



## Call to Prayer for Pastoral Summit

*by Pr. Dennis D. Nelson,  
CORE President/Director*

Jesus said in Matthew 9: 37-38, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.”

What should be our first course of action when we wonder where Biblically faithful and evangelistic pastors for the future will come from? What should we do if we are members of a congregation that has been served faithfully for years by a pastor who believes that the Bible is the Word of God, but that pastor is now or soon retiring? What should be our first response as people who are alarmed over the “Naked and Unashamed” movement that has risen out of one of the ELCA seminaries (see article on [page 3](#)) and is further undermining the authority of Scripture and the Biblical concept of marriage? What should be our first course of action? The Bible says that the first thing we should do is to pray.

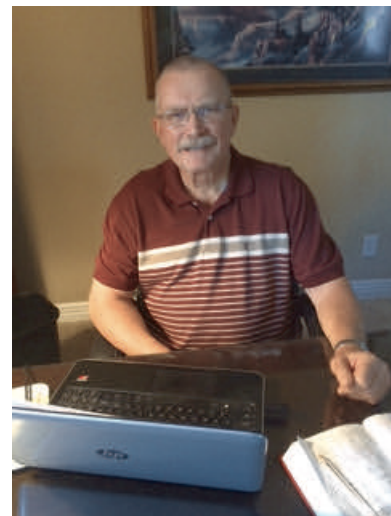
Please join with us in praying for the Summit on Pastoral Formation, which will be taking place on Wednesday, June 21, as ten leaders from four different Lutheran church bodies – ELCA, LCMC, LCMS, and NALC – will be gathering with the board of Lutheran CORE at Grand View University in Des Moines to begin wrestling with the question:

*How can we raise up a whole new generation of*

*Lutheran pastors who will be Biblical and confessional in their theology and evangelistic, outreach-oriented in their perspective and practice?*

Throughout the day of the event we will be disseminating excerpts from the presentations and discussions through various forms of social media in order to keep you posted.

Follow our [Facebook page](#), our Twitter postings, and our [blog on \*www.lutherancore.org\*](#) for these updates.



## Weekly Devotions And Sermon Starters

Lutheran CORE is continuing to provide weekly devotions and sermon starters on the [blog](#) on the home page of our website.

A link to these devotionals is then posted on a number of different Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Please help us get the word out about these resources. It is our desire that they be an inspiration to all who read them and also a source of ideas, thoughts, illustrations, and images for pastors as they prepare for the following Sunday’s sermon.

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### Save the Dates for Annual “Encuentro” in Chicagoland

September 14-17, 2017, plan to come to the next Lutheran Hispanic-Latino Ministry Encuentro to be held at St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Chicago, and First & Santa Cruz Lutheran parish, Joliet.

*Cosponsored by Lutheran CORE*

# River's Edge Ministries: Building Bridges Beyond the Barn

by Kim Smith, CORE Board member

River's Edge Ministries, located in suburban Mt. Airy, Maryland, is affiliated with the NALC and LCMC. Both its pastor and mission developer, K. Craig Moorman, and congregation are down-to-



earth, as you might expect from a church that meets in a beautiful barn built by volunteers.

A typical worship service may include 25-40 people and may or may not occur on Sunday. In fact, River's Edge was intentionally launched with weekly Monday evening gatherings. According to Pastor Craig, "We are not just a Sunday morning church or bound by a building or particular location and never want to be." The mission of River's Edge is to "mobilize ordinary disciples of Jesus Christ into the extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit through missional communities, witnessing to the extravagance of the Father's love."

Pastor Craig and his wife Nancy took three of their five children to East Biloxi, MS three months after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005. Pastor Craig wrote, "Now that we've seen the intense suffering of the residents of the Gulf Coast, we're no longer able to so easily overlook those who recurrently struggle with the effects of poverty and crime. How can bridges be built between where I live in the artificial comfort of suburbia and the complex challenges of these cities?"

