

Nr. 17

Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr' vergehet nun und nimmermehr

June/July 2023

For the remaining issues of The Kaiserslautern Lutheran this vear, I'll be writing a series on "Christian buzzwords." A "buzzword" is basically a piece of trendy jargon. It's a word or phrase used so often or in such a broad way that it has lost most of its meaning. Some examples of buzzwords in the business world include: "cutting edge," "holistic," "benchmark," "paradigm," and "next generation." In the military, buzzwords might include: "people first," "mission always," "accelerate, change, or lose," do more with less," "we are a family," "mission creep," "interoperability," and "innovation." Or in the political sphere: "checks and balances," "fake news," "echo chamber," "hot button issue," "dog whistle," and "equality." The number of buzzwords in our life is nearly endless. They act as a sort of code by which we communicate with others. The danger is that we use such terms so much that they lose nearly all meaning and will become incomprehensible to future generations.

Christian Buzzwords: "Evangelical"

By Pastor Jensen

Christianity, like any other realm of our life, also has its buzzwords. Once you start thinking about it, you'll notice how you absorb the language of those around you. It becomes part of who you are. You can often tell someone's church background based on the words and turns of phrases they use. If someone speaks about having "given" or "surrendered his life to Jesus," or making a "decision for Christ," he's most likely an Arminian (Christians who believe in the power of free will even before conversion). If someone speaks about the "sovereignty of God," the "reprobate," "election," and "covenants," he might very well be Reformed (opposite of Arminian). If a Christian speaks about the "anointing," "Spirit Baptism," "tongues," and "vision casting," he might be charismatic/Pentecostal. Or if theology is discussed in terms of "justice," "inclusivity," "diversity," "equality," and "contextual," you're probably dealing with progressive/ liberal/mainline Christianity.

Of course, Lutheranism itself has distinctive buzzwords: "means of grace," "sacraments," "in, with, and under," "sin, death, and the devil," "believe, teach, and confess," or "Divine Service." These words and phrases that have meaning for us could leave outsiders completely clueless. Of course, learning the lingo is part of initiation into any community. And as Christians, we also ought to learn the language of other confessions/ denominations in order to better understand and communicate with them. The trick is both learning the meaning of buzzwords, and trying to write and speak in fresh ways so that the words

don't get in the way of the message. In this series on Christian buzzwords, I'd like to address some of the buzzwords many Lutherans have picked up on, but haven't quite realized it yet. I'll start with the squishy word "evangelical."

When you hear the word "evangelical," what comes to mind? For most of us, the word conjures up images of American Christianity. Evangelicalism is all about being "born again," not in Baptism, but by a special act of the Holy Spirit. The roots of evangelicalism are often traced to the First Great Awakening in the 1740s, when North American Christians began emphasizing true conversion over against the perceived hypocrisy of the traditional churches. Evangelicalism grew and spread with subsequent "Great Awakenings," becoming a central part of American Christianity. Today, evangelicalism is often associated with an informal worship style, rejection of creeds ("no creed but the Bible"), and political activism. Evangelicalism also carries with it positive connotations, such as belief in the inerrancy of the Bible, full dedication to the truth of God's Word, and a zeal for missions.

The term "evangelical" literally means "having to do with the Gospel," and it derives from the Greek word for Gospel, euangelion. When you hear "the Gospel according to . . .," the Greek word used there is the word euangelion. In German, the word is translated literally: "Das Evangelium nach Matthäus" (*The Gospel* is Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church. So what does it mean to be *Evangelical* Lutheran? Don't be tricked by the name of our foil church body in the United States, the "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" or "ELCA." That



according to Matthew). *"Euangelion"* as *"*Gospel,*"* or *"good news,"* is also where terms such as *"protoevangelium"* (the first Gospel, Genesis 3:15) and *"evangelist"* (Acts 21:8) come from.

The name of our congregation

"church" has little to do with the true Gospel of Jesus Christ or the Lutheran Confessions, and in fact actively works in opposition to these things. "Evangelical Lutheran" in the sense of our congregation's name goes back, again, to the German: *evangelisch*. Remember, in German "evangelical" simply means "about the Gospel." During the Reformation, "evangelisch" became the designation of those churches that were not Roman Catholic. They wanted to emphasize the centrality of the Gospel in their churches. Some Protestants are called "evangelical" (*evangelisch*). The Evangelicalism of the Englishspeaking world has actually made some inroads in Germany, which has led to a new designation, "*evangelikal*, to distinguish the traditional evangelical protestants



churches became "evangelical Lutheran," and others "evangelical Reformed." Later, some wanted to brush aside the differences, and began using the term "evangelical" to refer to all Protestants. That's why the generic Protestant church in Germany is simply designated the "evangelical church," and from those we Americans know as "evangelicals."

When The Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod was founded in 1847, it was called "The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States" [*Die deutsche evangelischlutherische Synode von Missouri,*

Ohio und anderen Staaten]. Until its centennial in 1947, the LCMS continued in the German tradition of calling itself "evangelical Lutheran." That's why so many of our congregations, including KELC, retain the phrase "Evangelical Lutheran" in their name.

