

**Passing of Our Beloved Brother and Assistant to the Archbishop for
Communications Pr. Gary Ettlemyer.**

On the afternoon of February 23, 2022 the Archbishop's Office was notified of the passing of Pastor Gary Ettlemyer. His death was sudden and unexpected, according to the information provided. Details of plans for services are not available at this time but will be provided in further communications, as will recognition of his service to the Christian faith through the LC-I.

During a conversation with the Archbishop on February 21 Gary expressed a desire to publish the Lenten issue of the BULLETIN prior to the beginning of Lent. The issue to which this notice is attached is sent to you at this time in accordance with that wish.

Please keep Gary's family and friends in prayer.

May he rest in peace



BULLETIN

BRINGING GOD'S MESSAGE OF LOVE IN CHRIST JESUS TO ALL THE WORLD

The Lutheran Church–International

and the

Lutheran World Parish

LENT 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the LC-I Family,

My fervent prayer is that God will continue to grant us the grace to develop and increase our service to Him during the coming year. As we prepare for the Lenten season and in anticipation of the Feast of the Resurrection, we can profit from a time of recollection. As confessional Lutherans we hold fast to our Spiritual and theological anchors as expressed in the Augsburg Confessions and the Book of Concord. We in the LC-I also firmly maintain our evangelical catholic identity.

During the early part of each year, it is a family tradition at our house to recollect with thanksgiving the grace that God has shown us in lives in the past. We give thanks for family and friends. For me, it is especially important to give God thanks and glory for the blessings I have had as part of the LC-I. It has been a wonderful and blessed time of continuing service to the Lord.

Each of us has a unique history as we serve to bring the Gospel to all nations as commanded by Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We can be grateful for the opportunities we have been given and the persons who have guided and enriched our lives of service by God's grace. I remain firmly convinced that God often sends His angels to us in human form. I likewise remain convinced that we in the LC-I have a special role to play as messengers of the Good News in Christ Jesus to all nations.

In addition to the family custom of reflection on the past as described above, the first part of each calendar year is a time during which I recall those individuals who have been important influences in my life. I give thanks to the Lord for His grace in putting them in my path.



++Robert W. Hotes, Archbishop

By God's grace I have been a confessional Lutheran Christian for more than fifty years. I have fond memories of those Lutheran colleagues in the LC-I and other Lutheran bodies who have been a light on my path to love and serve the Lord. I also fondly remember some Roman clerics who guided my early formation. Although I was guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit to understand the straying of some of their theology, I have always admired their examples of kindness, generosity and charity in the name of Our Savior.

In going through old photographs and papers in the first weeks of 2025,

my wife Lynn and I and found a small blue page from a note pad with a brief handwritten message. Written in 1965, the note encouraged me to persist in my studies; it also contained words of prayerful support for my journey in preparation for the priesthood. The note is signed "James Alberione."

Some weeks earlier in that year I had knelt on a predieu before James (Giacomon) Alberione to profess my vows of poverty, chastity, obedience in the religious Society of Saint Paul. (The correct Italian name of the Pius Society of Saint Paul is "Pia Società di San Paolo). This religious congregation was founded by Blessed Giacomo Alberione in 1914. Their mission focuses on using modern media to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The brief note on blue paper brought to mind his example in working to bring the light of the Gospel to a darkening world. Like many other heralds who announce the good news of Christ, Father James came as an agent of active Christianity to those whom his life touched. His life story is an inspiration to all who have heard of him.

Born on April 4, 1884, in San Lorenzo di Fossano, Italy, Giacomo Alberione (1884-1971), also known as Blessed James Alberione, was an Italian

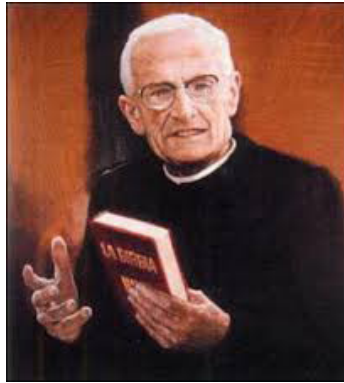
Catholic priest and the founder of the “Pauline Family.” I met him when he was approximately 77 in age. He was hunched over and had to have some help in the liturgy, as I recall. (I can relate to that!) I have a picture from an Italian publication of Blessed James receiving my first profession of vows. Although he would have been troubled during his lifetime in learning that I am now a Lutheran, I am sure that in the clarity of the Kingdom of Heaven he now understands my position as an evangelical catholic Christian Lutheran.

According to his official biographer, Blessed James felt a strong calling to the priesthood from a young age, as did many young men from rural Italy in those times during a lifetime that saw difficulties between the Papal States and the secular government. With the fall of the Italian monarchy and the rise of dictatorship, Christian values were under siege.