That experience has translated into both local and distance missions for River's Edge Ministries. The most recent, City Mission, was held over three days during Holy Week 2017, and teams were sent to Baltimore, Frederick and Mt. Airy, Maryland. This is the fourth year a mission was held during Holy Week. In the past, Cross Country Mission teams have aided those devastated by Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi, a 1000-year flood in West Virginia, and catastrophic tornadoes in Indiana.

Perhaps one of the most exciting things about this ministry is its reach, extending far beyond its barn doors. River's Edge is small, but its missions are often augmented by those who have crossed Pastor Craig's path at one time or another. On Maundy Thursday, after a mission dinner literally prepared in a Vietnam era field kitchen, the Helping Up Mission3 choir, whose members participate in a yearlong Christ-centered addiction recovery program in Baltimore, spoke about their repeated struggles with drugs, alcohol and near-death. Yet they spread joy to all present through their music and witness. As Pastor Craig rightly texted to his flock, "If you've never experienced them or heard their



stories, you will (almost) have your socks blown off." River's Edge City Mission had once sent a team to work at the Helping Up Mission and they have since joined the effort. Some choir members actually helped build the very barn they were singing in.

Most youth in the church participate in *Fire on the Mountain*. As the name suggests, fire is part of the draw and it is normal to have 25-50 kids in attendance. As a multigenerational event, both youth and parents are urged to come for "worship, food, fellowship, prayer, games and a bonfire." Some of these participate in missions, whether they are members of River's Edge or not.

Pastor Craig is also "passionate about the incredible privilege and honor of Christ-centered parenting and committed to help lead a revolutionary movement towards that end." In his book *The Awe-full Privilege*, Pastor Craig wrote, "...no mission can happen without tapping into the source, the Holy Spirit ... It is the Spirit who calls forth what is really needed in every home. Often, that need is something we cannot describe and may be unintentionally hidden and unspoken — an underlying and

*continued on page 5*

# Clothed And Forgiven: Lutheran Core Responds To “We Are Naked And Unashamed”

In August 2009 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly rejected as normative the traditional, Biblical definition of marriage by allowing for the endorsement and ordination of persons in “publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same gender relationships.” As we knew would happen, there is now a new movement that hopes to reject any definition of marriage as normative for sexual relationships.

Known as “Naked and Unashamed,” this movement was reportedly started by seminarians at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, and since then has reached out to other pastors, leaders, and seminary students in the ELCA who share its beliefs and values. Its revisionist agenda is clearly revealed on its [website](#). Lutheran CORE has posted a response to this movement on our [Facebook page](#) as well as on the [blog](#) on our website. Our response has also been disseminated through various forms of social media. A link to our response can be found at <http://www.lutherancore.org/blog/>.

We realize that those who oppose us will criticize us by saying that we are “just about sex.” Sex is not the most important issue theologically, but as Brett Jenkins, a member of our board, has so insightfully said, “It is the point at which the authority of the Bible – after better than two hundred years of sustained attack by rationalists of the ‘higher criticism school’ – has finally been successfully dismantled.” Brett goes on to say, “Recent studies have

shown that 90+ percent of Millennials hold a heterodox view of Christian sexuality, even if they espouse orthodoxy in other ways; they don’t see the connection, the ‘seamless cloth’ of Christianity as ‘the Way.’” Brett also refers to American author and editor Rod Dreher, who has said that it is a demonstrable sociological fact that people who abandon traditional Christian sexual ethics either shortly leave the faith entirely, or pave the way for their children to do so.

So to ask a very Lutheran question, “What does this mean?” It means that even if you are a member of another Lutheran church body, and not the ELCA, you need to fight this battle for your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. The reality is that most of our neighbors do not distinguish among various groups of Lutherans.

As of the time of the writing of this article, we are not aware of any official response from the leadership of the ELCA rejecting and distancing the ELCA from this movement.

