



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

Rumors, hoaxes, Luther and grace

IN 1943, there was a rumor that spread throughout North America that anyone could buy a brand new Ford automobile for the price of one penny. People were buzzing about the rumor. If the Internet had been around in those days, you would have had thousands of your friends sending you an alert about the unbelievable opportunity.



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President

The rumor was that anyone who would bring in a new, 1943 U.S. copper penny could purchase a new Ford automobile. People, by the thousands, called Ford wanting details. Banks were deluged by people wanting as many pennies as they could get in their hands. Finally, Ford had to admit the rumor was a hoax. Out of the billions of pennies minted in 1943, none of them had a speck of copper in them. Pennies were made of zinc because copper was too valuable for the Allied effort in World War II.

St. Paul put an end to another rumor that was flying around the first-century Christian Church. It's still true today: you can't be saved by a hoax! Good works can't justify a person before God! Righteousness and salvation are gifts

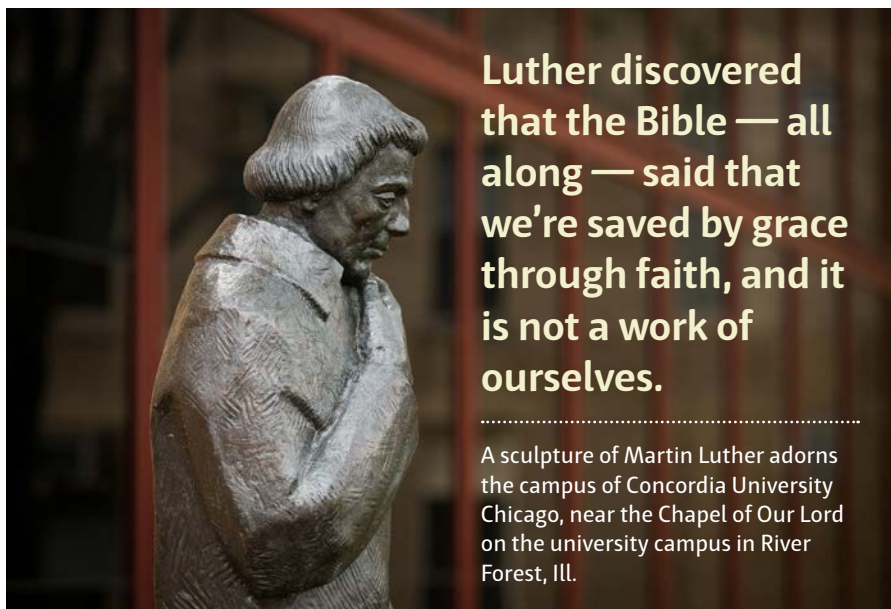
from God's grace through faith. Martin Luther told King Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, 1,500 years later, that this truth has never changed: we are still saved by grace through faith alone.

Rumors, hoaxes, confusion and corruption in Luther's time threatened the pure teaching of God's grace. But around 1517, the Church needed money. Money was hard to find. So some eager clergymen decided to go on the road and demand money in exchange for the forgiveness of sins. People were urged

to pay money to show how sorry they were for their sins, to beat themselves to perform unusual punishments and ritually do all sorts of things before full forgiveness could fully be pronounced. Even after a poor soul died, the 16th-century Church taught that families had to pay to release the deceased from the torment and punishment of purgatory.

An outspoken monk was confused by all the price tags and gimmicks foisted on the Church for forgiveness, grace and repentance. He only asked for an answer. He discovered that the Bible — all along — said that we're saved by grace through faith, and it is not a work of ourselves. He couldn't understand why, nor could he find anywhere in the Bible that money ever even entered into the equation of God's grace toward

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Luther discovered that the Bible — all along — said that we're saved by grace through faith, and it is not a work of ourselves.

A sculpture of Martin Luther adorns the campus of Concordia University Chicago, near the Chapel of Our Lord on the university campus in River Forest, Ill.

MESSAGE

mankind. Even though he needed an answer, that solitary monk was turned away. “Don’t trouble yourself,” he was told, “Do your job, teach what you’ve been told, not what you read.”

But the monk, Luther, was troubled to the point that he took the time to write out 95 questions. The Bible said one thing and the 16th-century clergy said something completely different. He printed the 95 questions and nailed them to the Wittenberg cathedral door, just wanting answers. He didn’t want anything new ... just answers.

