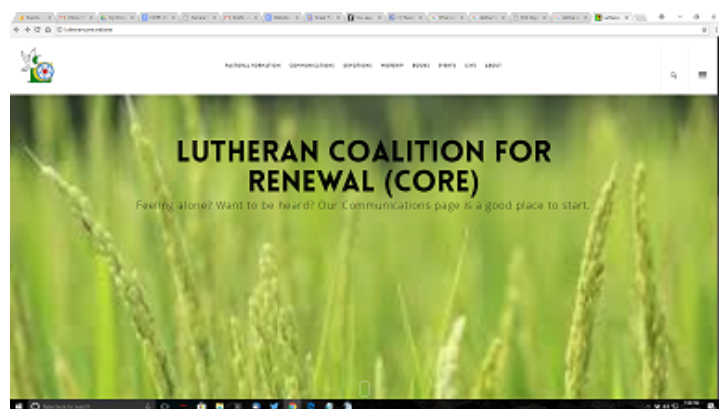


## New Website Reflects CORE Ministries

by Dennis D. Nelson

If you have not yet checked out our new website, we urge you to do so as soon as possible. We feel that it better reflects who Lutheran CORE is and what we are doing now. You will also find that a number of things, including the latest information about our Pastoral Formation project, the various worship resources, and our written communications, are easier to find. Our old web address can be used to reach the new site — [www.lutherancore.org](http://www.lutherancore.org).

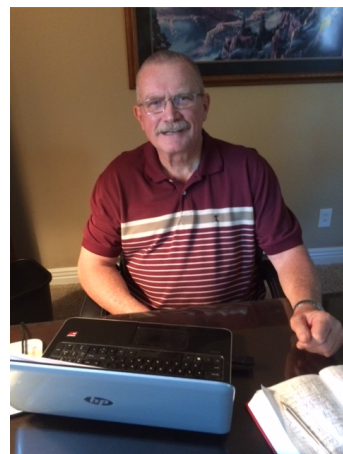
Looking at the menu bar on the home page, you will see that the first item, starting from the left, is PASTORAL FORMATION. Clicking on that link, you will find a summary of



the main insights gained as well as copies of several of the presentations that were given during the first phase of this effort. In June 2017, we gathered leaders from four different Lutheran church bodies to address the critical question of how to raise up a whole new generation of Bible-believing and outreach-oriented Lutheran pastors. You will also find a list of the presenters who have been confirmed for the second phase, which will take place in April 2018. At that gathering we will hear from several people who are doing something unique and/or particularly effective to raise up future leaders in their ministry context.

To the right of Pastoral Formation you will find COMMUNICATIONS. Click on this link for copies of past

newsletters (published in odd-numbered months), letters from the director (distributed in even-numbered months), as well as other communications on significant topics. These include a letter to ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, asking her to take a stand against abortion; Lutheran CORE's response to "Naked and Unashamed," a movement that arose out of one of the ELCA seminaries and is rejecting marriage, by any definition, as normative for sexual activity; and a letter written to all ELCA bishops after the Supreme Court's decision regarding same sex marriage.



To the right of Communications you will find DEVOTIONS. Many thanks to NALC Pastor Jeffray Greene for writing our daily devotions. Lutheran CORE vice president Steven Gjerde and president and director Dennis Nelson write weekly devotions. Many people are finding these devotions helpful for their personal spiritual lives. Pastors have reported them as helpful for sermon

*continued on page 7*

## Praying to the Lord of the Harvest

Lutheran CORE continues to be obedient to the words of Jesus, who told us that because the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, our first response needs to be to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (Matthew 9: 37-38)

Plans continue to develop for the second phase of our pastoral formation project in April 2018, when we will gather a number of people who are doing something particularly unique and/or effective to raise up pastors and other church leaders for the future. Most of the participants have been confirmed. We will soon be able to share with you who will be participating and the topics of their presentations.