So what can we expect? Can we anticipate the same as we have experienced in the past – that we are seeing only the beginning of the next step, which will push its agenda relentlessly until it achieves its goals and prevails; and then, when they do so, will seek to silence the faithful by declaring them to be disruptive, divisive, schismatic, and intolerant?

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## Spanish Language Worship Resources Available

### Prayer for the Vigil of Pentecost

+ June 3, 2017 +

Almighty and ever-living God, you fulfilled the promise of Easter by sending your Holy Spirit to unite the races and nations on earth and thus to proclaim your glory. Look upon your people gathered in prayer, open to receive the Spirit’s flame.

May it come to rest in our hearts and heal the divisions of word and tongue, that with one voice and one song we may praise your name in joy and thanksgiving; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Lutheran Book of Worship)

*For details of the Encuentro in September, and / or for Spanish - English resources for worship at the Vigil and Festival of Pentecost, contact Pastor Keith Forni, STS, 815 600-3030, KForni@aol.com.*

### Oración para la Vigilia de Pentecostés + 3 de junio 2017 +

Todopoderoso y eterno Dios: tú has cumplido la promesa de la Pascua al enviar a tu Santo Espíritu para unir las razas y los pueblos de la tierra y así proclamar tu gloria. He aquí tu pueblo está reunido en oración, abierto para recibir la llama del Espíritu. Permite que ella venga a reposar en nuestros corazones y sane las divisiones de palabra y lengua, para que con una sola voz y canción alabemos tu nombre con gozo y acción de gracias; por tu Hijo, Jesucristo nuestro Señor, que vive y reina contigo y con el Espíritu Santo, un solo Dios, ahora y siempre. Amén.

(Libro de Liturgia y Cántico)

# ELCA and Abortion: Is There Hope for Change?

by Steve Shipman, retired ELCA Pastor

The road to Hell is reportedly paved with good intentions. I finally acted on one of my good intentions last January, when I joined tens of thousands of Christians at the March for Life in Washington.

My Facebook post of the picture on the right mischievously noted that I couldn't find the ELCA delegation, so I joined these folks. But therein hangs a tale of dishonesty and betrayal in the ELCA.

I was personally acquainted with two of the people who served on the drafting committee of the 1991 ELCA Statement on Abortion. One of them contacted me as the document was being prepared and said, "I know you and I have different opinions about abortion, and I would like you to meet with me and explain your position." I did so, and the statement shows that he and other drafters took seriously what many of us told them.

The statement says, "Because we believe that God is the creator of life, the number of induced abortions is a source of deep concern to this church. We mourn the loss of life that God has created. The strong Christian presumption is to preserve and protect life. *Abortion ought to be an option only of last resort.* Therefore, as a church we seek to reduce the need to turn to abortion as the answer to unintended pregnancies." [italics mine]

When the Board of Pensions tried to follow the statement by restricting coverage of abortions to situations involving rape, incest, or danger to the life of the mother, the ELCA Church Council rejected their plan, and the ELCA by 2001 could only adopt a resolution asking for "continuing moral deliberation" about abortion. That has been taken as seriously as the 2009 decision instructing the ELCA to develop policies to protect those objecting to same-sex sexual relationships. In other words, it has been ignored.

Many of us tried to challenge the ELCA coverage for all abortions, probably the only elective medical procedure that does not require prior authorization. Pr. Leonard Klein, then editor of *Lutheran Forum*, wrote a powerful editorial entitled, "Real Churches Don't Kill Babies." Pr. Klein and a number of other ELCA leaders eventually decided their only option was to "swim the Tiber" and join the Roman Catholic Church. Dr. Carl Braaten wrote an open letter to then-Presidenting Bishop Mark Hanson bemoaning a "brain drain"



from the ELCA.

The other task force member I know expressed his anger to me about how the statement was misused, and he has since joined another Lutheran group after decades in the ELCA and ALC.