Before, during, and after the First and Second World Wars, Father James saw a need to use the media to defend and safeguard the Christian faith. He was inspired by Saint John Bosco who believed in bringing the light of the Gospel to people in the world of work. Fr. James aimed to evangelize a newly literate working class through modern media. He founded several religious congregations, including the Society of St. Paul and the Daughters of St. Paul which use media to spread the Christian Catholic faith. During his final illness, Pope John Paul II came to visit him. They had become close friends. (Yes, I guess one can be friends with a Pope!) He was beatified on April 27, 2003, by Pope John Paul II.

Father James lived at a crucial time in world history. It was a time before and during the World Wars when religion and civilization were under attack. It was also a time of absolutism and dictatorship, of powerful crime families and syndicates, of disrespect for faith and religion, and a time of intense uncritical selfishness. Perhaps it was a time not unlike our own.

Through his efforts in founding five religious societies and associated lay ministries, Father James led the Universal Church forward in using the power of the press and other media to proclaim the message of the Gospel. The groups he founded never became numerous, but their influence has been important. I can't help drawing comparisons with the work of the LC-I. We are a small religious body destined to have an important impact in carrying the standard of evangelical catholic faith and practice.



Blessed James Alberione

Fr. James' life as well as the lives of many Lutherans and others have influenced my ministry. All have been an inspiration for me, especially for my life and ministry in the LC-I. We are not among the most numerous church bodies but like Israel, we are a key part of God's plan of bringing His message and divine presence to the world.

My family's tradition as well as my own personal custom of recalling those who have been near and dear to us have proved to enrich our faith in ways that are too many to count. During the Lenten season I pray that you, too, will take time to recall with thanksgiving the many people who have enriched your lives. In this way, I firmly believe that the Lenten journey on which we are about to embark will be

for you more meaningful this year than ever.

As we move through Lent to the joy of the Resurrection, may we continue to dedicate ourselves to proclaiming and living the Gospel of Jesus our Master, the Way, the Truth, and the Life in truly catholic ministry and worship.

Throughout this Lenten Season may we also be mindful and grateful for the blessings of fellowship that we have in the LC-I as we seek to love and support one another in the service of Our Lord and Savior.

May God continue to bless and keep you in His care!

++Robert





SPECIAL PRAYER REQUESTS

These prayers have been requested through communication to the Archbishop's office. Please include them in your personal prayers and in the prayers of your congregation. Prayers, thoughts, and joyful remembrances may be sent to the Archbishop: dbldoc@sbcglobal.net

WE PRAY FOR...

- All who have suffered loss of homes and loved ones due to the devastating fires in California.
- For those still suffering the loss of loved ones and their homes in North Carolina.
- For the families who have been reunited with loved ones released from captivity in the Middle East and for those yet to be released that they may be restored to health and wholeness.
- For all captives who have been deprived of their freedom throughout the world, that the hearts of leaders of all nations may be filled with compassion and forgiveness.
- For those suffering from illnesses in mind, body or spirit, especially those in the LC-I family.
- For all those who are traveling during the winter season. May God keep them safe in His care.
- For those suffering through wars and natural disasters in other parts of the world.
- For all who suffer persecution for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, especially those in the LC-I family in Asia.
- For those planning the 2025 LC-I Synod Assembly.
- For the people of Ukraine, as they continue to fight for their freedom and independence.
- Those who mourn the deaths of loved ones from disease and disaster, from violence and war.
- For Deacon Eric Frank and the members of Zion, W. Jefferson, Ohio.
- For those who seek freedom from repression, torture and death, as they seek asylum in the United States.
- For firefighters and other first responders in lives of service that they be protected from all danger and harm.

- For those who are traumatized by events beyond their control and ability to “normalize” their response.
- For all victims and families who continue to suffer from the devastating consequences of 9/11.
- For those experiencing turmoil in the recent events in Syria, that the freedom and safety of all may prevail.
- For all people following our elections, that a spirit of national pride, tolerance, integrity, honesty and reconciliation will prevail.
- For our newly re-elected President that he might be strengthened in his faith and that his actions will bring wholeness and healing to our nation.

WE PRAY WITH THANKSGIVING...

- For our Synod officers and members of our Executive Board as they work to further the mission and ministry of our Synod.
- For all of our rostered LC-I pastors and deacons, that they may be blessed as they work with us for the building of the Kingdom.
- For all the saints in the Church Militant, and in thanksgiving for all the saints in the Church Triumphant.
- For all members of the Lutheran World Parish.
- For the Americans and all who have been released from captivity and reunited with their loved ones.
- For our Archbishop who so personally exemplifies the love of Christ in his pastoral and priestly ministry as he shepherds our flock.

To Our Readers

The Editors of the LC-I and Lutheran World Parish BULLETIN are always eager to receive news of interest to the friends, members, and ministries of the LC-I. Articles in this BULLETIN reflect the opinions of their authors and are not to be understood as official statements by the LC-I. All items must have relevance to the identity and mission of the LC-I as expressed in our Constitution. A copy of the Constitution is available on the LC-I website. The LC-I reserves the right to approve all content as well as the right to copyright any material published with permission of the authors.