Every commentary I read in seminary — whether Lutheran, Reformed, Catholic, Orthodox and even Jewish literature — quotes Luther and his scholarship. He wrote more than 250 books and preached at least twice a week. He had the Bible printed in the language of the day and made it possible to put Scripture into common folk’s homes. He held the position as the head of theology, raised a family and traveled extensively throughout Western Europe. And yet Luther still found time to pray, study Scripture and routinely did his devotional studies for six hours each day.

The misguided clergy had muddied up the distinction of God’s pure Gospel and human works and performances. St. Paul wrote to the Roman Christians that the Gospel is God’s pure promise of grace. The Gospel promise is God’s gift and God’s work, not ours. Salvation, forgiveness and grace cannot be replaced by human decision, human work or human obedience. Grace is purely and solely God’s action on our behalf.

The Gospel was first pronounced out of God’s love for our humanity when Adam and Eve fell into sin. Instead of destroying the creatures He created in His image, God pronounced the Gospel of grace. His pronouncement of grace never changed when God reassured Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the faithful of old that He would offer His grace to expunge the punishment of the sins of the whole world. The Gospel Promise neared its completion when the whole world heard the announcement of God’s angels proclaiming that our Savior was born to redeem, to save and to win God’s pure grace.

The Pharisees had already perverted



God’s pure grace before God Himself became enfleshed in our humanity. Christ was born. Ritual demands for pious works and requirements under religious laws brought nothing but despair and fear. But Christ brought the light of truth and announced God’s grace to everyone. Superstition, rituals, legalism, false rumors and hoaxes were gone. The only justification for mankind was the sacrificial, vicarious suffering and death of God’s own Son. The only justification for anyone is to receive God’s own payment for sins by faith, and this is a gift of the Holy Spirit, not by human reason or decision, says St. Paul.

Because we’re celebrating Luther’s “re-discovery of God’s grace,” and it’s about this time of the year that we see millions of young people returning to schools, it seems most appropriate that we focus on the second imperative of the Great Commission — “Making new disciples ... by teaching [the new disciples] to observe all that Jesus commanded” (Matt. 28:16).

Justification by God’s grace is the foremost doctrine upon which the Christian faith rises or falls. Justification by grace through faith is the center of our Lutheran Confessions, the seed of life in a saving faith and the focal point which brings us God’s work of salvation. Justification by grace through faith, in Christ alone, revealed in Scripture alone,

is the only key by which anyone may enter eternal peace with God.

Our sin is not eliminated because we can blame someone or something else. Liberal theology has turned God into some old, senile grandfather who wouldn’t think of punishing anyone. New age theology searches for perfect harmony in all creation for peace. Eastern religions construct gods from imagination and probability. But in the end, there is no justification by our works. We’re all sinners by our very nature who fall short of God’s glory. The only righteousness in the eyes of God is perfect righteousness. By receiving Christ’s perfect life and innocent death, woven together by the work of God, He gives us the perfection of the Son of God — to stand justified before God’s throne.

If someone in 1943 did find a copper penny, would it be worth millions, or nothing? Since there were no copper pennies minted that year, it would be worth a penny, but counterfeit. Just like trying to get a single penny that never existed, our feeble attempts of self-righteousness and pious works are just an awful hoax, an empty counterfeit rumor that leaves us sad and short of winning the prize that has already been paid by the blood of Christ.

How, indeed, can sinners stand before a perfect and righteous God? Despite rumors of modern thinking, flawed theology and hoaxes, God is still holy and living. Sin is still sin. Human works and reason are nothing but filthy rags. We can’t beg, buy or reason ourselves around salvation or forgiveness. We stand before our Almighty God — justified by the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We can now stand confidently, covered with His righteousness alone, faultless, spotless and declared innocent before God. It’s no hoax. It can’t be bought for a 1943 copper penny or a billion dollars. We can’t ever do enough to prove ourselves worthy to receive it. But it’s free for us because God gave His life out of His love for us all. It’s free for us all by faith in Him. So we can rejoice in His love, mercy and grace. It belongs to you. It’s free and worth more than just a penny or trillions of dollars. It’s life everlasting through Christ alone.



LHM creates online space for conversations about life, faith — and Jesus

HOW CAN MISSION-MINDED CHRISTIANS SHARE THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS if the people we want to reach are not on or near those traditional trails of faith? Lutheran Hour Ministries' answer is to blaze new trails! LHM launched THRED to share the message of Jesus in the digital space.

At one time, people looked to institutions like the church for guidance and perspective to understand the issues they face in their lives. In today's digital age, people increasingly go online to learn, connect and even build relationships.

