

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



Lutheran Concerns Association
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The International Lutheran Council “A Beacon to Worldwide Lutheranism”

On August 29, 2017, the International Lutheran Council (ILC), Inc. was registered in the State of Delaware as an independent corporation. There comes the time when grown children move out of the home and into their vocations. Parents spend years preparing their children for this bittersweet moment. They teach them the life skills and character they need to survive and succeed out in the world. They are independent, but not alone. They continue to be loved, encouraged and supported by their parents.

So it is with the ILC and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The July 20-25, 2019, Synod Convention in Tampa Bay, Florida, adopted Resolution 5-08 by unanimous voice vote, “To Commend and Support the International Lutheran Council.” Reading the Resolution is like listening to parents who are not afraid to tell their children how proud they are of them.

“WHEREAS, The ILC has become a beacon to worldwide Lutheranism by upholding the Holy Scriptures as the infallible Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions...[the delegates]...*Resolved*, That the LCMS give thanks to God for more than 25 years of membership in and for the expansion of the ILC...”

The delegates commended the ILC as

“...a place for worldwide Lutheran churches to be strengthened in the Holy Scripture and in Lutheran identity.”

The final resolve encouraged the LCMS to learn more about the work of the ILC and to support this work. Learn more and support. A good place to begin is the ILC webpage (<https://ilc-online.org/>). It contains the history and bylaws which succinctly explain the origin, nature and purpose of the organization plus an up-to-date, constantly growing list of the sixty member churches, their leaders and seminaries. It includes documents and statements addressing theological issues, news and commentary on pertinent global developments impacting church, faith and life, and up-to-date news from ILC churches. Learn more and support. The ILC webpage also includes instructions on how to send donations to support the work of the Council.

In 2019 I was asked to write an article for the *Lutheran Clarion* giving examples of the positive activities undertaken by confessional Lutherans around the world. The arti-

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A Price too High to Pay

For the past several years, activists have targeted faith-based colleges in their war on biblical sexuality.

First, it was through the so-called “Shame List” that was created to stigmatize faith-based colleges and apply pressure to these schools to change their policies to no longer require students to adhere to biblical standards of human sexuality. In California, they attempted to pass a law that would have denied students attending faith based schools to receive state grants, effectively drying up the source of income for many schools to remain in business. Thankfully, many of the colleges and their alumni took a stand and defeated that effort. Now, 33 activists have filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Eugene, Oregon, to achieve this same goal: forfeit your standards or forfeit your money (and with it most of your students).

This is an alarming attack on religious liberty and the rights of conscience. It is not a coincidence that this lawsuit was filed concurrently with the so-called “Equality Act” that is working its way through Congress. The “Equality Act” extends the federal Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and “gender identity” and would strip churches, faith-based colleges, and organizations of their ability to require their members, students, and employees to adhere to a faith-based code of conduct. For instance, students who attend faith-based schools would no longer be able to receive federally guaranteed student loans and any other form of government assistance to attend these schools. The result would be devastating for these colleges, many of which would be forced to close their doors.

This is ultimately the intention of these efforts and these lawsuits: to no longer allow any Christian expression of faith, both outside and inside the church and college campus. The new rules are: if you want to keep your doors open, you must bow to the government’s agenda.

Unfortunately, in many instances, we have already seen some faith-based organizations and colleges bow to Caesar and forsake their standards to continue receiving money. Having seen these college and organizations

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cle was titled, “A Snapshot of the ILC, Concordia Theological Seminary and Global Confessional Lutheranism” (Vol. 11:3, January 2019). It documented how in recent years the ILC has quietly experienced a remarkable transformation which has gone largely unnoticed. A few months ago, the *Clarion* asked me to write a follow-up article focusing specifically on the International Lutheran Council as a newly independent corporation.

The 2015 world conference in Buenos Aires resolved “to strengthen the reach of the ILC...by adopting revised bylaws to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century; by legally incorporating as a non-profit; [and] by developing programs that benefit its members.” The 2018 World Conference in Antwerp, Belgium, welcomed leaders from over 50 confessional Lutheran churches and seventeen new churches into the ILC.

