

that is what preaching Christian faith means. Such preaching is called the Gospel, which means in German as much as a cheerful, good, comforting message.”

He continues, “Isaiah says, ‘To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given’ (Isaiah 9:6). If He is given to us, then He must be ours; then we must also receive Him as our own. [Paul writes]: ‘How has He not given us everything with his Son?’ (Romans 8:32). When you grasp Christ in that way as your gift, given to you as your own, and do not doubt, then you are a Christian. Faith frees you from sin, death, and hell and causes you to conquer all things.”

But there is a second blessing of the Gospel: “When you now have Christ in that way as the basis and chief blessing of your salvation, then the second part follows, namely, that you take Him as an example and devote yourself to serving your neighbor, just as you see that He devoted Himself to you. Then faith and love are both active, God’s commandment is fulfilled, and the person is cheerful and fearless to do and suffer anything” (9).

FUTURE DATES (see wylcms.org for information)

January 6-8, 2023: Herring Barrel, St. Andrew’s, Laramie

February 10-11, 2023: TTGNAJ Convocation, Ramkota, Casper (registration materials will be made available in the January Roundup and one the district website)

February 17-19: St. Andrew’s Youth Breakaway 9-12 grades, Laramie

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around December 20 (January/Winter 2023 issue).



Wyoming District Round-Up

December 2022

District Website: www.wylcms.org

“...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS...” (Eph. 1:16)

For **Rev. Ralph Jaeger** (emeritus, Laramie), health

For our active-duty chaplain, **Rev. Ryan Mills (Colorado)**

For **Rev. Neil Carlson (Zion, Chappell and Trinity, South Divide)** continues his rehabilitation while returning to limited service.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon) is serving **Grace, Merri-man, NE** (Nebraska District) while it considers its future.

Prince of Peace, Buffalo (served by **Rev. Rene Castillero, Immanuel, Sheridan**) continues in the pre-call process.

Bethel, Lander (served by **Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein, Wind River Lutheran Mission, Ft. Washakie and Mt. Calvary, Dubois**) holds a call meeting November 27.

Our Savior’s, Chadron (served by **Rev. Dan Praeuner, emeritus**) holds a call meeting December 1.

Trinity, Riverton (Rev. Mark Mumme) has a call list in hand.

Immanuel, Burns and **St. John’s, Kimball** (served by **Rev. Andrew Dimit**, assistant pastor at **King of Glory, Cheyenne**) have entered the pre-call process.

The Christian in Community: By Faith in Jesus

“And he believed the LORD, and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). These words reveal so much: God’s gracious will to us in Christ; the entire purpose of Holy Scriptures; the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; and more. This precious verse is the golden thread running through all of Scriptures, the foundation of the church, the eternally new song of the Gospel of Jesus.

What did Abraham believe (Genesis 15:1–6)? He believed the forgiveness of his sins, God’s saving Gospel, and the promise of God’s eternal favor. “Fear not, Abram. I am your shield; your exceedingly great reward.” No fear of God, no fear of guilt or shame, no fear of punishment or rejection from God, no fear of the slavery to sin and death. Fear not! Instead, God Himself was Abraham’s defense and the eternal reward he sought. “Your face, Lord, do I seek” (Psalm 27).

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What did Abraham believe? He believed the promise that the Savior would come through his own son, even though the elderly Abraham had no son as yet: “He who comes from your own loins shall be your heir.” From this son would come the promised Seed through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. The Seed of Abraham was the eternal hope of the nations, the woman-born Man who would finally and forever crush the head of the devil with all his works and ways.

What did Abraham believe? He believed in Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God, who came to earth to bear the sins of all men, to die in payment for our guilt, to satisfy the wrath of God against all our iniquities, and to give us eternal life and peace and rest. “Abraham rejoiced to see My day. He saw it and was glad,” Jesus said in John 8:56. Fear not, Abraham. Fear not, dear Christian!

What did Abraham believe? He believed that God would gather a great congregation of fellow believers in this dear Savior. “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them. So shall your offspring be.” The promised Seed would draw to Himself and from Himself an entire family and nation of forgiven sinners, justified by faith. Through faith they also are counted as righteous before God. Not by their works, not by their merits, not by their parents, not by their decision or choice, not by their own sufferings or satisfactions for sin. By faith alone!

This company of believers is the church, built eternally upon “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). The gates of hell cannot withstand this host of saints. They are “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . the festal gathering . . . the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven” (Hebrews 12:22, 23). Like the stars in number, so also “the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43). Their faith is counted to them for righteousness.

Dear Christian, dear believer in Christ: Your faith is in Christ Jesus alone. You are justified by this faith alone. Yet by this faith in Jesus you are never alone. You are yoked with Jesus your Savior. And where Jesus is, there also is the “great congregation” (Psalm 22) where the risen Jesus praises His Father and proclaims “His righteousness to a people yet unborn.” This is the congregation you join for church week by week, a mighty host, though your gathering may seem small in your eyes. From the days of Abraham, indeed, from eternity, God has looked with favor and joy upon your little congregation. He spoke of you to Abraham. He fulfilled it in Jesus. And you, righteous by faith, are that fulfillment.

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20–21)

We have heard that Luther immediately took up preaching what we call the *Invocavit Sermons* when he returned from the Wartburg in March 1522. From April 25 to May 6, and again later in May, 1522, Luther undertook a preaching tour among the local cities of Electoral Saxony. Not only was the Reformation expanded through preaching, but it was secured in places where confusion or opposition might bring about its destruction.

Only the Word of God can reform the church’s doctrine and practice. Thus we see that preaching is the central thing in our congregations. Luther called for qualified preachers, preachers who knew and meditated upon God’s Word, preachers who could teach what Scriptures taught in a clear and bold way. In his early 1523 sermons on 2 Peter, Luther taught, “Now every preacher should be so sure of having and preaching God’s Word that he would even stake his life on this, since it is a matter of life for us” (B2.57).

Luther himself was a memorable preacher. One student in Wittenberg, Albert Burer, described Luther in the pulpit, “His facial expression is kind, mild, and good-natured. His voice is pleasant and sonorous, and one must marvel at his winsome gift of speech. What he says, teaches, and does is quite pious, even though his godless opponents claim the opposite. Whoever has heard him once—unless he is a stone—would gladly hear him again and again, for he drives home his points, like nails, into the minds of his hearers” (B2.57).

Luther preached often, whether in Wittenberg or travelling. His preaching schedule in Wittenberg was as follows: Sundays and festivals he preached on the appointed gospel in the morning. In the afternoon sermon at noon he preached on individual books of the Bible (much like a Bible Study): 1 Peter beginning in May 1522, 2 Peter and Jude in early 1523, Genesis from March 1523 to the fall of 1524.

Most of Luther’s sermons were transcribed by fellow theologians. Luther preferred that his sermons not be published, because what he really wanted was for Christians to read the Bible and come to know it well. Nevertheless, the printers were eager to answer the demand for his preaching. More than 30 sermons appeared in 1522, and more than 25 the following year. In 1524 Luther resumed the work of preparing sermon postils—collections of sermons for pastors to study and imitate.

In the introduction to a collection of sermons in 1521 (and reprinted in later years), Luther wrote a “Short Instruction: What Should Be Sought and Expected in the Gospels” (AE 75.7–12). “The main point and basis of the Gospel is that before you grasp Christ as an example, you first receive and apprehend Him as a gift and present given to you by God to be your own. . . . That is the great fire of God’s love for us by which the heart and conscience become happy, certain, and at peace;