Christ always

The message of Jesus is still relevant in this digital space. That's why Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) created THRED.

The mission of THRED is to foster open and honest dialogue between people from different backgrounds. We believe the Holy Spirit works in these types of interactions.

This means people share viewpoints that are sometimes challenging to Christians, but these are the very people that THRED is trying to reach online. Allowing others to share their thoughts

opens the door for THRED to share a Christian perspective.

Through THRED, LHM is creating online spaces for people of all different backgrounds to talk about life and faith. Jesus and Christianity are part of THRED's content and conversations, but we want to provide a safe environment where people can share multiple perspectives. The point is to be true to our Christian identity, which includes genuinely

listening to other views.

At LHM, we think this is a highly effective way to engage mass audiences around topics like life, faith and Jesus. Already, amazing numbers of people are interacting with THRED's content.

LHM's prayer is that the organic growth



VISIT THRED.org
LIKE THRED at Facebook.
 com/ourTHRED
SUBSCRIBE at YouTube.
 com/THRED

of this mission strategy will continue to accelerate:

- ▶ Total number of times a piece of THRED content was viewed in the first three months: 2,075,707
- ▶ Weekly average of times a piece of THRED content was viewed: 159,670

What can you do?

The digital landscape is changing constantly, which is why support is critical. You can help THRED start conversations with more people. You can join us by sharing THRED's content, volunteering, and by making a gift to support THRED's mission. Every \$10 you give enables us to reach 1,000 with the Gospel.

Get involved at lhm.org/thred, call 1-800-876-9880 or send an email to lh_min@lhm.org.



Congregation mission commitment receipts
as of June 30, 2017 (6 months)

Anticipated amount (50% of budget)	\$786,572
Actual receipts	\$799,506
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$12,934
Use of mission commitment receipts	
Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$227,352
Allocated to Tanzania	\$12,500
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts) ...	\$559,654
Total receipts	\$799,506
Mission commitment receipts comparison	
Actual receipts as of June 30, 2017	\$799,506
Actual receipts as of June 30, 2016	\$788,177
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$11,329

MILESTONES

The Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Ordained ministers celebrating anniversaries in 2017



65 Years

Rev. Robert Miskimen (em)
Bella Vista, Ark.

60 Years

Rev. Paul Donner (em)
Paducah, Ky.

Rev. Donley Hesse (em)
Mena, Ark.

Rev. Herbert Klepatz
Nashville, Tenn.

Rev. John Schulz (em)
Knoxville, Tenn.

55 Years

Rev. Wesley Toncre (em)
Conway, Ark.

Rev. Fred Hagemeister (em)
Lakeview, Ark.

50 Years

Rev. James Evers (em)
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

45 Years

Rev. Peter Ave-Lallemant
Faith, Fairfield Bay, Ark.

Rev. William Barthel (em)
Loudon, Tenn.

Rev. Paul Baumann (em)
Paragould, Ark.

Rev. Gary Heckmann (em)
Cookeville, Tenn.

40 Years

Rev. Jan Munch (em)
Athens, Tenn.

Rev. Don Schmidt
Messiah, Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Roland Schutz (em)
Benton, Ark.

35 Years

Rev. Gary Carstens (em)
Mena, Ark.

Rev. Keith Enko
Emmanuel, Hermitage, Tenn.

Rev. Stewart Marshall
Trinity, Pine Bluff, Ark.

Rev. Richard Mayer (em)
Bentonville, Ark.

30 Years

Rev. Steven Harmon
Bethlehem, Johnson City, Tenn.

Rev. H. Christopher Sheets
Good Shepherd, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. Russell Shewmaker
Pilgrim, Jonesboro, Ark.

25 Years

Rev. Jon Bischof
St. Matthew, Corning, Ark.

20 Years

Rev. Mark Goble
Christ the King, Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Mark Louderback
Beautiful Savior, Olive Branch, Miss.

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
Mid-South District President

Rev. Andrew Smith
Heavenly Host, Cookeville, Tenn.

15 Years

Rev. Tracy Nelson
Our Savior, Nashville, Tenn.

Rev. Chad Philipp
St. Paul, Gillett, Ark.

Rev. Kenneth Shaw
Trinity, Gallatin, Tenn.

10 Years

Rev. Daniel Hauser
Christ, Little Rock, Ark.

Rev. Robert Portier
St. Paul, Sevierville, Tenn.



Rev. Gregory Truwe
Concordia, Jackson, Tenn.

Rev. David Vandercook
Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle, Ark.
Trinity, North Little Rock, Ark.