The ILC recognizes three classes of membership:

- **Members** are official, organized church bodies that accept the doctrinal basis of the ILC and enjoy voting rights.
- **Associate Members** are official, organized church bodies that accept the doctrinal basis of the ILC but do not find it expedient to seek voting rights.
- A third class of members are called **Others**, and include three subclasses of membership:
 - (a) **Observers** are official, organized churches which do not currently qualify as Members or Associate Members, but which seek to affiliate with the ILC.
 - (b) **Recognized Organizations** are ecclesiastical organizations other than official, organized church bodies such as councils, districts, dioceses, organized movements and individual congregations.
 - (c) **Individuals**. (See ILC website and Bylaws Art. II.3)

The ILC is a growing worldwide association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God. The ILC is not a church body nor does it carry out churchly functions.

Since the Buenos Aires World Conference (2015) the ILC has been occupied with implementing the many structural changes required to organize the Council as a truly independent corporation on the basis of its official bylaws. Personnel changes in 2019 included my election as General Secretary, the appointment of Mr. Gerry Wiley of Columbia City, Missouri, as treasurer, and Mrs. Alison Blodget of Fort Wayne as Office and Business Manager. The Office, which had been temporarily moved from the International Center to Concordia Publishing House, has finally found a home on the campus of Concordia Theo-

logical Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The mailing address however remains unchanged. Send all mail to: **International Lutheran Council, PO Box 10149, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46850 USA**. Telephone 314-800-0310; email info@ilccouncil.org.

I am pleased to report that the ILC Board of Directors, under the leadership of Chairman Rev. Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt (SELK), continue to support the established programs such as the World, Regional and Seminary conferences, each held in a different year on a three-year cycle. The COVID pandemic has caused some cancellations and postponements. Regional conferences were cancelled in 2020. The next World Conference originally scheduled to take place in Kenya in September 2021 has been postponed until 2022. The Lutheran Leadership Development Program continues but classes have been postponed since the outbreak of the virus.

One tragic result of COVID was the death of the president of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, MLC (Fianganana Loterana Malagasy, FLM). Dr. David Rakatonirina was an untiring, bold leader who was committed to strengthening Confessional Lutheran doctrine and practice in his homeland. He was instrumental in bringing the Lutheran Church in Madagascar into the ILC. The church has 4 million baptized members, 1,731 pastors and 7,000 congregations. On November 5, 2020, the MLC elected Rev. Dr. Denis Rakotozafy as its new president. Rev. Rakotozafy, along with many other newly elected church officials, are committed to the theological position of the ILC. Rakotozafy earned a PhD from Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne in 2018.

Two Lutheran Church dioceses in Tanzania have recently joined the ILC. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania—South East Lake Victoria Diocese joined the ILC under the visionary leadership of Bishop Emmanuel Makala (D. Min from CTS, Ft. Wayne in 2016). The diocese was formally declared a Recognized Organization observer member in February 2019 at the ILC Board of Directors ZOOM meeting which had been scheduled for Wittenberg, Germany. On that joyful occasion, Bishop Makala is quoted as saying:

“We understand that there is a big contradiction between the teachings and practices of African churches and much of world Lutheranism today.” Bishop Makala continued, “We pray for and witness to those who would change the church into a secular entity focused

The *Lutheran Clarion*—13 Years!

In September 2020, we started our 13th year of publishing the *Clarion*. We strive to present and uphold the truth of God’s Holy Word. **We could use your help.**

If you can help with our costs, there’s an enclosed envelope to mail your check to Lutheran Concerns Association, 149 Glenview Drive, New Kensington, PA 15068-4921. Do it now. **Thank you!!**



Planning for the 2022 LCA Conference is Underway: Monday, January 17, 2022

Besides a great set of speakers, the conference will feature the very popular Sunday and Monday night dinners where attendees can informally meet the speakers and discuss the issues facing church and society.



Watch the *Clarion* for information about hotel accommodations, the attendance form, and dinner reservations. The expected location is Fort Wayne, Indiana.

solely on human rights rather than on being the Church.” For that reason, he said, the ELCT-SELVD is grateful for the work of the International Lutheran Council. “The ILC remains faithful to the Scriptures and the Confessions. We remain also in that understanding and will not abuse our consciences.”