As part of this emphasis we also want to lift up various organizations that are doing good work to raise up laborers for the harvest. In this issue of CORE Voice you will find an article about one of these ministries — the Institute of Lutheran Theology, which for twelve years has been offering seminary education from a confessional Lutheran perspective and has been doing it in a way that makes it more affordable and accessible to people today.

We have written about other such ministries in prior issues, and look forward to sharing with you about more of them in the future.

### Inside this Issue:

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# Why Are Some “The Unmentionables” — Response to Bishop Eaton

by *Pr. Steven K. Gjerde*

Our readers may recall that Lutheran CORE initiated a conversation with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (ELCA) regarding abortion this past year. Writing in *Living Lutheran*, Bishop Eaton had noted that “Life is precious and beautiful and, even in its painfulness, something fiercely to be protected.” On behalf of Lutheran CORE, I asked Bishop Eaton if this commitment to life, so eloquently stated, might not lead her to acknowledge publicly the efforts of ELCA members who advocate for the protection of the unborn. On November 16, Bishop Eaton sent her response ([see next page](#)).



Before commenting on her letter, I should note that this conversation was not Lutheran CORE’s first time to address the subject. Working with the North American Lutheran Church in 2012, Lutheran CORE adopted a document entitled “A Word of Counsel to the Church on the Sanctity of Nascent Life,” which addressed abortion and the moral standing of unborn children ([click here](#)). Beholden to that witness, Lutheran CORE considered Bishop Eaton’s comments on life as an opportunity to raise the voice of traditional believers in the ELCA who might not otherwise be heard by her.

Lutheran CORE is thankful that Bishop Eaton took the time to respond to our concerns. Within her letter, she expresses gratitude for speaking with Lutheran CORE and affirms her commitment to maintaining a relationship with us. We take her at her word, and hopefully all confessing Lutherans who know their Small Catechism would do the same.

Yet because we take her at her word, we also note that Bishop Eaton has spoken publicly on behalf of many social causes (the federal minimum wage, the Dakota pipeline, DACA, Israel, and gun violence, to name a few). In doing so, she usually acts in concert with a social statement or other directive from the churchwide organization. Therefore, and given her apparent passion for life, she could justifiably issue a public message that applies to contemporary debates exactly what she cites in her letter, namely, the “strong presumption” in favor of preserving and protecting unborn life contained in the ELCA’s social statement on abortion.

Her letter to us shows no indication that she intends to do so. In a familiar approach for occupants of the episcopal office, Bishop Eaton’s letter simply directs us back to the social statement and encourages us to unity in our diversity. Lutheran CORE certainly understands how carefully Bishop Eaton must choose her words and the subjects on which she speaks. Yet given that she has taken stands on issues of far less consequence, and about which Lutherans could fairly hold much broader disagreement, we would argue that she owes us a more explicit accounting of her silence — and we would argue it, not necessarily or alone for her sake, but for her church’s.

To put the question simply: Would (or could) the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA ever publicly speak of the unborn, and in

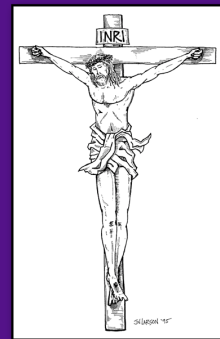
what capacity could she speak of them? And if the Presiding Bishop would (or could) not do so — what does it mean for her ministry (and thus for her church), that a whole group of people has become Unmentionables? Is this what commitment to “striving for justice and peace in all the earth” looks like — not mentioning a whole group of people over whose very life a fierce moral battle wages?

The ELCA, through the office of its Presiding Bishop, has not allowed immigrants, refugees, victims of violence, and others who stand at the center of moral debates to become Unmentionables. At times, it has spoken for them with great specificity, bemoaning or commending particular policy decisions, despite the diversity of views that ELCA members might justly hold on such policies. To refuse an equally clear application of the ELCA’s “strong presumption” for preserving and protecting unborn life to such contemporary debates as the sale of fetal body parts begs the question: what drives the ELCA’s social witness? Or, better — Who?