5 Years

Rev. Mark Bushuiakovish
Grace, Knoxville, Tenn.

Rev. William Stevenson
Trinity, Dyersburg, Tenn.

Rev. Joshua Woodrow
First, Chattanooga, Tenn.

*Well done, good and faithful
servants!*

Installations



The Point, Knoxville, Tenn., joyfully celebrated the installation of the Rev. Adam Woldt on July 9. This church, planted by the Rev. Matt Peebles seven years ago, meets in a movie theater and seeks “to connect with the disconnected.” The Rev. Greg Bears preached during the service with more than 200 in attendance, and the Rev. Stephen Skov officiated over the Rite of Installation.



The ordination and installation of the Rev. JD Zischke as district missionary-at-large to the Fayetteville, Ark., area was recently celebrated at Grace, Little Rock. Clergy attending were, from left, (front row) the Revs. Paul Jilg, emeritus; John Gierke, Peace, Conway; Roger Schoolcraft, emeritus; Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; Zischke; Mark Barz, Crown of Life, San Antonio, Texas, and Zischke’s father-in-law; Jon Beyer, Faith, Hot Springs; Michael Schleider, Zion, Alexander; (back row) David Witte, Grace, Little Rock; Paul Hass, Bella Vista, Bella Vista; Gordon Besel, Holy Trinity, Rogers; Robert Herring, Grace, Holiday Isle; Dr. Tim Saleska, professor, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; and Brandon Martin, Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale.



Family grows at Concordia, Nashville

Concordia Lutheran Church, Nashville, recently welcomed new members: from left, (front row) Lisa Cannone, Kelli Noyes, Jon Foss (with his son, Liam, who was also recently baptized at Concordia); (back row) Alicia and Mitl Montoya, Paul Doster, Michael Noyes and the Rev. Dr. Eric Phillips, pastor, Concordia. Not pictured is Harold Rogers.



Confirmed at Bethlehem

On June 4, the Rev. Steve Harmon confirmed four young adults into full membership at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Johnson City, Tenn. A dinner was held the night before to honor the young men and women, who were joined by their parents, relatives and friends. From left, Ruth Wudtke, Johnny Neal, Harmon, Dylan Treece and Camron Scruggs.



Watch the movie on PBS



"Martin Luther: The Idea that Changed the World," the full-length feature film that premiered in selected theaters in February, is set to air nationally on PBS on Tuesday, Sept. 12, at 7 p.m. Central time. Congregations still may arrange screenings of the film at their local theaters. Visit NewLutherMovie.com for information on how to host and promote a screening, as well as resources including a sample bulletin insert, poster, artwork and the movie trailer.

Funded by Thrivent Financial, the film dramatizes the events that shaped Luther and examines the questions he wrestled with, such as "Who am I?," "What is my purpose?" and "How do I get right with God?"

Documentary highlights **IMPACT OF REFORMATION** on today's world

Martin Luther triggered the Reformation in 1517 with the posting of his 95 Theses on the Castle Church doors in Wittenberg, Germany. Now, 500 years later, that momentous event that ignited the West continues to have a great effect on our lives and our world, stretching from the church and beyond.

In celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation this year, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, has produced a series of videos highlighting how the Reformation surrounds us today through religion, politics and society.

In "500: The Impact of the Reformation Today," some of the world's leading Reformation and Luther scholars share their expertise on the modern-day effects of the Reformation.

"Whether intended or not, the consequences of the 16th century Reformation were far-reaching and long-lived," said the Rev. Dr. Erik Herrmann, director of the seminary's Center for Reformation Research and

the documentary's executive producer. "We often don't realize how profoundly the actions of a lone monk shaped the Western world in its religious, social and political makeup. But here we are, 500 years later, in a world that could only exist because of those tumultuous times."

The documentary is available in a variety of versions: a multipart topical series, a five-part miniseries with one-hour documentary, or a full feature-length version.

This documentary delves beyond the history of the Reformation, showing how its events and leaders left lasting effects on almost every aspect of modern-day life.

Four years in the making, portions of the documentary were shot on location throughout Germany, where the Reformation events occurred.

To view, go to reformation500.csl.edu. For more information, email communications@csl.edu or call 800-822-5287.



Time to get busy!

Fall opportunities include mission projects, retreats

By Julie Keck
LWML Mid-South District
Media and Marketing

"**LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION**" is all about doing God's work and this fall is a great time to gather the women and youth of your congregation for a mission project.