The history of the term "evangelical" can get awfully confusing when you consider its Greek origins, that it was taken up in Latin, borrowed by German, and then came into English, where it has been used in multiple senses. Remember, dear members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, that "evangelical" simply means "about the Gospel." We continue to call ourselves "evangelical" because the Gospel, the Good News, is central to who we are. The term may have shifted towards a certain kind of Englishspeaking Protestant, but that doesn't change who we are. If anything, it gives us a great excuse to explain to evangelicals what it *really* means to be an evangelical. It's all about Jesus and what He has done for us, by laying down His life for sinners and taking it up again in His Resurrection, all for you! Yes, "evangelical" is a buzzword today that could mean many different things to many different people. But it's also a word rooted in our own tradition. With the right understanding, it can help explain who we are and where we come from.



Currently back in Latvia, with the other faculty and seminarians from Eurasia and Africa for Luther Academy's "Intensive Study Weeks." Once or twice a year we see our students face-to-face and supplement online instruction with in-person classes. This past semester I taught "Lutheran Confessions of Faith," in which we worked through the entire Book of Concord—a collection of 16th century documents that explain correct Christian teaching on various doctrines and expose theological errors introduced by

A Letter from the Mission Field Pastor Christian Tiews

the medieval Church and other groups. I greatly enjoyed the students' final papers, reading their thoughts on how the Lutheran Confessions interpret Holy Scripture faithfully and serve as a pastor's most helpful tool

for explaining various doctrines. One student had for many years been a priest in a certain Christian denomination. But, praise be to God, at one point he discovered the original teachings of Christianity, studied them, and a few years later was ordained a Lutheran pastor. Now honing his skills at the Academy, he offered a lovely illustration, sharing how his grandfather had always read the newspaper with a magnifying glass. He compared the Book of Concord to that magnifying glass because it amplifies key doctrinal

concepts of the Bible and brings them into focus. Indeed, he summarized, "The Book [of Concord] was created through the initiative of a simple Augustinian friar [and other theologians] who detected some deficiencies on the part of the clergy in following the true teaching of Jesus Christ. Thank you," [Luther Academy"], "for allowing me to write these few lines that also contain my living expression of the Lutheran Faith in which I am growing thanks to the input of many people who contribute to my spiritual and human growth." Amen. And a prayer of thanksgiving for the many generous donors who make Riga Luther Academy possible, a wonderful institution forming pastors who spread the Gospel all across Eurasia and Africa faithfully.



LCMS MINISTRY TO THE ARMED FORCES

A Ministry of Presence



A year ago this month, for the July 2022 newsletter, I completed my series on the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF). My purpose for writing the May, June and July articles about MAF was to highlight the mission work that our Synod engages in whenever an LCMS Pastor becomes a military chaplain. Congregations send their Pastors to serve our warfighters either fulltime on Active Duty, or as a Reserve or National Guard Chaplain for a minimum of one weekend a month and two weeks a year. Without our congregations supporting this mission in the practical formation of their LCMS Pastors, and supporting them and their families, we would not have any LCMS Lutheran Chaplains available to serve our LCMS service members. Not to mention. the multitudes of non-Lutheran Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coastquardsmen, and Guardians who encounter Jesus from their unit's LCMS Chaplain.

As I ended the series of articles last July, I explained how the Army Chaplain that catechized my wife, Camille, influenced my becoming an Army Chaplain. And then I introduced you to Joshua Schiff, a former Military Police Specialist whom I deployed with to Iraq. He became an LCMS Pastor, in part, as a result of our discussions and reading Luther's Small Catechism. I ended the

July newsletter article with the following:

"I have yet to persuade Rev. Joshua Schiff, now pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Orange, CT to join the Army Chaplaincy, but it's not for lack of trying! As a Called and Ordained servant of the Word, Rev. Schiff is a joyful testament to the fact that the story continues. not by what we have done, but by the grace and mercy of our Lord bringing loved ones to faith in His Son Jesus Christ through redeemed sinners.

Pro Deo et Patria!"

Well, I am writing today's article with an exciting addendum. This past March I opened an email from an Army Recruiter requesting that I submit a letter of recommendation to support the application of Rev. Joshua Schiff to be accessioned as an Army Chaplain. You could imagine my quick reply agreeing to submit a letter of reference, and shortly thereafter, sending that very letter. On June 22nd, Joshua emailed me and said:

"Good afternoon Chaplain Ayers, I wanted to personally thank you for your support and encouragement both now and all those years ago. I was informed of my selection into the Chaplain Corps yesterday and wanted to let you know. Thanks again!

In Christ, Joshua"

I had to share this exciting news with my KELC family. Please pray for Josh, his wife Shelly, and their two children as they transition from Zion in Orange, to their first Active Duty Army Chaplain assignment. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

Very Respectfully,

Raymond L. Ayers



Rev. Joshua Schiff & Family



Elder's Corner

Insights, thoughts, and inspirational messages

Spotlight Verse

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

1 Corinthians 1:10

What does it mean to be a Lutheran (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod – LCMS)?