As always, Lutheran CORE remains committed to being a voice for confessing Lutherans when others are not. We especially look forward to the day when the ELCA and its office of Presiding Bishop will join us in freely, publicly confessing that unborn life is precious and beautiful and, even in its painfulness, something fiercely to be protected.

## MEDITATIONS ON CHRIST'S WORDS FROM THE CROSS

GILBERT MEILAENDER



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*Editor's note: We thank Bishop Eaton for responding to our letter sent by Pr. Gjerde. We share Bp. Eaton's response below, printed in full with her permission:*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Pr. Steven K. Gjerde  
Vice President, Lutheran CORE

November 16, 2017

Dear Pastor Gjerde,

Grace and peace to you and to our sisters and brothers in Christ who are part of the Lutheran CORE.

All of us have just come through a marvelous season of events commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. It has been a joy and a privilege to be part of so many gatherings across this diverse church, carried out in a spirit of reconciliation and unity in Christ.

It is in that spirit that I now write to offer a response to your letter, which you have long been awaiting. Let me first offer my gratitude for your correspondence, which I received as *itself* a sign of our shared commitment to relationship with each other, within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including the Lutheran CORE. In a deeply divided world, this is an important witness for the church to make, even and especially where differences exist.

In reflecting on the teaching office that has been entrusted to me, I have read what you have shared, and I have also reread the ELCA's Social Statement on Abortion. As you acknowledged in your letter, the Statement does "not represent the end of conversation and speech, but a platform for further teaching and public witness." What the church says and does, including relevant institutional policies, are governed by the Statement.

A strength of the Statement is that it reflects a diversity of viewpoints and experiences on the highly complex question of abortion. The concerns you have detailed, as well as those held by others, are not absent from the statement, but are, in fact, foundational – in all of their complexity – to our church's social teaching. Therefore, any public witness of this church is made on the basis of our unity *and* our diversity, requiring "that we move beyond the usual 'pro-life' versus 'pro-choice' language in discussing abortion" (p. 2).

Together, we can proclaim that "the strong Christian presumption is to preserve and protect life" (p. 3). At the same time, we can confess that the conditions and factors that lead to considerations of abortion are devastating to the people involved. Freed in Christ, the church is called to respond, pastorally and socially. While our differences about how we will do so have the potential to be divisive, they can also be a "gift that can lead us into constructive conversation about our faith and its implications for our life in the world," a life marked by service and love of neighbor (p. 2).

Therefore, "because we are united in Christ through faith, we have both the freedom and the obligation to engage in serious deliberation on moral matters," including abortion (p. 1). Let us proceed, then, on the basis of our unity in Christ: as part of creation; as part of the one, holy, and apostolic church; and as people who are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ on the authority of the scripture, which guides our Christian faith and life.

In Christ,



Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop



# What Kind of Pastor Does the Church Need Today?

## Part 2 of 3

by Pr. Brett Jenkins

In *the last issue* I said, “The pastor needed by the [21<sup>st</sup> century] church has got to be able to reach across this cultural divide with the true (read: *orthodox*) Word of Christ, the ‘eternal gospel’ proclaimed by the angel in the passage most of us heard read in church on All Saints’ Sunday. They must be able to present Him who is ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ and who alone offers the hope that can disarm their nihilism to members of a post-truth society.”

To borrow the language of our Evangelical brethren, what I am getting at is that they will need to have “a heart for the lost.” They will need to look out on our broken world; and rather than getting angry or depressed about it, *their* heart should be broken by the pain they see, especially the pain most willfully espoused and defended. “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom 10:14) Such pastors will need to be skilled bridge-builders between the Biblical worldview and a plethora of worldviews alien and even hostile to it. Rather than just worrying about the needs of those already in the Church, a 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor will need to be *missional*.