The deadline for articles for our Pentecost/ Pre-Synod Issue is May 26, 2025.

Please help us with relevant materials to make the upcoming season more meaningful than ever for our readers.

2023-2024 LC-I OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

(Terms end as indicated.)

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of the LC-I Contributing.

Ready...Set...GO!

Annual Synod XXVI

At the September 13th meeting of the Synod Executive Committee, the dates and location for the Annual Synod XXVI were approved.

In keeping with having our Annual Synods being held in very beautiful and meaningful locations, our gathering will be held as follows:

DATES

June 23-25, 2025

The Synod will start with dinner on Monday evening, June 23rd and end after the Closing Pontifical Eucharist on Wednesday, June 25th.

LOCATION

The Claggett Center
3035 Buckeystown Pike
Adamstown, Maryland

Nestled in the rolling hills of Frederick County, this center has wonderful views of Sugarloaf Mountain and the Monocacy River Valley!

The added bonus is that it is only an hour's drive from three international airports!

COSTS

CHRISTIANE INN

1 Queen Bed
Private Bath

2 Nights Lodging, 6 Meals

One Person: Lodging & Meals \$348.00

Two Persons Sharing the Room:
Lodging & Meals \$530.00

Registration forms are available in this issue of the BULLETIN newsletter! Take a look at the Claggett Center online:

www.claggettcenter.org

Limited financial assistance may be available for attendance at the 2025 Synod gathering. Consideration will be based on individual cases. Those interested should make their requests known to their Bishop Ordinary. Approval will be determined by the LC-I Board.

Lenten Thoughts to Ponder

A Revisiting of Evangelical Catholicism

What does it mean to be Evangelical Catholic? This topic is one which Lutherans have considered for decades. In this 21st century how are Lutherans to understand where we stand as a part of the evangelical catholic movement? How are we to accurately define those two words – evangelical and catholic?

The noted Lutheran liturgist, Dr. Philip Pfatteicher of sainted memory, wrote, “The Church of the Augsburg Confession is not a new denomination which came into existence during the sixteenth century Reformation. It is a part of the Church that has existed ever since the ascended Lord commanded his disciples to be his witnesses to the end of the age. Its faith, its doctrine, and its symbolic books are evidence of this link with the past.” Considering the Pfatteicher quote let me ask, “As Lutherans do we see ourselves ‘linked with the past’ within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church?” When the sixteenth century Reformation swept through most of Europe, Martin Luther faced the dilemma of trying to select a name for this reforming movement. One of the names he seriously entertained was “Evangelical Catholic.” That understanding of “evangelical catholic” permeates our existence as heirs of the Reformation. In the end, Luther preferred having the name of Jesus Christ in the reforming movement. Much to his disappointment the word “Lutheran” was settled on. For my purposes let me briefly revisit each word.

“Evangelical.”

Perhaps in all of Christian thought this one word has been grossly misunderstood. Nowadays, “evangelical” is understood by many as a denomination. When we correctly understand evangelical, we are speaking about the Gospel – the Good News; the sacred story of the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of “the Word made Flesh” – Jesus Christ. It is the story of John 3:16. God so loved the world; God so loved me that he rescued me from sin, death, and the devil so that I may be his own now and forever. The Gospel is the story of justification by grace through faith in the sacrificial acts of Jesus as Lord and Savior. Empowered by the Holy Spirit of God, that story is driven by our desire to reach out into the world to share the life of Jesus Christ. The understanding of “evangelical” is always mission driven and mission focused. We dare not sit on such a life altering message that has the power to change lives forever. When The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod celebrated its 150th anniversary a few years ago, they patterned their celebration on the theme “It’s All About Jesus.” Lutherans who understand themselves as evangelical can still say, “It still is all about Jesus!”

“Catholic.”

One of the many things that Lutherans learn early on, especially in confirmation class, is that the word “catholic” means more than just “Roman Catholic.” As a boy growing up in the 1950s, I was taught – as we all were taught, that if the “C” was capitalized it referred to the “Roman Catholic Church”; if it wasn’t capitalized it referred to the universal church. Some stubborn Germans, however, never accepted that explanation. Yes, “catholic” means more than just a denomination; it means a whole host of things. It is rightly understood as, but not limited to universal, confessional, orthodox, traditional, liturgical, structure, and inclusive. All of these defining words have their own depth of understanding within the catholic movement. Simply stated, “catholic” means a faithful adherence to the Word of God as our sole rule and norm for doctrinal teaching, a rightful administration of the Holy Sacraments, and an active prayer life using the historic prayer offices.

Various theologians have commented that Lutherans stand in the midst of the great catholic tradition of the church. In 1976, before becoming Pope Benedict XVI, Joseph Ratzinger suggested that the Lutheran Church is clearly a part of that great catholic tradition because of its subscription to the Augsburg Confession and other symbolical books in the Book of Concord. It is interesting to note that Benedict was willing to accept the majority of the Book of Concord as a catholic statement of faith! The message of the church is catholic. Our Lutheran Church is couched in the tradition and heritage of that which has come before and after us. It is very much catholic. It is very much universal.