By Jeff Peterson

I have often pondered this same question. You would think that since my father, brother, and brother-in-law are all LCMS Lutheran Pastors, that this answer would be simple and easy, but being an LCMS Lutheran isn't always that simple of an understanding. (But it can be!)

There often comes a time in one's faith walk that we question what we believe or even why we believe a certain way. Being an LCMS Lutheran really comes down to The Word of God, its Truths and Sound Doctrine.

"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in **sound doctrine** and also to rebuke those who contradict it." **Titus 1:9**

Even though Paul is writing to Titus and instructing him on how to search for and instruct Elders (Overseers/Pastors) of the True Word of God, it also can apply to us as Christians and parishioners of the LCMS Lutheran Church. We are to hold to sound doctrine, not waiver to the whims of society, and to not appease the masses to make them feel better about themselves.

Before the reformation, Martin Luther was perplexed and concerned that the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church had the Gospel and the Graces of God wrong, and that they were not keeping to sound doctrine as taught by the prophets and apostles. As he searched God's Word, The Holy Spirit revealed many Truths to him, and when he brought these Truths to the Pope's attention, Martin was scorned, shamed, and told to recant his way of thinking and to fall in line with the Roman Catholic Church, Martin responded with:

"My conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound. Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me."

Martin Luther went on to write and say many things defending God's Word, and these are known as confessions of faith, Martin was not alone in His fight to defend the Word of God, there were several others that helped him through out the years to stand firm to **sound doctrine** and to **confess their faith** in front of Kings, Lords, Emperors, and the Pope.

Today we have the Book of Concord, which contains these confessions of faith, so that we can believe, teach, and confess the Truths of God's Word as they are summarized and confessed in this Book of Concord, like a road map for Lutherans.

This road map reinforces what we as LCMS Lutherans believe. We believe in the truths of God's Word, the Holy Bible, as they are correctly explained and taught in the Book of Concord, and by us believing this we confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As stated in the Book of Concord: "All doctrines should conform to the standards [the Lutheran Confessions] set forth above. Whatever is contrary to them should be rejected and condemned as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith" (FC Ep. RN, 6).

^{"10} I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that all of you agree**, and that

there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. **"1 Corinthians 1:10**

For us to be a confessional Lutheran, we need to honor the Word of God. The Word of God makes it clear that it is God's desire for His church to be in agreement about doctrine, and to be of one mind, living at peace with one another.



^{"11} Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, **agree with one another**, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you." **2 Corinthians 13:11**

It is for this reason that we truly treasure this precious confession of Christian truth in the Book of Concord (The Lutheran Road Map \Box). For us Confessional Lutherans, there really is no other collection of documents, or

statements or books that so clearly, accurately and comfortingly presents the teachings of God's Word and reveals the Biblical Gospel as our Lutheran Road Map (Book of Concord).

^{"13} Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, ¹⁴ knowing that he who

> raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵ For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God." **2 Corinthians 4:13-15**

Together with our commitment to pure teaching and confession of the

faith, we should always be, as equally strong in commitment to reaching out boldly with the Gospel and speaking God's truth to the world. That is what "confession" of the faith is all about.

What it means to be an LCMS Lutheran is pretty simple right!

Remember, you are loved, and you are forgiven!



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

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK & MESSENGER

Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC)

For news, worship sign-ups and fellowship events.

KELC Volunteer Schedule

7/2/23: 1st Sunday Usher: Mason Westphal Greeter/Elder: Stephen Young Altar Guild: Annie Shelton Acolyte: Ryan Young

7/9/23: 2nd Sunday Usher: Jared Anderson Greeter/Elder: Paul Hester Altar Guild: Lorraine Hester Acolyte: Mark Hester **7/16/23:** ^{3rd} Sunday Usher: Jim Ponziano Greeter/Elder: Paul Hester Altar Guild: Eloise & Emily Ponziano Acolyte: Jonathan Ponziano

7/23/23: 4th Sunday Usher: Paul Hester Greeter/Elder: Jeff Peterson Altar Guild: Christina Peterson Acolyte: Dylan Worley

7/30/23: 5th Sunday Usher: Jeff Peterson Greeter/Elder: Rob Tuttle Altar Guild: Annie Shelton Acolyte: James Hester



Thank you to all who came out and helped with the Ukrainian Kids Party on June 23rd and the BBQ Potluck dinner at Rhema on June 30th.

Please join us again at the end of July. Date and Signup Genius coming soon.



June Birthdøys

4 Paul Hester 5 Annie Shelton 6 Gabe Paulsen 17 Samuel Abliganz 17 Jared Anderson 28 Ray Ayers 29 Rob Tuttle



July Birthdays

3 Karly Hester 7 James Hester 14 April Paulsen 17 Brandon Holmes (Marla's husband) 28 Eloise Ponziano

June Wedding Anniversaries

Happy 22nd Anniversary to Dewey & Gwen Landers on the 2nd.

Happy 4th Anniversary to Anthony & Hannah Swenson on the 22nd.

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 Mittendrin 10:15–11:15 AM

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