If through such missional ministry the church actually manages to evangelize those unreached by the Gospel, there will be many in the church’s pews in need of spiritual healing... given the depth and breadth of our culture’s spiritual dysfunctions, this will be true even of lifelong observant Christians. This means that the 21<sup>st</sup> century pastor will also need to be a skilled *Seelsorger* or “curate of souls.” They will need to be skilled in applying the Word of God to people in desperate need of its healing power in both its diagnostic (Law) and prescriptive (Gospel) forms. A 21<sup>st</sup> century pastor will need to be a *healing* presence in both their congregation and local community.

As the very language of the last paragraph suggests (and a commitment to Christian orthodoxy requires) this also means that a 21<sup>st</sup> century pastor will need to be rooted in history. They will need to resist the twin sirens of the latest fads being promoted by the Evangelical publishing houses and mere adherence to the historic forms of the Christian life, by lashing themselves to the mast of the Church’s great ecumenical tradition. This tradition, of which the Reformation’s *Solas*<sup>1</sup> are the Lutheran restatement, will be held to with bulldog-like tenacity and used to evaluate all the church’s practices (both old and new) for their usefulness in proclaiming the Gospel and promoting Christian fidelity. While they will likely embody it innovatively, in order to be able to say or do anything countercultural enough to be worthwhile, the 21<sup>st</sup> century pastor will need to understand their role in a *traditional* way.

It is evident that such a self-understanding means eschewing (or surrendering!) other roles that have been assigned to the pastor for so long that they are now considered by many to be “traditional.” After all, what I have been discussing takes a

tremendous amount of work, and pastors have the same number of hours that everyone else does. A 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor will need to stop being the CEO of the local congregation so that they can be the shepherd. They will have to *permit* and *empower* others to do ministry that was previously the exclusive domain of the pastor, for there is too much ministry to do. They will need to be mature and competent enough not to be threatened by the maturity and competency of others. They will recognize the truth that “The harvest is plentiful, but the *laborers* are few.” A 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor will need to *share* ministry.

To use a crass and inadequate analogy, if the pastor of Christendom was trained to be a franchise manager, the pastor on the mission field needs to be the proprietor of an old-fashioned diner — a short order cook. They will need to be aware of and responsive to the needs of the people they serve and not expect them to conform to the institution’s opted-for menu, counting on a great advertising campaign to make people content with the choice of burgers or chicken nuggets slathered in sauce that is salty enough to disguise its relative lack of flavor. A 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor will need to be *responsive*.

All of this will require tremendous resources from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor... more than they can possibly possess. Therefore, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor will need to be attentive first and foremost to their own spiritual condition, for they will need to operate in a strength that is not their own. Responsiveness requires attentiveness, and such attentiveness can only be exercised by someone who is deeply immersed in their own Christian spirituality. The pastor who would presume to shepherd others and even work under the Holy Spirit’s guidance in the cure of souls in their care had better be under such care themselves. They will take seriously Luther’s famous maxims that he was “just one beggar telling other beggars where to find bread,” and be under the care and in the counsel of competent and godly pastors themselves. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor will need to be no executor of religious rites or dispenser of spiritual nostrums, but rather will themselves be *profoundly spiritual*.

From such spirituality they will garner the strength required to say, “No,” to enough good things that the best things may have priority of place in their lives. They will take seriously the story that when Martin Luther was asked what he had to do the next day his response was, “Work; work, from early until late. In fact, I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.” Their ministry will typically be *unhurried* and consequently, *unharried*.

The last part of what I will propose will be necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor will be the most radical. I look forward to offering my proposals in the next issue.

<sup>1</sup>*Solus Christus* (Christ alone), *Sola Gratia* (grace alone), *Sola Fide* (faith alone), *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), and *Soli Deo Gloria* (to the glory of God alone)

To be continued next issue

**21st Century  
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# The Institute of Lutheran Theology: Ten Years and Counting

by President Dennis Bielfeldt, Ph.D

Part 1 of 2

I have been blessed to lead ILT since its inception 12 years ago. I have learned in this time that academic communities formed online are as real as communities formed in physical classrooms. Moreover, I have come to realize that spiritual formation can happen wherever there are teachers and students willing to dialogue and share deeply about what happens and ought to happen in one's spiritual and pastoral life.