The Two Elements United

How are “evangelical” and “catholic” rightly put together? First, it always begins with the preaching, teaching, and living of the Gospel – that wonderful story of what Jesus Christ accomplished for us and for our salvation. But that story is far too great to keep hidden or keep to ourselves. The evangelical message is placed within the catholic understanding of the church. From the sharing of the Gospel, our catholicism emanates from that sharing to enhance the Good News. The sharing is like the icing on the cake. Since their inception as the basis for catholic understanding of evangelical catholic, the three ecumenical creeds have served as icing. Everything we need to know about our place in God’s kingdom is contained in the words of these ancient statements of faith. When a person is baptized in the Lutheran Church, they literally are joined to that great tradition which goes all the way back to Jesus and his Apostles. We are clearly a part of “that great cloud of witnesses.”

It is my opinion that a correct understanding of what it means to be “evangelical catholic” can only be experienced through the Lutheran Church. As evangelical catholics,

(Evangelical Catholic – cont'd)

Lutherans adorn the life of our Savior by the preaching of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments. Both Word and Sacrament are tightly wrapped in the deep richness of our catholic tradition handed on from one generation to another. A Lutheran Church that does not make full use of what evangelical catholicism offers greatly reduces how the church can empower her members to live the Gospel using historic items that separate us from other Protestant denominations. The use of candles, statuary, vestments, incense, chanting, reservation, private confession, apostolic succession, and bells enrich our worship. They are the means by which we give expression to what we believe. They are not present for appearances only; they are not elements that are often referred to as “smells and bells.” They do not communicate faith to the believer as thoroughly as the Means of Grace do, yet they greatly enhance our appreciation of the glory and majesty we owe our Triune God. Evangelical catholicism provides a framework that is richly catholic, deeply liturgical, and fundamentally historical.

Given the challenges that God’s holy Church faces today throughout the world, a return to the fundamentals of our faith would provide a renewal of growth and commitment to the Church. Dr. Pfatteicher was correct when he said, “[The Lutheran Church] is a part of the Church that has existed ever since the ascended Lord commanded his disciples to be his witnesses to the end of the age.”

– Rev. Terrence L. Weber, STS, KTJ



Worth Repeating...

Frequently Asked Questions

From time to time we will publish answers for some of the questions that are asked about our Synod. A few of the most recent ones are included here.

How do I keep my status with the Lutheran Church—International up to date?

The very best way to keep one’s status with the Synod is to: (1) read and be familiar with our Synod’s Constitution and Bylaws. Copies are available from our Synod Secretary, Bishop Jeffrey D. Bischoff; (2) attend meetings of the Synod held in the various dioceses and especially the Annual Synod each year; (3) visit the Synod’s web page which will be updated soon; (4) stay in contact with the Bishop of your diocese; (5) keep financial obligations up to date by paying dues on time. (6) Pray! Daily! Keep God’s grace and blessings in your heart by taking time to recall who you are and WHOSE you are: a child of God.

Remember that the success of our mission and ministry’s continued success and growth depends upon the active participation by everyone who is part of our family of faith. There are many ways you can participate in our efforts. Why not start by telling family and friends about our Synod and even better: make copies of our BULLETIN to share! All you need is a willing, Spirit-filled heart and you will find a way!

What happens if I have financial difficulties with regard to attending the Annual Synod or other activities? No problem! Please contact your bishop and speak with him. In addition to your local diocese, the Synod Office may be able to help!

What is the Annual Synod meeting really like? If you like wonderful worship in the Lutheran tradition; if you like fellowship with wonderful, Spirit-filled bishops, priests, deacons, and lay people, you’ll love joining our Synod family at some of the most beautiful and inspiring places you can imagine.

What is the responsibility of clergy regarding attendance at Synod gatherings? Attendance at as many synod gatherings as possible is an important responsibility of clergy membership. Exemptions from this requirement are liberally granted for good reasons upon contacting the local bishop or the Archbishop’s office. Participation in synod meetings is a privilege of membership, not a burden.

Lent: Back to Basics!

This Lenten issue of the BULLETIN contains an article submitted by Fr. Terrence L. Weber regarding evangelical catholicism and its meaning within the confessions and teachings of the Lutheran church. At the end of his article, Fr. Weber makes the following statement: “Given the challenges that God’s holy Church faces today throughout the world, a return to the fundamentals of our faith would provide a renewal of growth and commitment to the Church.”

With that in mind, I suggest that a return to the basics of our faith can be found no further away than Blessed Dr. Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism*. From the earliest days of the Lutheran church tradition the *Small Catechism* has been linked to Lent. That continues even to today, as many churches use the *Catechism* in renewal sessions, including it in Lenten worship services and in sermons. Some parishes utilize the *Catechism* as the center of midweek Lenten services wherein it is read responsively, a practice that I used many years as part of Evening Prayer.