On September 21, 2020, the ILC Board of Directors voted to accept the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania – Lake Tanganyika Diocese (ELCT-LTD) into Recognized Organization membership. The ELCT-LTD is the youngest diocese of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania. It grew out of mission work in the ELCT in two Tanzanian administrative regions, namely Rukwa and Katavi, and was formally constituted in 2014. It consists of 10,044 baptized members, 35 pastors and 22 congregations. The diocese was registered as an autonomous church body in 2015. Over the next five years it found itself attracted to confessional Lutheranism largely through the influence of neighboring Tanzanian bishop Makala and the theological education and human care ministry of Concordia Theological Seminary and the LCMS.

“As we evangelize, we have come to realize that the ILC is the faith-based organization with which to cooperate, for it can help strengthen us to witness of the Good News of Jesus Christ boldly,” said ELCT-LTD Bishop Ambele Mwaipopo, noting the ILC’s strong confessional Lutheran theology. “The ILC can play a role of nurturer so that the ELCT-LTD keeps in the right direction.”

The pastors and laity of the Tanganyika Diocese agree with Bishop Mwaipopo. The General Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania—Lake Tanganyika Diocese meeting November 4-7, 2020, voted unanimously to become a member of the ILC. This brings the total membership of the ILC to 60 churches, 7,201,504 baptized members, 11,214 pastors and 19,157 congregations.

In spite of the COVID restrictions, the ILC has continued in the spirit of the Buenos Aires resolve to “develop programs that benefit its members.” Family friends recently shared with us the endearing story of how their daughter met a wonderful Christian young man. Their

relationship blossomed immediately. Then suddenly—COVID, and it became a virtual relationship over the internet. The choice between a virtual and “real” date is a no brainer. Since last March the ILC international enterprise has also gone virtual, with work being carried out via skype, ZOOM and old-fashioned email. Truth be told, COVID restrictions have had a frustrating effect in many areas; nevertheless, there is encouraging progress to report.

According to the ILC Bylaws, Art. II.2, the “Nature and Functions” of the ILC is to further “united diaconal action through intentional acts and programs of mercy in response to human need and suffering.” At the January 18 meeting, the Board of Directors (BOD) instructed the General Secretary to appoint a task force to study how the ILC might best implement this Bylaw.

As the ILC expands its global work, it will require a significant increase in donations. The annual dues from the 60 members, many of whom are small or newly emerging churches, is not sufficient to meet the current and future needs. To help meet the financial demands of its expanding work, the ILC BOD called Rev. Roger James as Assistant to the General Secretary. He will oversee the establishment of a fundraising department which to date does not exist. He will also assist the General Secretary with administrative and “church relations” issues that require pastoral, theological and international ecclesiastical experience. Rev. James served in the parish for 20 years (1992-2012) and as an LCMS missionary to South Asia as Area Director (2012-2018) where his duties included Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh. He taught at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Baguio City, Philippines (2018-2020). He holds an M.Div., S.T.M. and is a PhD candidate at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne.

Upon the request from the *Lutheran Clarion* to write a post-Tampa Bay synod convention update, the first title to emerge in my mind was something like, *Quid, Quare, Quo Vadimus? What, Why, Where is it going? What is the ILC? Why is it needed given the existence of the Lutheran World Federation which claims 148 member churches with 77 million people? And Where is it going?* I have attempted to answer some of these questions in this brief article. If you want to know *why* the ILC is needed, it is because Lutheran churches around the globe are looking for a beacon of hope in the world. If you want to know *why* the ILC is needed, even a cursory comparison of the LWF (<https://www.lutheranworld.org/>) and ILC (<https://ilc-online.org/>) websites reveal disparate views of theology and practice. Aside from the ILC, there is no global association which promotes an historical understanding of Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Where is it going? The ILC churches are actively going forward together with fellow Lutheran Churches who are committed to the Gospel and Lutheran Confessions. What will the future be like? No doubt there will be positive achievements but it will also be a rocky road with constant opposition, struggle, disappointments and set-

backs in a world that is often hostile to Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Nevertheless, we will not despair. It is the Lord's Church, his beloved bride, and He prays for his church and he has promised to be with her forever to the end of the age.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for all of us...Jesus Christ is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [Nothing] in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (*Rom 8:31-32, 34, 39*)

Until Christ comes again, faithful churches will work together around the world supporting one another and proclaiming Christ and the Gospel to a world in spiritual darkness. By the grace of God, let us strive to make the ILC a “beacon to worldwide Lutheranism” and “a place where worldwide Lutheran churches can be strengthened in the Holy Scripture and Lutheran identity.”