To address the looming clergy shortage, we need more seminarians, not fewer, therefore we need to take unnecessary objections to pastoral formation off the table. And as Lutheran CORE so rightly stated in 2017, the current seminary model which was put forward by Schleiermacher circa 1815 must change. It's now possible to embed a seminarian within the context of the church, rather than a seminary which is essentially a residential college.

I know firsthand about the factors that might prevent someone from enrolling in seminary. Four decades ago when I was farming, I had questions about uprooting, quitting what I did for a living, moving to the city to go to seminary, and how was I going to afford it?

Today one can "go to school" without leaving one's house. Over the last 15 years, scores of university classes have "gone online." One can read a book, watch a professor lecture, access a web page and read what the professor assigns, and submit written assignments, all online. When people talk about "online education," this is what they normally mean. One does online assignments, takes online quizzes, watches online lectures, and passes online exams. Online education so done is asynchronous; it is "education on demand." Some say that one cannot become a pastor in this way. How could "correspondence courses" teach the essentials of ministry? Students never sit or pray with their teachers or other students: they never become part of a community. The folks at the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) agree!

ILT doesn't do asynchronous. ILT pioneered the synchronous residential class room experience, which delivers to student the latest in video-conferencing technology. ILT online courses replicate the residential classroom. Students and professor see and can speak with each other in real-time. Moreover, ILT professors can use all the media they would use in the residential classroom: PowerPoint, videos, document sharing, whiteboard, etc. The sound and video quality are excellent. I tell people that teaching at ILT is very much like teaching at the university, except I don't have to find a parking place before class.

## Background

ILT was born out of the WordAlone Network just as Lutheran CORE was, and essentially at the same time for the same reasons, the difference being CORE was to reform the church and ILT was to reform seminary education. ILT's

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*Dr. Dennis Bielfeldt, President of ILT*

conception was at the 2005 WordAlone Annual Meeting. "Be it resolved that the WordAlone Board appoint a task force to develop a plan and proposal to establish a Lutheran Theological House of Studies using the gifts of theological teachers employing the scriptural hermeneutic of the Lutheran Reformation."

At the 2006 Annual Meeting, I presented the report of the "Lutheran Theological House of Studies Task Force" that wrestled with motivations for establishing such a House of Studies. It identified these challenges then facing ELCA seminary education:

- *Economic Challenge.* Because ELCA funding to seminaries was declining, schools were increasingly forced to develop alternative tuition-generating revenue streams that tended to marginalize Lutheran confessional theology.
- *Sociological Challenge.* Potential seminary students often had families and could no longer conform to the old model of moving to seminary for two years, going on internship for a year, going back to the seminary for a year, and then graduating and taking a first call.
- *Leadership Challenge:* Leadership preferring the praxis of political/social advocacy over confessional theological theory found increasing resonance upon ELCA seminary campuses.
- *Theological Challenge:* The intellectual ethos of ELCA seminaries de-emphasized the truth-conditions of theological language.
- *Authority Challenge:* The question of the proper grounding of Lutheran theology after the marginalization of the hermeneutical and theological commitments of the Reformation remained unresolved.
- *Rights Challenge:* The seminary ethos often focused more on the "rights" of the individual than upon the Cross of Christ.

The report advocated a House of Studies that would seek

## Ten Years of ILT (continued from p. 5)

accreditation, teach a rigorous, normative, Reformation theology, be autonomous and not located at an ELCA seminary, and be implemented regardless of the ELCA endorsing (or not endorsing) its graduates. The report also advocated its House of Studies be realist with respect to God's being and causality.