In a sermon in March 1529, Luther himself said that parents should instruct and educate children in “the doctrine of the Lord: the Decalog, the Creed, the Prayer, and the Sacraments. Such children ought also to be admitted to the Table that they may be partakers [of the Lord’s Supper].” (LW 30,1, 233.)

I would recommend that the *Catechism* be used by dividing it into several parts during midweek Lenten services. I have found this to be a common practice in many churches:

- Ash Wednesday – Ten Commandments
- Lent 1 – The Creed
- Lent 2 – Lord’s Prayer
- Lent 3 – Sacrament of Holy Baptism
- Lent 4 – Office of the Keys, Confession
- Lent 5 – Sacrament of the Altar
- Maundy Thursday – Questions and Answers

The Daily Prayers and Table of Duties may be utilized on other appropriate occasions during the Church Year.

Those who are diligent in maintaining the richness of our tradition are familiar with the structure of the *Catechism*. To review, it contains three chief parts, each of which contains three parts. If we consider the emphasis of each part, the First Section contains the first three “chief parts”: The Ten Commandments, The Creed, and The Lord’s Prayer. Each of these is linked to specific passages from Scripture. In this part we see the relationship we have with God and neighbor – the Law. The Creed teaches us that God gives us his grace through the saving work of our Lord and through the work of the Holy Spirit, who calls us to faith and preserves us in our faith until the resurrection. The Lord’s Prayer is our Lord’s teaching on how faith in him provides for our redemption. In the *Preface to the Large*

Catechism Luther says, “These are the most necessary parts which one should first learn to repeat word for word, and which our children should be accustomed to recite daily when they arise in the morning, when they sit down to their meals, and when they retire at night; and until they repeat them, they should be given neither food nor drink. Likewise, every head of a household is obliged to do the same with respect to his domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, and not to keep them in his house if they do not know these things and are unwilling to learn them. For a person who is so rude and unruly as to be unwilling to learn these things is not to be tolerated; for in these three parts everything that we have in the Scriptures is comprehended in short, plain, and simple terms. For the holy Fathers or apostles (whoever they were) have thus embraced in a summary the doctrine, life, wisdom, and art of Christians, of which they speak and treat, and with which they are occupied.” The First Section, therefore, provides the basics of the Christian faith.

The Second Section covers how and where our faith is experienced and practiced. It contains extremely important instruction on the Means of Grace: Baptism, the Office of the Keys and Confession, and The Lord’s Supper. This portion of the *Catechism* contains our Lord’s very own words. They are at the core of our faith, who we are, and *whose* we are. If our Lenten preparations include special attention to this portion of the *Catechism*, our faith and our relationship with God in Jesus Christ will be renewed and strengthened. In addition, the entire Holy Week experience will be better than ever!

The Third Section includes Daily Prayer, The Table of Duties, and Christian Questions and Answers. These help us to know how the first two major sections may be applied to our daily lives. They help us examine ourselves and renew our understanding that the Cross of Christ is the source of our life.

As Fr. Weber points out, we need to return to our roots. In so doing, we return to what it truly means to be “evangelical catholic.” To repeat Dr. Pfatteicher, “[The Lutheran Church] is a part of the Church that has existed ever since the ascended Lord commanded his disciples to be his witnesses to the end of the age.” The *Small Catechism* provides the avenue by which we can return to the fundamentals. The Lutheran emphasis on the Holy Scriptures, the Confessions, and the *Catechism* – the basics of our faith – have enabled our tradition to thrive and grow for over five hundred years. The *Small Catechism* can serve as the means for each believer to be strengthened in faith and service to our Lord every day. It is the “back to basics” key to our past as well as the future of the Church.

This is most certainly true.

– Rev. Gary V. Ettlmyer +

Lutheran Diaconal Association Announces Executive Director Appointment

Deaconess Jean Warren, President of the Board of Directors, Lutheran Diaconal Association (LDA) has announced the appointment of Deaconess Adrainne Jean Gray as the new Executive Director of the LDA. Adrainne had served as the LDA's Director of Discernment, a position she held since 2022. Her new appointment as Executive Director began on October 28, 2024.

Consecrated an LDA deaconess on September 17, 2017. Adrainne is an ordained deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She holds a Master's Degree in Practical Theology from Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia as well as a degree in Journalism from the University of Florida – Gainesville.

Adrainne has extensive experience in communications with the Lutheran World Federation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

We pray God's continued blessings upon her as she assumes this new role in the LDA. Deaconess Adrainne may be reached by email at:
adrainne.gray@valpo.edu.

POINTS OF VIEW...

(Note: The reflections presented in this section are the opinions of the individual authors and are not official statements by the LC-I Board or its officers.)

Start with Amen!?