Rev. Dr. Timothy C. J. Quill

General Secretary of the International Lutheran Council since 2019; Dean of International Studies, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne 1996-2018

A Price too High to Pay
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“compromise” away their standards has only empowered those who seek to punish, and perhaps eventually criminalize, any institution or individual that holds to biblical beliefs. Through their “compromise” these institutions have thrown their brothers and sisters under the bus to be crushed in the name of “tolerance.”

Unfortunately, for years, many churches and faith-based institutions have been lulled to sleep with the argument advanced by those attacking religious liberty that no one is trying to take away their freedom to practice their faith, at least within the walls of the church and the institution. But time and again, we have seen this proven to be false.

In the days since the *Obergefell* decision, we have seen a relentless assault on faithful artists, photographers, and other creative professionals who did not want to use their talent to affirm such unions.

Finally, churches and faith-based institutions have been told that they will be free to practice their faith within the walls of their buildings. This is not true, as this lawsuit and the Equality Act clearly reveals. These same activists are coming directly for churches and faith-based institutions, by redefining them as “public accommodations” that must allow behavior that violates their faith, or face the legal and financial consequences.

For too long, the church and these faith-based institutions have bought into this fiction, and we are reaping the result of apathy and ignorance. The question we

must ask ourselves as faithful Lutherans is this: Will we stand against this assault? Or will we, like many others, wilt under pressure and bow to Caesar? I pray, for the sake of our nation, our children, grandchildren, and all succeeding generations that the answer is the former: that we will stand for freedom and fight against efforts such as these lawsuits and the Equality Act. The price of remaining on the sidelines is unthinkable.

Timothy Goeglein

Vice President of External and Government Relations for Focus on the Family

Editorial Note: Read the article below to find out how some church leaders are fighting the assault on college campuses that Mr. Goeglein describes.

President Harrison Signs Letter to Education Secretary Cardona

A Plea to Protect Faith-based Student Organizations

In early June, LCMS President Matthew Harrison signed a joint letter to U.S. Department of Education Secretary of Education Miguel A. Cardona. The letter asked Mr. Cardona to preserve regulations that “provide protections for faith-based student organizations and their contributions to religious diversity on public college campuses.” President Harrison was one of twenty-one signatories to the letter; other signers were clergy leaders, religious freedom groups and other Christian and non-Christian organizations.

The two regulations the signers cited “provide common sense protections for faith-based student organizations who have faced discrimination on some college campuses for nearly four decades.”

The letter continues, “Students do not surrender their constitutional rights when they arrive on public college campuses. Religious freedom is America’s first freedom, enshrined as a constitutional right in the First Amendment. ... The right to assemble together based on religiously informed beliefs is foundational to a free society. ...”

Additionally, “...student groups on some college and university campuses are denied the right to require that their leadership affirm the religious convictions of the organizations. They are put at risk of losing their official standing as a campus organization because they want the officers who lead them in prayer and in studying their respective sacred texts to agree with their religious beliefs.”

The Lutheran Concerns Board of Directors supports our synodical president in joining his voice with others to ask that our First Amendment freedoms be preserved. *The Reporter* published an article about the letter at <https://reporter.lcms.org/2021/harrison-signs-joint-letter-to-u-s-secretary-of-education/>. At that site you can read more about the regulations cited and the entire letter.

The Gospel and the Law Op-Ed Commentary

Tandon v Newsom No. 20A151 (U.S. April 9, 2021)

It was in a still, small voice that the prophet Elijah heard the voice of the Lord. (1 Kings 19). A still, small voice can speak loudly. It was in a still, small voice that the long awaited word from the Supreme Court of the United States came in *South Bay United Pentecostal Church vs. Newsom*, no. 20-746, on April 26, 2021. The Court reversed the judgment of the Court of Appeals. The appellate court had continued to uphold the pandemic related restrictions of the state of California on worship. The Court uttered two brief sentences:

The petition for a *writ of certiorari* is granted. The judgment is vacated, and the case is remanded to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit for further consideration in light of *Tandon vs. Newsom*.