I was disappointed that my letter to former Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson got no response, and when I asked my synodical bishop, he reported that Bp. Anderson had told him that the only objections he received regarding the policy were from a few pastors in York County, Pennsylvania. Minutes from various Churchwide Assemblies offer a different picture.

Recently Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton wrote in her column in *Living Lutheran*, "...life is precious and beautiful and, even in its painfulness, something to be fiercely protected." Lutheran CORE has contacted her [[click here](#)] to affirm what she wrote and to request that she consider the applicability of her words to the topic of abortion.

Meanwhile, I have a proposal. I believe that many of us in the ELCA are strongly committed to the view that "life is precious and beautiful" and "something to be fiercely protected" from conception to natural death.

Let's plan an ELCA presence at the March for Life on Friday, January 19, 2018, in Washington. We are already looking to produce an "ELCA for Life" banner, and we need a group of folks (lay and clergy) to march with us. If you can't make it to Washington, plan to join local marches on that day.

If interested, email [prsteveshipman@gmail.com](mailto:prsteveshipman@gmail.com).

Try to come in time to join the large prayer service that precedes the March.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if Bishop Eaton and some synodical bishops would march with us and commit themselves to "fiercely protect" God's precious gift of life?

# How Does Lutheran CORE Witness in the ELCA?

*by Pr. Dennis D. Nelson*

We are often asked whether Lutheran CORE continues to be involved in witness to the ELCA, as well as providing encouragement and support for the orthodox and faithful who remain in the ELCA. This article is an expansion of what we wrote for our [Facebook page](#) in early April. We wish to reassure our friends that we are as committed as ever to being a VOICE for Biblical truth as well as a NETWORK for confessing Lutherans. Our most recent expression of witness to the ELCA has been our response to the movement, “We Are Naked and Unashamed.” (see article on [page 3](#)) I also want to share some other ways in which we are and have been engaged in that witness.

Members of our board advocate for the historic Christian faith in their own local settings on a regular basis. For example, I oversee adult education, including the Sunday morning adult forum, at the ELCA congregation where my wife and I are members. I am very grateful for the opportunity to teach as one who believes that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God, and that the Lutheran Confessions give us reliable insight into how to interpret and understand the Bible. I have also written to the bishop of the synod in which I used to be rostered, advocating for the traditional view of human sexuality and the role and mission of the church. A link to my most recent communication to my former synod can be found [here](#).

We continue to have display tables at the annual assemblies of synods where we receive permission and have someone to do the work.

Pr. Steven Gjerde, vice-president of our board, gave a presentation representing the traditional view on human sexuality to the ELCA’s Ministries to Same Gender Families Task Force. We view as positive the fact that the new ELCA resource, “A Guide for Talking Together about Shared Ministry with Same-Sex Couples and Their Families,” acknowledges Lutheran CORE as a “church-related but independent” organization that “many congregations have turned to.” We also view as positive the fact that the resource includes in the appendix a link to our [home page](#) as well as the “Marriage and Family Resources” page of our [website](#).

As mentioned on [page four](#), Pastor Gjerde has also written a letter to Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, challenging her to apply her words about the preciousness of life to the issue of abortion.

During the summer of 2015, as president of the board of Lutheran CORE, I sent a letter to the pastor and congregational president of every ELCA congregation encouraging them to participate in the dialogue that the ELCA was having regarding the use of the means of grace. I urged them to advocate for the traditional view that baptism and confession of faith in Jesus should precede receiving Communion. Also during the summer of 2015, I wrote on CORE’s behalf to all the bishops of the ELCA, expressing our concerns over the U. S. Supreme Court’s decision regarding same-sex marriage and asking them how they will now be giving equal support and defense to pastors and congregations who may find themselves in a difficult position because of their traditional views. [Here is a link to that letter to all ELCA bishops.](#)

At the request of our friends and constituents, I have evaluated ELCA materials and commented on remarks made and actions taken by ELCA leaders.

Our upcoming Summit on Pastoral Formation was developed significantly because of our concern over whether there will be orthodox and outreach-oriented pastors for ELCA churches in the future.