Unlike some languages used throughout the world, our English language comes from a wide variety of linguistic sources. How those words are used is the basis of human communication. In daily use, we communicate ideas, descriptions, values and meanings through those words. We even play tricks with words. In only a few more weeks, April Fool's Day will bring a flurry or even a blizzard of words with double or distorted meanings. One master of April Fool's use of words is Canada's WestJet airline. Look at some of their past videos, like when the pilots announced that they were going to work from home, or the classic "Metric Time" rescheduling. Or perhaps the innovative "KargoKids", "FurryFamily" or "Smart Seats". It's all in good fun.

But most often, words are intentional, filled with content, even with threat. When an officer shouts "STOP!" it certainly is intentional - and threatening!

When a judge gives an order, it is intentional, and disobedience brings punishment to end the threat to the "Rule of Law."

After Jesus was arrested and brought before the High Priest Caiaphas, Jesus was brought before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate; Pilate asked him "What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" [John 18:35-38 (ESV)]

Indeed, we also must ask the question "What is truth?" Pilate's arrogant and sarcastic confrontation was Pilate's response to Jesus. But as you read the entire 18th chapter of John's gospel, Peter (the outspoken "radical" among the disciples and the preeminent among them) lied to a servant girl, denying that he was one of Jesus' disciples (v. 17); and when asked by a group of others warming themselves by a fire, Peter once again lied, and denied being one of Jesus' disciples (v. 25). Then "One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, 'Did I not see you in the garden with him?' Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed." (vv. 26-27). So much for "truth".

The dictionary describes "truth" as an ACTUALITY or FACT or a transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality or a judgment, proposition, or idea that is true or accepted as true. I grew up with TRUTH through a love of country and for the rule of law (imparted, sometimes physically) in a loving Christian home. Dictionary meanings were not what was expected; but I certainly learned and respected TRUTH! The Ten Commandments included not only truths but the importance of truth: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." What does this mean? "We should love and fear God, and so we should not tell lies about our neighbor, nor betray, slander or defame him, but should apologize

for him, speak well for him, and interpret charitably all that he does.” [Luther’s Small Catechism]

Scouting also instilled the love of truth through the Scout Law, the first of which is “A Scout is TRUSTWORTHY.” (“Tell the truth and keep promises. People can depend on you.”)

The Hebrew word for “truth” (emet) has very specific meaning. It signifies completeness, as in “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” The Hebrew word is deliberately comprised of the first, middle and last letters of the 27-character Hebrew alphabet. Further, the first letter signifies the presence of the Almighty; take that character out and you have the word “met” which means “death.” If you take God out of the equation, truth becomes deadly! Truth is complete, whole, life-affirming; it is not an alternative to another truth, an alternative truth. When we affirm a prayer or a truth, we use a derivative word: “AMEN!” “It is so!” “I agree!” We seek truth in our lives, and we seek to affirm that truth through our actions, not just our words! Scriptures tell us what to do: “These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace.” [Zechariah 8:16 (ESV)]

The principles of truth, dignity, honor and respect within and for our nation are still, as always, expected for us and by us. We are now living at a transitional moment in time; at least temporarily, chaos and confusion may seem dominant. This may be a difficult time, and may bring remembrances of historical similarities. Many of those who are enforcing the rule of law are being rejected or even replaced by those who reject the law. Chaos in upper-levels of government are beyond our control.

As citizens, and especially as Christians, we must act appropriately with honor and dignity under the law, under the Constitution, and in accord with our pledge “to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands”. It is also our responsibility to keep all of our governmental officials in our prayers, that they may be God’s servants for justice and righteousness [Romans 13:1-10]. After all, like the mythical Superman, we too are fighting for “Truth, Justice and the American Way.”

“AMEN” to that! May it be so!

Or as Luther puts it:

“This is most certainly TRUE!”

Call for Advisory Council Members of the Lutheran World Parish

One of the unique ministries within The Lutheran Church – International is the Lutheran World Parish. This ministerial outreach is authorized by the LC-I Constitution. It provides a unique opportunity for outreach in sharing the message of the Gospel and our understanding of the Evangelical Catholic position within the Lutheran understanding of the universal church.

To strengthen and improve its effectiveness, the Lutheran World Parish is planning to form an Advisory Council. Drawn from the entire LC-I’s list of active members in good standing, the Council will advise the Archbishop and the Board on ways to enhance and promote the outreach of the World Parish.

Those who are interested and who feel called to join in this important ministry are invited to express their interest to the Archbishop at bishophotes@icloud.net or 217-691-3090. While no member in good standing will be excluded from consideration, the Archbishop will make the determination as to membership. It is hoped that the Council will have representation of both laity and clergy and will include members who represent the population served by the World Parish.

In addition to the official LC-I members selected for the Advisory Council, the Archbishop may select advisors from others who are friends of the LC-I who are strong supporters of the Evangelical Catholic position but who are not formal LC-I members. These individuals will serve as auxiliaries to the Advisory Council.