Tandon, issued two and a half weeks prior, concerned California's pandemic restriction of at-home Bible study and prayer meetings to no more than three households. In its *per curiam* order, the Court set out four factors. A *per curiam* opinion or order is one issued in the name of the Court itself, and not signed by any particular judge. The first and the fourth are nothing new. First the Court reminds, the government regulations are not neutral "whenever they treat any comparable secular activity more favorably than religious exercise" (emphasis original), reiterating its holding from *Diocese of Brooklyn*. The fourth factor was that the government may not render a case moot and escape judicial review merely by softening and amending its regulations mid-stream, only to reactivate them again later. The substance of *Tandon* is in the second and third factors: comparable activities, and narrow tailoring of regulations.

One of the points of difference in the reasoning of the justices in *Diocese of Brooklyn* was what constituted a comparable activity. The majority had held that stores and shopping were comparable activities, and that they were receiving more favorable treatment than worship activities under New York's scheme. The dissenters turned to theatres and cinemas as comparable activities and found that worship was more favored under the regulations than the entertainment industry. Now in *Tandon* the Court points out that the test for whether an activity is comparable is not in the actions of the activity, e.g., sitting in an auditorium (churches and theatres), but "whether two activities are comparable for purposes of the Free Exercise Clause must be judged against the asserted government interest that justifies the regulation at issue." Do the two activities "present similar risks"? "Comparability is concerned with the risks various activities pose, not the reasons why people gather." Stated another way, the point of comparison is not what the people are doing (sitting vs. walking) but whether the risk is similar or not. Notably the Court did not reach the

issue of how similar the risk need be to be considered similar (e.g., must it be identical? Likely not.), nor how different the risk could be yet remain within the classification of similar.

Next, turning its attention to the third factor, the Court gave meaning to the long established requirement that the regulation must be "narrowly tailored" to meet the government's interest. Merely finding that there are risks in an activity which the government is trying to minimize is not sufficient. The government must not only show that it is imposing regulations which are not stricter than those imposed on comparable activities. It must also show that a lesser restriction could not meet its interests of risk mitigation. It is not enough to treat everything exactly alike. For example, a regulation that closes all businesses and churches would pass the test of treating the two the same. But that is only the first step. Worship (and other First Amendment activities) must be given maximum liberty. If a less restrictive regulation (such as occupancy levels, etc.) would meet the risk, then a total closure would fail the "narrowly tailored" requirement, even though the government was treating everyone and everything equally poorly.

Not to go unnoticed in the narrowly tailored requirement is the burden of proof. The burden is not on the church or the citizen to prove that a lesser regulation would be adequate. The government must prove that a lesser regulation would be *inadequate*. Which means that the citizen who is challenging the regulation need only offer a facially reasonable alternative. The government cannot merely reject the proposed alternative, but must show that the alternative is insufficient.

After the decision of the Supreme Court in *Tandon*, California repealed its Covid related worship regulations. It would seem that the *South Bay* case has come to a quiet end. But all is not quiet on the Eastern front. On May 21, 2021, a church in Maine filed a writ in the Supreme Court seeking similar relief. *Calvary Chapel of Bangor vs. Mills, governor of Maine*, no. 20-1346. The writ for injunction was not accepted by the Court for filing; however, Calvary's petition for certiorari review is still pending, with the state's response due July 9th. One might speculate that Maine would seek to quickly resolve this case. California is paying two million dollars in attorney's fees in the cases of *South Bay* and a companion case involving a Catholic priest. Additionally, a permanent injunction and a settlement award of \$1.35 million in attorney's fees was entered against California in the worship liberty case of Harvest Rock Church of Pasadena. ((*Harvest Rock Church vs. Newsom*, docket no. 2:20-cv-06414JGB (U.S. Dist. Ct. C.D. Calif., May 14, 2021)).

While we are gladdened by these victories for religious liberty, as Christians the focus of our worship is neither The Declaration of Independence nor the First Amendment. Rather, we find comfort, strength and hope in the words of our Lord and Savior who said, "on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16, ESV).

Our Lutheran Brothers and Sisters in Siberia

God has graciously given us an opportunity to take the Gospel to the far reaches of the world: Siberia spans ten time zones and more than 5 million square miles with 33 million people.