ILT's initial mission statements proclaimed that it must be independent of any particular church body or para-church organization, that it must value divergent Lutheran theological/ecclesiological trajectories, and that it must be evangelical in placing Christ and His atoning work at the center of its curriculum. They declared that the context of ILT's work was a post-Christian world, deeply secular and suspicious of theological truth claims.

*Dr. Bielfeldt's article will conclude next time with the history and current operations of the [Institute of Lutheran Theology](#).*

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## Time for a Crew Change at CORE Voice

*by Pr. Steve Shipman*

My life for the past dozen years or so is proof of the danger of not attending a meeting. I was unable to travel to the conference in Kansas City on human sexuality in 2005, and so I was nominated there to serve on the Steering Committee of the group the participants decided to form, to be called the Lutheran Coalition for Reform.

Things got more interesting as Bp. Paull Spring called me and asked me to take the notes at the first Steering Committee meeting in December. That led to my being elected secretary, a position I held until another shock and surprise, just after I had promised my wife I was going to retire from CORE (then renamed the Lutheran Coalition for Renewal) and spend more time at home.

As I was sitting in my living room peacefully minding my own business, Moderator Paul Ulring called and asked me to consider becoming Director of Lutheran CORE, to follow Pr. Mark Chavez (notice I didn't say "replace") who was becoming General Secretary of the North American Lutheran Church.

The Almighty clearly has a sense of humor. After prayer and conversation with Linda, with Mark Chavez, and with a number of friends whom I trusted to tell me if I was totally crazy, I accepted the challenge. What a ride it has been!

Over the course of the last dozen years, I have been blessed to know many wonderful saints in Christ's Church. I have represented CORE at many gatherings of renewal groups and have been blessed even as I have often felt inadequate to the task.

I may at some point (perhaps next month) sit down and write some thoughts about my experiences and my view of the current situation. I am often amused as CORE is regularly blamed for the decline of the ELCA, when it is more accurate to say (borrowing words from a friend) that we were trying to save the ELCA from itself. We failed in that task, but God is causing many wonderful ministries to blossom forth among Lutherans in North America. And I continue to pray for the ELCA, which I have not felt called to leave (and they have not felt obligated to kick me out).

Anyhow, as the Bible says, for everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under Heaven. And it is time for me to step aside from my ongoing responsibilities as editor of the *CORE Voice*.

## Thank You, Eric Swensson!

Lutheran CORE wishes to express its appreciation to Eric Swensson for his many years of technological assistance and guidance.

Eric developed and oversaw both our open and closed Facebook pages as well as our Twitter account, and he helped get the word out about our work through his considerable network of social media connections. In addition, he posted items on our website and participated in our board discussions, prayer gatherings, and the first phase of the pastoral summit.

Eric has been a long-term part of the renewal movement within the Lutheran church. He is committed to the authority of Scripture, confessional theology, and the mission of the church.

We wish him God's blessings as he continues his work on his doctoral degree and as he serves various Christian organizations with their technological needs.

This is not a decision I made lightly, because I enjoy writing and I believe the witness of CORE and its founding task of uniting Lutherans across denominational lines are more needed today than ever. I also believe that CORE has rightly identified that the most critical need in all our Lutheran bodies is to find ways to train and equip ordained leadership for the future.

I am delighted that Kim Smith, a board member of Lutheran CORE, has agreed to take over editorial responsibilities on an interim basis until the board can make more permanent arrangements. We worked together some on this issue, and she will take primary responsibility beginning with the next issue.

At this point, you should still submit your articles to me. Kim and I will be working together as needed to administer the "private" Facebook group and the public Facebook page, and you probably will still read things here in *Voice* from me on occasion.

One of the commitments I have made, along with a lot of supply preaching and a very part-time chaplaincy at a program for seniors, is to be more involved with the Lions Clubs. This will involve a lot of time and travel. Plus Linda and I want to do more leisure traveling as long as our health permits. And there is a granddog who needs love and attention from time to time.