In August 2016 board member Pr. Keith Forni hosted a hospitality room at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

In September we will be sponsoring the third annual Encuentro (Encounter) in the Chicago area to support Latino ministries in the ELCA.

Much is being done, but much work remains to be done. We value and thank you for your prayers, your partnership, and your support.

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## Beyond the Barn

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desperate need for Jesus in our living!”

Because River’s Edge is small, Pastor Craig works bivocationally. In the past eight years, he has worked as the pastor for family life at St. John Evangelical Lutheran church in Columbia, Maryland, as an architectural design consultant/estimator for a building company, and now as an interim pastor at a church an hour from his home. His focus there will be discipleship. He will continue to hold various small group meetings and monthly gatherings for River’s Edge. No doubt he will be building missional bridges along the way.

# Speak to What They Trust: A Reminder for Confessional Lutheran Witness

by Benjamin S. Osenbach

*So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.” — Acts 17:22-23*

By the time that Paul stood in the Areopagus to deliver these words, he had been in Athens long enough to see its rampant idolatry and to study its culture. But rather than addressing the crowds gathered there in various Hebraisms, Paul witnessed using elements that already existed in the culture: A temple to an unknown God, and verses from Greek poetry (Acts 17:28). Specifically, Paul used what the Athenians considered to be religiously authoritative to witness to them, rather than speaking from what he as a Hebrew follower of Jesus found to be authoritative. Paul’s words to the Athenians point us to an important truth in today’s world: If we truly want to share the Gospel with those who are not like us, we need to familiarize ourselves with their culture, see which things they find to be authoritative, and use those to point them to Jesus.

When we fail to speak to what those outside of our midst consider to be authoritative, our witness to them will naturally lean towards arguments that appeal to our own core values instead of theirs. We cannot, and we should not, expect these arguments to convince anyone else but ourselves. Specifically, if confessional Christians have missed opportunities to witness to “liberal” Christians (though I prefer the term “Universalist-leaning”), it has been by failing to understand that our differences are more profound than just stances on Biblical interpretation and certain social issues. Fundamentally, our major differences stem from different authoritative core values, specifically on the role and value of Truth.

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By “Truth,” I am not speaking about whether or not the Bible is true or whether it is God’s Word, but whether objective Truth itself is a virtue and a good worth pursuing. For most confessional Christians, this is obvious. We believe that God loves us enough to tell us things clearly and perspicuously in His Word, instead of leading us on some “meaning merry-go-round.” Truth is therefore beautiful and good for us, because it is an expression of God’s nature and love. But this is not the case in postmodernism. There, truth may actually be ugly, cruel, and tinted with racist, sexist, or colonialist power. In the absence of a good and beautiful postmodern Truth, “personal happiness” has rushed in to fill the gap, with “fairness” playing a supporting role behind it. In a postmodern world view, any “truth” that would unfairly limit or deny somebody their happiness is not a “truth” worth following.

This explains many stances of Universalist-leaning denominations: From affirming same-sex marriage (valuing happiness over truth) to liberation theologies (fairness over truth) to “radical hospitality” at Communion (fairness) to disparaging Peter and Paul as sexist, racist, and misogynistic (fairness). Understanding this, we should not despair of being able to reach Unitarian-leaning Christians, but resolve to be more strategic in our witness. Jesus told His followers to be “crafty as serpents, yet innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16). If those we want to reach value happiness and fairness over truth, then our arguments for Biblical orthodoxy will need to be reframed to emphasize these points.

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As an example, consider the current ideological stalemate in the American church on LGBTQ+ issues. On one side stand orthodox voices arguing from the Bible (and hence from Truth) that homosexuality is a sinful expression of God’s gift of

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## Speak to What They Trust (continued from page 6)

sexuality. On the other side stand revisionist Christians who eschew Biblical teaching and “affirm” LGBTQ+ sexuality. For these Christians, “what the Bible says” has little or no value because objective truth is not an authoritative value in their world view. Instead, these Christians affirm LGBTQ+ sexuality because (1) sex is enjoyable and makes us happy, and (2) it doesn’t sound fair to tell some people that they can’t or shouldn’t enjoy what the rest of us can, especially since it “doesn’t hurt anyone else.”