Two ideas for fall mission projects are personal care kits and school kits. These are easy to put together and a fun event for all ages. Once the kits are assembled, your group can send them to Lutheran World Relief (LWR) or take the kits to local homeless shelters and schools.



LWR has easy instructions for the kits at lwr.org/get-involved. If you are giving the kits out locally, contact the agency, shelter or school to find out specifically what is needed.

One way to make this mission project easier is to get \$250 in seed money by creating a Thrivent Action Team. Any participant of your group who has a policy with Thrivent Financial can apply for support for your mission project. Go to thrivent.com, click "Making a Difference" and select "Thrivent Action Teams" to learn how to apply.

Fall is also the time for the **LWML Mid-South District retreats!** The theme is "Beautiful Feet" and we will enjoy Bible study, fellowship, singing and celebrating our lives in Christ.

Visit midsouthlwml.org for more information and to register. There are three retreats:

- ▶ Sept. 8-10, Morrilton, Ark.
- ▶ Sept. 15-17, Lexington, Tenn.
- ▶ Sept. 22-24, Tallassee, Tenn.

We are Lutheran Women in Mission — let's get busy!

Scenes from the convention



Snapshots taken of the group representing the LWML Mid-South District at the 37th Biennial Convention in Albuquerque, N.M., in June include, clockwise from top, the entire group; from left, Young Woman Representative (YWR) Angela Lukens, LWML Mid-South District President Diane Reimold and YWR Ashley Tieman carry the district banner in the processional that began the convention; Reimold presented an LWML tie to Mid-South District President Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola during the district caucus prior to the convention.



LWML moves forward with new logo

At the 37th Biennial Convention in Albuquerque in June, the Lutheran Woman's Missionary League unveiled a new logo to lead Lutheran women into the next 75 years of mission work.

Through this identity, the hope is to empower members through deeper connections, tradition and the desire to serve God. The

symbol was created with this in mind, one that represents the members of both the LWML and the church:

A heart to represent the love and giving nature of the members; a drop to symbolize the blood of Christ; and a cross above all else to proudly show the purpose behind the efforts of the LWML.



Young people are at war

By David Cox

Director, Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean

They may not be aware of it, but young people are in the midst of a spiritual battle for their hearts and minds. The war is real and produces real casualties, as every Christian parent knows.

The ultimate victory is already won; with His suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ defeated sin, death and the devil. But until His triumphant return on the last day, His children still face an onslaught of attacks from the enemy.

The good news is that God provides the weapons to withstand the enemy's assaults. Young believers who attend the LinkT retreats in November and February will learn how to successfully navigate some of the most difficult challenges they face.

The theme of this year's retreats is "War." The theme verse is 2 Cor. 10:3-5:

"For though we walk in the flesh,



we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to Christ."

LinkT retreats, held at the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean, are for LCMS Mid-South District youth and their friends. Since the first LinkT retreat in 2015, two dozen churches in Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky have sent youth and adult volunteers to the retreats for faith-building messages, fellowship and fun. Nearly 300 attended the retreats last fall and winter.

This year's junior high retreat is set for Nov. 10-12. The senior high retreat is Feb. 8-10, 2018.

LinkT retreats include singing, hiking the trails at Petit Jean State Park, servant events, large-group games, great meals and campfires. The retreat also includes small group discussions and mass worship events with lots of singing

and challenging messages from pastors and youth leaders. The Rev. Clayton Sellers, pastor of Faith, Collierville, will deliver the main message on Sunday morning. Guests are invited.

The cost of the retreat is \$120 a person. But those who register and pay by the early registration deadline of Oct. 22 pay only \$95.

Youth leaders can register or learn

more about the retreats at the website linktyouth.com. They can also contact the Rev. Mark Tooley at Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, at 501-329-3854, or David Cox at the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean, 501-652-6304 or director@lutherancamp.org.

ANNIVERSARIES

(50 or more years)

- ▶ **Franklin and Shirley Zoch** of Faith Lutheran, Hot Springs Village, Ark., celebrated 56 years of marriage on July 1.
- ▶ **Juergen and Ursula Nolte** of Faith Lutheran, Hot Springs Village, Ark., celebrated 55 years of marriage on July 21.

Deadline for the November issue is Sept. 15

Digital files, sent via email, are preferred. Email submissions to lw@mid-southlcms.com, or mail via U.S. Postal Service to: **Judy Otto, 150 N. Maury St., Holly Springs, MS 38635**

Our submission deadline is the 15th of each month, two months before publication.