I thank all those who have shown confidence in pushing me beyond my comfort zone, especially Bp. Spring and Pr. Ulring, and those who have helped in so many ways. Pr. Mark Chavez was a tremendous help in the transition, and the many people who have served on the Steering Committee, the CORE Board, and in administrative positions (I won't even begin to list names) have been a blessing to me and to the whole Church.

Most of all, I thank and praise the Lord of the Church, who took this undistinguished country pastor approaching retirement and opened doors to unimaginable ministry opportunities.

Please pray for Kim and for the work of Lutheran CORE going forward. And please continue to support CORE financially.

And continue to support the many other programs, activities, and organizations who are working in various ways to build up the Body of Christ and be instruments of the Holy Spirit in calling people to faith and discipleship in this increasingly hostile spiritual environment.

I am convinced that God is not finished with His Lutheran family yet. Blessed be His Name now and forever.



## New Website (cont'd from page 1)

ideas. People also tell of using them when visiting the sick, the hospitalized, the home-bound, and in worship services in nursing homes.

To the right of Devotions you will find WORSHIP, which provides a link to hymn suggestions, prayers, and choral music. Many churches are using these prayers during their Sunday morning worship services. Many thanks to Cathy Ammlung, secretary of the Lutheran CORE board, for writing these resources.

To the right of Worship you will find BOOKS and EVENTS. Click on the Books link for a list of some of the books we recommend. Click on the Events link for information about past and future events, as well as podcast recordings of several presentations from the pastoral summit/phase one.

To the right of Events you will find GIVE. Clicking on that link will bring you to a form you can use to make a secure online donation to Lutheran CORE. We are very grateful to and for all who support us with their prayers, financial gifts, and through telling others about our work.

### Partners Wanted!

To the right of Give you will find the word ABOUT. Clicking on that link will bring you to a form that individuals can fill out and submit to become supporting members of Lutheran CORE, and a form that congregations and renewal groups can fill out and submit to become partners with Lutheran CORE. Look at the list of Partner Renewal groups to see if there is one in your area. If there is, we encourage you to connect with the contact person. Join with local, like-minded people. If there is not, we encourage you to gather a group of like-minded people in your area to start one for fellowship and mutual support.

We are re-building the list of partner congregations from scratch, because we know that often, when church leadership changes, there is a change in the theology and ministry emphasis of a congregation. If your church is not listed, we encourage you to contact your pastor and church council about taking action to become a partner with Lutheran CORE. If you are looking for a Lutheran CORE-affiliated congregation in your area and do not see one listed in that section of our website, contact us at [lcorewebmail@gmail.com](mailto:lcorewebmail@gmail.com). It is very possible that we have some contacts in your area.

Finally, under About, you will find a section called Clergy Connect. Click on that phrase for postings from orthodox, confessional Lutheran churches, who are looking for an orthodox, confessional Lutheran pastor. If your congregation currently is, or soon will be, looking for a new pastor, consider using this valuable, free service from Lutheran CORE.

In addition to the menu items mentioned above, Lutheran CORE's beautiful new logo, designed by board member Brett Jenkins, can be used to return to the home page from any page. There is also another menu (see the "hamburger" symbol ☰) that is mostly applicable to small devices, such as cell phones. It will display the menu vertically instead of horizontally. There is also a magnifying glass that will bring up a search window. After pressing it, try searching on keywords such as "Epiphany" or "Lent," as an example.

Now that the new website is published and an early bug or two has been resolved, board member Kim Smith is collecting requests for change as they come in via comments, email, and

Facebook. Several requests asked that certain documents be ported to the new site from the old. Another involved the Worship page and we may very well be combining the Hymn Suggestions and Intercessory Prayer areas in the future due to a comment that came in on January 1st that confirmed our hunch that such a change might be necessary. Please provide any other related feedback on how things should change to [lcorewebmail@gmail.com](mailto:lcorewebmail@gmail.com).