So how do you reach people who don’t care what the Bible has to say? Perhaps my own story can offer some insights. As a former ELCA youth group president (and youth voted “most likely to be a pastor one day”), I used to believe wholeheartedly that “gay is okay” in God’s eyes. When asked to defend my position, I gave answers that were full of philosophy but devoid of Scripture, because I had never read it and saw no need to read it. If you would have shown me the passages denouncing non-marital sexuality, I would have casually brushed it all away as the limited perspective of Bronze Age patriarchs.

What changed my opinion on non-marital sexuality was not simply reading “what the Bible has to say” (although Romans 1:26 obliterated my argument that the Bible only condemned pederasty), but seeing celibate same-sex attracted Christians who are full of joy (happiness) and involved in loving and supportive (i.e., fair) confessional churches. In

other words, I had to discover the very thing that I wrote four paragraphs above: That objective Truth is not just real, but it is GOOD.

As I have explored more of confessional Lutheran theology, I have found that the other areas where I erred (universal salvation, worship as a pagan activity, evangelism as colonialism) are not just untrue, but they were limiting my joy in Jesus. I am actually a happier individual today for knowing the Truth, and my hope is that others would come to have the same joy that I found. Witnessing to members of Universalist-leaning churches will not be easy. It will involve reframing our apologetics to ask “why is this joyful?” instead of just “why is this true?” We may not see masses of people flock to orthodoxy. But if there is more rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner who repents than ninety-nine who don’t, it will most definitely be worth it (Luke 15:7).

For further reading, I recommend *God Behaving Badly* by David T. Lamb and *Paul Behaving Badly* by E. Randolph Richards.

*Ben Osenbach is a graduate student of Economics at Penn State University. As a Lutheran follower of Jesus, Ben has interned with World Vision, developed map applications for Christian non-profits, and initiated LGBTQ+ outreach efforts through InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. His spiritual gifts are knowledge and teaching, and he has a passion for systematic theology and missiology.*

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## Looking for a Pastor?

We would like to remind you of a service that is available through our website, called [Clergy Connect](#). Churches are invited to list pastoral as well as lay staff positions. A link on the [home page](#) of our website will bring you to a page where you can find positions that are currently being listed as well as instructions for posting an opening with your congregation.

Many congregational call committees have reported experiencing a real lack of qualified, orthodox candidates for pastor being given to them by their synod. Many congregations who have been faithfully served by an orthodox and outreach-oriented pastor for years have told of what has happened when their pastor retires or resigns to take

another call. Their synod uses the time of a change of pastors to move in and bring that congregation in line with the theology, values, and priorities of the synod — often with tragic consequences for the life and vitality of the congregation.

At a time when Lutheran CORE is preparing to hold the first phase of the pastoral summit, which will focus on raising up a whole new generation of Lutheran pastors who believe that the Bible is the Word of God and who care about fulfilling the Great Commission, we also want to help match orthodox congregations who are looking for an orthodox pastor with orthodox pastors who are looking for an orthodox congregation.

# The Good Shepherd and His Sheepdogs

by Pr. Cathy Ammlung, CORE Board Secretary

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is often called Good Shepherd Sunday. I've incorporated into many Good Shepherd Sunday sermons my experiences of shepherding with my Shelties. I've occasionally wondered if I could declare herding lesson costs as a business expense at tax time!

Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd. After the Resurrection, he told Peter to feed his sheep. In so doing, he bestowed that shepherding function on the apostles and (by extension) all pastors. The very word "pastor" means "shepherd!" Now, there's an obvious danger in identifying clergy as shepherds. It can go to their heads. It seems to put them on the divine side of the relationship of Christ with his Church. They're tempted to think they have more (or at least a different kind of) authority than they do. So, I'd like to use a slightly different analogy: The pastor as sheepdog. I trust our Lord won't take this comparison amiss.