Rosedale Congregations of Southeast Queens Hold Ecumenical Worship for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Clergy representing four congregations in the Rosedale section of Southeast Queens in New York City celebrated the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18 - 25) at a Rosedale Ecumenical Service with Evensong on Sunday, January 19th. The special worship was hosted by St. Peter's Episcopal Church. The host rector, the Very Rev. Dr. Steve Foster, led the liturgical section, and the choir of St. Peter's led in the musical portions. The Rev. Daniel O. Kingsley, pastor of both St. Clare's and St. Pius X Roman Catholic Churches, was the preacher for the celebration.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Aubrey N. Bougher, STS, bishop of the LC-I's Northeastern Diocese whose cathedral is Christ Church, Rosedale, was in procession and participated in liturgical leadership representing the Lutheran congregation there. Also present was the Rev. Fr. John Nimako, associate pastor of St. Clare's, who participated in the procession and liturgical leadership.

A deacon from St. Clare's led in some of the prayers and LC-I Deacon Sevika Sooppersaud, a parish deacon from Christ Church, served as one of the lectors. Members from St. Peter's also served as lectors and assistants.

The rite followed the use suggested by the Graymoor Fathers, who annually publish Week of Prayer for Christian Unity materials.

Ecumenical co-operation in Rosedale has existed for well over 60 years, beginning during the time the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council was held. A number of parishioners from each of the congregations were present for the rite.

LC-I Bishop Bougher, who served as pastor of Christ Church 1981-2015, participated in joint services throughout his ministry in Rosedale. He continues to serve as a guest preacher at the Seven Last Words liturgy at St. Peter's on Good Friday afternoon as he has done since 1982.



Top Left:

L to R The Rev. Fr. John Nimako, associate pastor of St. Clare's Roman Catholic Church, Rosedale, NY; The Very Rev. Dr. Steve Foster, rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Rosedale, NY; The Rt. Rev. Dr. Aubrey N. Bougher, STS, bishop of the Northeastern Diocese, Lutheran Church - International with cathedral at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Christ, Rosedale, NY; and the Rev. Daniel O. Kingsley, pastor of St. Clare's Roman Catholic Church and St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church, both in Rosedale, NY. This photo was posed after the Ecumenical Service was completed.

Top Right:

The clergy Procession from the chancel of St. Peter's at the end of the Ecumenical Service, led by Fr. Nimako, followed by Fr. Kingsley, Bp. Bougher, and Fr. Foster. Members of the congregation in the chancel are in the photo.

Left: The presiding clergy jointly pronounce the blessing at the end of the Ecumenical Service: Fr. Kingsley, Fr. Foster, and Bishop Bougher.



A Glimpse of the Beautiful Setting for Annual Synod XXVI

(Special thanks to Lisa Estes and Hannah Graham of the Claggett Center for permission to reproduce these photos.)



Claggett Center Rests in the Farmland of Frederick County



Monocacy Hall & Sugarloaf Dining Contain Conference Rooms



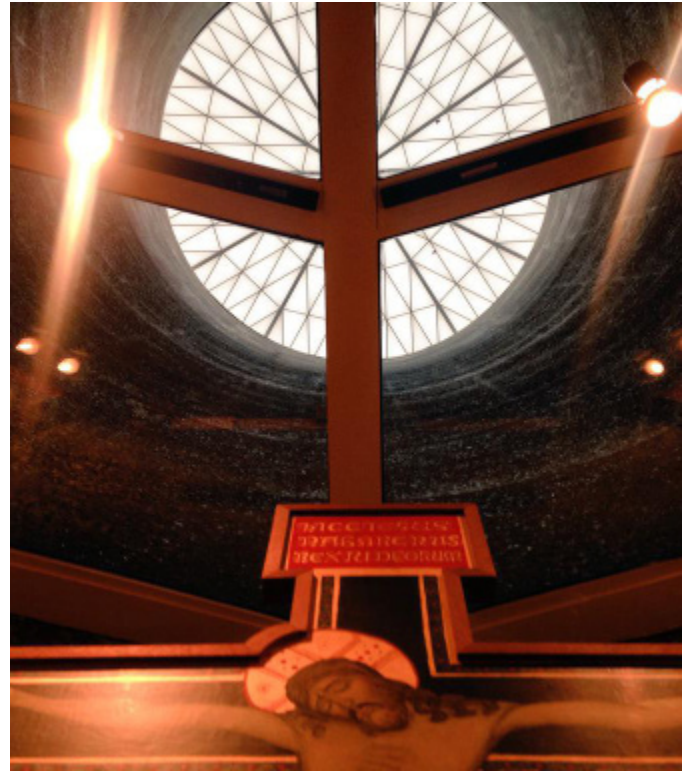
The Newly Renovated Historic Barn Includes a Gathering Space and Youth Dining Hall