In April 1996, the Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) in Fort Wayne was asked if they would accept a significant donation from a charitable foundation to develop the Russian Project. The goals were to prepare men for the pastoral ministry to replace the hundreds of pastors killed by the Soviet communists, and establish a seminary in Russia to train pastors and lay leaders and work with the Russians to organize evangelism/catechetical seminars.¹

Since 1996, nearly forty people have studied at CTS including six women who now serve as translators, church musicians and deaconesses.² A seminary in Novosibirsk was dedicated in July 1997 and classes began the following October with short-term visiting professors from the LCMS. Over the years many professors and parish pastors have traveled to Siberia to teach at evangelism and catechism summer seminars. During the past 25 years hundreds of laity and unchurched people have attended the sessions held in Siberia and republics of the former Soviet Union.

Today the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC; in fellowship with the LCMS) has twenty-three pastors and twenty-five congregations as well as preaching stations in cities and towns from Moscow to the Pacific Ocean, serving about 3,000 baptized members.³

Distances are one of the biggest challenges in Siberia. Many parishioners live far from a parish, and most of them do not have cars or money to travel to church. Therefore, the pastors constantly travel hundreds and thousands of miles to bring the Word and Sacraments to these parishioners who live at "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).⁴ The roads in Siberia are not always good and sometimes the only option is to fly, which is expensive.

The sole drawback threatening the stability and survival of the seminary is the capacity of being fiscally self-sufficient...it will take many years before [the SELC] can support the Novosibirsk Seminary on its own.⁵

Thus, the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society (SLMS) was organized in 2002 to raise funds to support the pastors and their mission stations.⁶ The SLMS has a dual goal:

First, support new Russian pastors in their mission work. People need the Word of God but they also have physical needs and cares. The SLMS also supports Siberian pastors as they care for their flocks in body and soul.

Second, support the seminary in Novosibirsk. The SELC seminary is now a strong independent institution fully capable of self-governance and staffed by a first-class

indigenous faculty. However, the charitable organization that initially established the Russian Project and seminary is now in the process of bringing their support to an end. What a blessing this organization has been in the lives of hundreds of people over the past 25 years. Thanks be to God!

As the grants ended, President Matthew Harrison and the LCMS Church Relations Office asked the SLMS to build an endowment capable of making the Russian Seminary at Novosibirsk financially self-sufficient. This fund was established in 2019 and the goal is to raise \$7 million during 2019-2023.⁷ Income from strategically invested donations will be used to support the mission of the Seminary in perpetuity. As of March 2021, contributions surpassed the \$1.5 million mark.⁸ If the seminary in Novosibirsk is ever closed, there is a danger we will never be able to re-open it!

Please pray for our Lutheran brothers and sisters who live far from their parishes and for the pastors who travel long distances to bring the Word and sacraments to God's people. You can learn more at the SLMS web site (<https://siberianlutheranmissions.org>). There are newsletters, videos and resources for congregations.

If you would like someone from the SLMS to visit and speak to your congregation or a group of congregations, they will be happy to do so. The SLMS periodically hosts 'Save the Seminary' mission festivals and other events in various parts of the country. You don't want to miss this opportunity! Please contact Rev. Dr. Timothy Quill, Director of Seminary Fundraising (260-580-0812; timothycquill@gmail.com).

Mrs. Ginny Valleau
Independence, MO

1. Answered Prayer, SLMS, 2019, p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
4. SLMS Facebook, 10/28/2020.
5. Answered Prayer, SLMS, 2019, p.5.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
7. <https://siberianlutheranmissions.org/> (06/09/2021).
8. <https://siberianlutheranmissions.org/2021/03/24/save-the-seminary-campaign-update-march-2021/> (06/09/2021).

Your Opportunity to Help in Siberia!

If you can help one or both of the SLMS mission efforts, please send funds to:



Siberian Lutheran Missionary Society, c/o Ascension Lutheran Church, 8811 Saint Joe Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46835-1037. Please write "Operational Needs" or "Endowment Fund" on the memo line of your check.

You can give online by visiting <https://siberianlutheranmissions.org/donate/>. All donations are tax deductible and you will receive a receipt. Please note that 100% of your offering goes to the fund you designate. None of the donations are used for administrative costs. Sometimes matching funds are available.