We are very grateful to Lutheran CORE board member Kim Smith and her husband Doug for the countless hours that they spent developing this new website. We are also very grateful for the many helpful suggestions from all the early users of the site on how the website could be more clearly laid out and be made easier to use.

## Annual Pro Ecclesia Conference: "Hope Today"

The annual Pro Ecclesia Conference sponsored by the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology (founded originally by Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson) will be held June 4-6, 2018, at Loyola University in Baltimore, Maryland.

In a world of heightened anxieties and dangers, this conference proposes to return to the basics of Christian hope. What is Christian hope? What are its grounds? How is it a virtue for human living? And in the midst of our many divisions, what does hope mean, not only in the world, but in the Church? How does Christian hope impact the lives we live today?



The 2018 CCET conference "Hope Today" will begin Monday evening, June 4, and continue to Wednesday noon, June 6. It is especially designed for clergy and lay people who are theologically interested but not necessarily theological experts. Registration includes admission to all sessions plus the conference banquet on Tuesday evening. Reasonably priced (and convenient to the conference) dorm accommodations are available.

Speakers will be as follows:

- Carolyn Chau, Western University, "The ways of perishing and the practice of hope"
- Elizabeth Agnew Cochran, Duquesne University, "Hope in the theology of Jonathan Edwards"
- David Elliot, Catholic University of America, "Hope as a virtue"
- Wesley Hill, Trinity School for Ministry, "The role of hope in Christian friendship"
- Willie James Jennings, Yale Divinity School, "Race, ecumenism, and the hope for church unity"
- Peter Leithart, Theopolis Institute, "Eucharistic hope"
- David Yeago, Trinity School for Ministry, Banquet speaker

Registration information is available at [e-ccet.org](http://e-ccet.org)

## Coming Events

**March for Life**, January 19, 2018, Washington D.C. Plan to join us! [More information here.](#)

**Pastoral Formation Summit, Phase 2**, April 11, 2018. Please hold this event in your prayers.

**Ancient Evangelical Future Conference** will be held again in June at Trinity School for Ministry. [Click here to learn more.](#)

**Pro Ecclesia Conference**, "Hope Today," June 4-6, 2018, sponsored by Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology, at Loyola University in Baltimore. More information on [page 7](#); [click here](#) to register for the conference.

**LCMC Youth Event**, July 17-20, 2018. Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa, "Called 2 Follow." [Click here.](#)

**Lutheran Week**, August 13-17, 2018. Crowne Plaza Denver Convention Center, Colorado. Includes Women of the NALC gathering, Braaten-Benne Theological Lectures, and the annual NALC Convocation. [Watch here for more information.](#)

**LCMC Annual Gathering**, October 7-10, Des Moines, Iowa. [Watch this link for more information.](#)

## Are You Sponsoring an Event? We Would Love to Help You Get the Word Out

If you are planning an event that you believe Lutheran CORE members would want to know about and that is consistent with the *Common Confession*, please let us know. Brief articles and pictures are always welcome. We also can share them on our website and our Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Contact the editor, Pr. Steve Shipman, by [clicking here](#).

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donation via our website.*

## Weekly Devotions and Sermon Starters

Weekly devotions continue to be available on [our new website](#). Pastor Dennis Nelson, president of the board and director of Lutheran CORE, posts a devotional based upon one of the following Sunday's readings every Tuesday. Pastor Steven Gjerde, vice-president of the board, writes a devotional based upon one of the previous Sunday's readings in the Missouri Synod lectionary series, which is posted every Wednesday. A link to these devotionals is then posted on a number of different Facebook and Twitter accounts. Spread the good word about these resources!

### CORE Voice

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PO Box 1741  
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1-888-810-4180  
[www.lutherancore.org](http://www.lutherancore.org)*

*Visit us on Facebook  
Follow us on Twitter*

*Pr. Steve Shipman, Editor  
[prsteveshipman@gmail.com](mailto:prsteveshipman@gmail.com)*

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