Beautiful View From the Front of the Christiane Inn



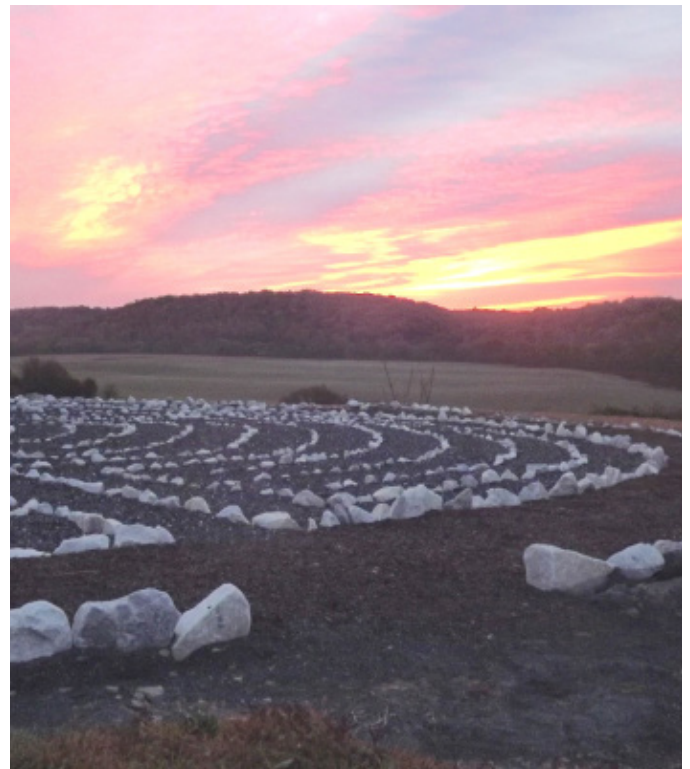
St. Andrew's Chapel, the Facility's Largest Workshop Space



The Silo Chapel, An Intimate Worship Space Created Out of the Original Farm Silo



The Lobby of the Christiane Inn Provides a Great Space for Connection and Conversation



The Outdoor Labyrinth, A Perfect Place for Personal Reflection



The Christiane Inn Holds Hotel-Style Rooms. Powell Hall (Large Red Building in the Background)
Their Iconic Dormitory Style Building for Youth Campers
Photo by Stuart Wright - 2019



Campus Map

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LUTHERAN CHURCH INTERNATIONAL
REGISTRATION FORM – ANNUAL SYNOD XXVI

Annual Synod XXVI of the Lutheran Church – International
Monday, June 23, 2025 to Wednesday, June 25, 2025
Annual Synod Registration Includes Room and Meals
Single - \$348 Double - \$530

Limited financial assistance may be available for attendance at the 2025 Synod gathering. Consideration will be based on individual cases. Those interested should make their requests known to their Bishop Ordinary. Approval will be determined by the LC-I Board.

PLEASE REGISTER BY MONDAY, JUNE 2, 2025

No. Attending: _____ Registration Confirmed _____ Registration PAID by _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

DIET RESTRICTIONS AND//OR FOOD ALLERGIES? PLEASE LIST THEM HERE:

SEND TO: The Rev. William Wigmore, Treasurer
15 High Street
Lyons, NY 14489
OR PastorWigmore@gmail.com
(215) 416-9591

====PLEASE RETURN THE ABOVE WITH YOUR REGISTRATION FEE BY JUNE 2, 2025====

Annual Synod XXVI of the Lutheran Church – International
June 23 – 25, 2025

Hosted by the LC-I Southern Diocese
Location: The Claggett Center
3035 Buckeystown Pike
Adamstown, MD 21710

Annual Synod Registration
Single: \$348 Double: \$530
(Fee Includes Room and Meals)

Nearest Airports from The Claggett Center

Dulles International – 40 Miles
Ronald Regan Washington National – 47 Miles

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Annual Synod XXVI Registration



*First Lutheran Church, Lyons, New York
LC-I Headquarters Church and Archbishop's Office*

Reminder –2025 Dues

FOR CONTINUING SUPPORT OF THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE LC – I
 Clergy and Lay Minister Membership Dues: \$75.00 U.S.D.
 Congregations / Communities of Faith Membership Dues: \$150.00 U.S.D.

Please maintain your good standing and credentialing! The dues are required for ordained and lay members and communities of faith who have been received and included on the official ministerial roster of the LC-I. All additional contributions, gifts, and bequests are gratefully received.

**LUTHERAN CHURCH – INTERNATIONAL
 2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

_____ 2025 Dues for Ministerial Members: \$75
 _____ 2025 Dues for Congregations and Communities of Faith: **\$150**
 _____ Gift _____ Bequest (*Amount*) _____
 _____ In Memory _____ In Thankfulness

For _____

Date _____ Check # _____ or Electronic Funds Transfer: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

SEND TO: The Rev. William Wigmore, Treasurer
 15 High Street
 Lyons NY 14489
OR PastorWigmore@gmail.com (1-215-416-9591)

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Synod Dues and Thankofferings