Away From Home – Where’s My Church?

“My country ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty ...” ‘Tis a land of liberty only because we have brave soldiers who defend and fight for it. Leaving home, family, friends and church they join a military force to serve our country.

They leave - but going with them are the prayers of those they left. We pray to God that they will avail themselves of the opportunity to continue their worship of Him as they serve our country.

That opportunity is there for them. The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) Ministry to the Armed Forces has a chaplaincy program for those on active duty, in the reserves, the National Guard and Civil Air Patrol.



These almost 200 “pastors in uniform” are the chaplains who are sent to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to our military all around the world.

We pray that God would grant them the power to proclaim His Word and rightly administer His Sacraments.

God grant us the impulse to learn more about these ordained men, pray for them, acknowledge their service and support. May we also be sure to have our pastors forward information to Synod when one of our members joins a military force.

For more details about this mission of the LCMS go to: <https://www.lcms.org/ministry-to-the-armed-forces>

Blessed Sacrament Lutheran Church, Hayden, Idaho

“And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.’” Luke 14:23

Missionaries of the LCMS take our Lord Jesus’ parable of “The Wedding Banquet” as a personal mandate. Not unlike the great commission of Matthew 28:19-20, wherever the Lord calls and leads, and no matter the primary vocation (be it theological educator or teaching English as a second language), the winning of souls to Christ and the formation of churches always takes pride of place. It begins with personally engaging local residents with an aim to make disciples by baptizing and teaching.

So when Covid-19 forced an alteration to the residency work at the Luther Academy, Rīga, Latvia, it was time for missionary Rev. John J. Bombaro to get innovative. An online seminary in English was launched, which required resourcing from the United States. North Idaho, renowned for its resilient people and fierce independence, was the natural choice. Freedom to live. Freedom to work. And an irrepressible exercise of the freedom to assemble.

In early August 2021, three families requested catechesis for the First Holy Communion of their children. Hearing and appreciating confessional Lutheran instruction, and seeing their children responding enthusiastically, these families, with Pastor Bombaro, assembled a parish. It was a core of four families, meeting in the Bombaro

kitchen. The name of the church would be chosen by fifteen-year-old Marie—*Blessed Sacrament Lutheran Church*—because their devotion would be to the Word and Sacraments of Christ, in accordance with Article XXIV of the Augsburg Confession.

On 15 August, the Feast of St. Mary, Blessed Sacrament was organized and met for its first Divine Service. Shortly thereafter they petition for recognition by the English District.

Word leaked out that there were intentional, biblical Lutherans assembling. Within the space of weeks, Blessed Sacrament outgrew the Bombaro home, moving into a semi-finished garage. Still, the remote location and industrial setting did not hamper God’s work. Families from a local school began attending. A mother and her three children were converted and baptized in November. Another mother and her two sons were baptized, with a law enforcement father and his two daughters baptized in January. Fourteen children and adults underwent months of catechesis and received their First Holy Communion.

The parish outgrew the garage and currently rents a church building, with an average attendance of 45 souls, with some Sundays seeing over 50 present for Jesus’ real voice and presence. There’s even a cadre of people who drive three hours, in each direction(!) to attend Blessed Sacrament.

Outreach occurs with a monthly “Theological Talk for Thirsty men” drawing dozens of Idaho men. Blessed Sacrament’s weekly “Augsburg Academy” features confessional instruction, with children sitting alongside their parents for family-style catechesis.

Blessed Sacrament has a vision for the word of God and looks to make a permanent settlement in what is now the fastest growing real estate market in the United States, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The parish’s outlook is bright and the mood is optimistic because “it is God who gives the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6).

Rev. John J. Bombaro, Ph.D.; Pastor, Blessed Sacrament Lutheran, Hayden, ID; Missionary and Theological Educator for LCMS Office of International Mission

Student Aid Endowment Fund! Concordia Theological Foundation, Inc.

In early 2018, in honor of Mrs. Ginny Valleau’s contributions to the publication of the *Lutheran Clarion*, a Concordia Theological Seminary Student Aid Endowment Fund was established at Concordia Theological Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible. As of May 31, 2021, the fund assets were \$23,023.00.

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