  
Jeba & Annie Kumar on  
the 2nd

Happy 13th Anniversary to  
Stephen & Emily Young on  
the 29th