A sheepdog is solidly on the creature side of the equation. Sheep and sheepdog alike are the concern of the shepherd. Neither critter is in charge. The wisdom, judgment, and compassion of the shepherd rule them all. But in a unique way, some of those things, as they relate to the sheep, are carried out for the shepherd by the sheepdog.

A sheepdog isn't just a pet. In addition to a personal relationship, the dog must have a working partnership with the shepherd. It's always "under orders," not a freelancer. My youngest Sheltie, Mustang, possesses great herding instinct, confidence, and work ethic. My biggest challenge is reminding her that she's not in charge. Ours is a partnership – but she's the junior partner. It's my responsibility to have "the big picture" in mind, and to channel her drive so that together, we accomplish what I have purposed.

Similarly, pastors are "under orders." Beyond their personal love for Jesus, they must be his "junior partners," ready to put their talents and devotion in his service for the good of the flock they are called to tend. They constantly must listen for — and tirelessly and unhesitatingly respond to — Jesus' commands.

A sheepdog must understand all the commands given by the shepherd, and must execute them promptly and well. Mustang and I work on that a lot. We practice moving the sheep around a field, changing directions, and getting them into a pen, with no help from me other than a verbal command – no "body English" allowed. That's harder for me than for her! But it's important. Even when I'm out of Mustang's line of sight, she's at a distance from me, or the sheep are acting unpredictably, she learns to "keep an ear out" for what I need her to do next. Conversely, if things are going smoothly, she needs to "keep on keeping on" without constant input from me.

She can't cheat by stopping short or cutting in too close. She can't use a "one speed fits all" approach to executing a command. Sometimes finesse is more important than speed or power. And she can't take out her frustrations by biting or chasing when the sheep don't comply. This takes intelligence, discernment, and self-control from a 20-pound "bottle rocket" Sheltie!

Similarly, pastors must be constantly immersed in the Word of God. They must constantly discern what the Good Shepherd intends for them - and the flock for whom they act as His "junior partner." Even when they can't seem to see Jesus clearly, even when things are hectic or stressful, even when they are frustrated or their congregation is in some sort of crisis, a good "Sheepdog pastor" must constantly listen to His Word and strive to accomplish it - for love of the Shepherd and for the good of the flock.

Mustang has a lot to learn. Ideally, we'd be working every day, not just once a week. We'll never be perfect herding partners in this life. Similarly, neither pastors nor congregations ever "get it all right" in this lifetime. Thank God that our Good Shepherd is infinitely wise, forgiving, and compassionate! But, even more so than Mustang, pastors are called to listen, learn, practice constantly; and using every grace they are given, to be formed into fitting sheepdogs for our great and Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

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# Braaten-Benne Lectures to Focus on the Work of Christ

The annual Braaten-Benne Lectures on Theology will be held August 8 and 9 at the Sheraton Music City Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee.

Featured speakers are Dr. Don Collett, Dr. Gordon Isaac, Dr. Paul Hinlicky, Dr. David Luy, and Dr. David Yeago. The annual theological conference is held prior to the NALC Convocation.

The theme of the 2017 lectures is “Savior and Lord: Lectures on the Work of Christ.” The theme text is, “Christ Jesus became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption...” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

“Picking up from last year’s well-received series on the person of Christ, this year’s Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology will invite attendees into a consideration of the inexhaustible riches of Christ’s work. The canon of Scripture, the tradition of Christian thought, and Lutheranism’s responsibility to the worldwide church will inform our presentations and discussions. Together we’ll explore the creation-changing accomplishment of Jesus — the faithful, crucified, and risen God-man — from historical, systematic, and pastoral perspectives,” explained the Rev. Dr. Amy Schiffrin, President of the North American Lutheran Seminary.

Dr. Don Collett is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Trinity School for Ministry. He has his Ph.D. from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. He is a graduate of Westminster Seminary and Montana State University.

Dr. Paul Hinlicky is Tise Professor of Lutheran Studies at Roanoke College in Salem, Va. He is the author of several books, including *Luther and the Beloved Community: A Path for Christian Theology after Christendom*.

Dr. Gordon Isaac is Berkshire Associate Professor of Advent Christian Studies and Dean of Chapel at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The focus of his masters’ degrees and doctoral work was on Martin Luther. He is the author of *Left Behind or Left Befuddled: The Subtle Dangers of Popularizing the End Times*.

Dr. David J. Luy is Assistant Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He is the author of *Dominus Mortis: Martin Luther on the Incorruptibility of God in Christ*.

Dr. David Yeago is Professor of Systematic Theology and Ethics for the North American

Lutheran Seminary and Trinity School for Ministry. He is the author of *The Apostolic Faith: A Catholic and Evangelical Introduction to Christian Theology* (forthcoming from Eerdmans).

The event begins at 1 PM on Tuesday, and runs through lunch on Wednesday. Registration is now open; [click here](#) for details and to register. Registration cost for the Braaten-Benne lectures is \$125. If you are participating in additional events in Lutheran Week, there are separate registrations for them.

*Editor’s note: Most of this information is shamelessly copied from the NALC website.*

## ALPB Issues 3-inch Medals to Celebrate 500th Reformation Anniversary



MEDAL #1 Commemorating 500th Anniversary of the Reformation— \$45.00 each including postage and handling. Medal comes with an attractive presentation box, wooden stand and brochure explaining the medal design. Other medal types no longer available.



MEDAL #2: Joint Lutheran-Catholic Commemoration, From Conflict to Communion. Antique bronze, \$45.00, Antique gold, silver, and silver matte, \$50.00 each including postage and handling. Included with each medal is an attractive presentation box, wooden stand and brochure explaining the medal design.

[Click here](#) for more information or to order.

## Coming Events

**Pro Ecclesia Conference**, June 5-7, Loyola University, Baltimore, MD. Topic: "Repentance and Forgiveness." This is an ecumenical conference for clergy and laity. Among other presenters, Carl Braaten will deliver the banquet address. [Click here for more information.](#)

**Ancient Evangelical Future Conference**, "Medieval Wisdom — 500 Years after the Reformation." June 8-9, Trinity School for Ministry, Ambridge PA. [Click here for information.](#)

**Lutheran Week**, Women of the NALC, Braaten-Benne Lectures, NALC Convocation and Mission Festival, and more, August 8-11, 2017, Sheraton Music City Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee. Registration now open; [click here for more information to register](#) (see also [page 9](#))

**Encuentro on Lutheran-Hispanic Ministry**, Joliet, IL, September 14-17, 2017. Presenters will represent both academic and parish ministry perspectives. A Resource Fair will feature a variety of materials for Christian education, evangelism, worship and devotional life, and there will be visits to Chicago-area ministry and cultural sites. Current and longtime practitioners in bilingual ministry are expected, as are those considering it in their congregational context. Sponsored by Lutheran CORE and the Bilingual Ministry Resource Center. Contact [KForni@aol.com](mailto:KForni@aol.com) or [Facebook: First and Santa Cruz Lutheran Church](#).

**LCMC Annual Gathering**, October 8-11, Hilton Minneapolis. "We Confess Our Faith," visiting the Reformation themes of Justification, Two Kingdoms, and Priesthood of All Believers. Service projects, vendors, worship, and many other activities. [Click here](#) for more information.

**March for Life**, January 19, 2018, Washington D.C. See article on [page 5](#).

Check [our website](#) for more event listings.

Notify us [here](#) of events you would like us to publicize.

*Click on blue text for hotlinks to sites mentioned or to contact writers of articles.*

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