

**The ELCA Breaks Trust**

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

The ELCA is guilty of a massive breach of trust. The ELCA cannot be trusted. We realize that those are very strong statements, but they are confirmed by the presentation given by one of the keynote speakers at the recent ELCA Youth Gathering.

Nadia Bolz-Weber (NBW) is a gifted communicator. As she shares very honestly about the struggles in her own life, she has an amazing ability to connect with and encourage young people who are struggling with self-confidence, self-image, and shame. She is absolutely correct that God loves us as we are, and she communicates that message powerfully (even though her description of grace says nothing about the cross!). But even so, anyone who cares about truth, integrity, and young people should be totally up in arms with how she ended her presentation on the night of June 29, 2018.

**NBW: Do you renounce the lie that queerness is anything other than beauty?**

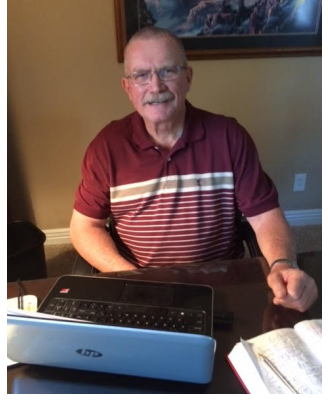
**List of Lies**

In that [presentation](#), she described the devil as that voice within us that accuses. She said that her favorite part of the baptismal liturgy is when we are asked, "Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil and all his empty promises?" Fairly enough, she equated the devil's "empty promises" with "lies," but then she led the audience through a series of questions, in which she asked 30,000 young people whether they renounced a list of things that she considered to be such lies. In response to each lie the au-

dience shouted, "I renounce them!" Included in these renunciations was the question, "Do you renounce the lie that queerness is anything other than beauty?" The arena full of young people shouted their agreement.

**Beholden to a lie?**

There you have it: if queerness is deemed beauty and a belief that queerness is *not* beauty is deemed a lie, then the traditional view of human sexuality has just been described at an official gathering of 30,000 young members of the ELCA as a lie, one of the devil's empty promises. So now, those who hold to that traditional view are, according to an official and privileged speaker of the ELCA, beholden to a lie from Satan that must be renounced. Can you imagine what would happen if an ELCA Youth Gathering keynote speaker had asked, "Do you renounce the lie that same-sex erotic behavior is anything other than sin?" Or if such a speaker had in any way implied that the LGBTQIA+ community is beholden to a lie?



**The traditional view of human sexuality has been described at an official gathering of the ELCA as a lie.**

**2009 Churchwide Assembly Commitment**

Whatever happened to the commitment that was made at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly (CWA)? That assembly purported to give an official place for a wide range of views, including the traditional view, within the ELCA. Was a traditional speaker allowed to address the youth in Houston? Or whatever happened to the boundaries that were set at that same Assembly? The only kind of same gender relationships that were approved are those that are publicly accountable, lifelong, and monogamous (PALMS). That assembly did not approve bisexuality, transgenderism, or any of the other forms of sexual identity and expression that are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community. And yet here we have the organizing

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# Sharing the (Not So) Good News

by [Pr. Cathy Ammlung](#), Lutheran CORE Secretary

Sharing the Gospel ain't what it used to be. Knocking on doors, handing out pamphlets or church brochures, or even simply inviting someone to church or asking if you can pray with them, may very well be met with a gruff rebuff.

Not only are more people unchurched and non-religious; many are also proud of their unbelief. Some are outspoken in their scorn and contempt for believers, especially traditional Christians, whom they consider judgmental, irrational, ignorant, racist, misogynist, and homo- and transphobic. Whether you've made a lifelong habit of openly sharing your faith or are doing it for the first time, it's intimidating to be met with open hostility instead of a polite, "No, thanks!"

## Observations

Today, I'll make several observations. I hope to address each of them in more detail in future articles.

First: although it may seem new to many of us, hostility is nothing new in the Church. From death at the hands of the Roman government to the torture of missionaries in far-off lands to today's persecution of Christians in the Middle East, Africa, and the Far East, many have rejected, hated, and tried to eliminate Jesus Christ, his Gospel and his disciples. We've dodged the worst of that here.

Second: intellectually, we've also gotten a tad lazy. Granted: We attend church, Bible studies, and adult forums, and strive to integrate our faith into everyday life. Good! We know what we believe, and why. Even better!

But most of us have very little training or experience in defending the faith of the Church against hostile critics. We may not know exactly *why* an accusation is wrong. We may be ignorant of the world-view of today's most vocal, popular, influential atheists and "spiritual-but-not-religious" gurus. We're flummoxed when Scriptural references are met with vacant stares, rolling eyes, or completely garbled interpretations of their meaning. We may wonder whether it really does all come down to, "Well, you're entitled to your opinions, no matter how kooky, but I prefer mine. They are true for me."

## We need a boot camp

In short, we need a boot camp for apologetics. And no, that doesn't mean "learning how to apolo-

gize for what you believe because it might offend someone!" According to Wikipedia, "Apologetics (from Greek ἀπολογία, "speaking in defense") is the religious discipline of defending religious doctrines through systematic argumentation and discourse." The website [www.crossexamined.org](http://www.crossexamined.org) says: "Why should anyone place their faith in Jesus Christ – a man who lived over two-thousand years ago? ... Christian apologetics is both *the science and art of answering this question by using reasons and evidence.*" And the tagline to [www.apologetics.com](http://www.apologetics.com) is, "Challenging believers to think and thinkers to believe."

Many of C. S. Lewis's works, especially *Mere Christianity*, are engaging primers of the faith, accessible to the average layperson. In the same vein (though a bit more challenging) and focused on the controversies (and their ramifications) that spurred the development of the Nicene Creed, is C.

FitzSimons Allen's book, *The Cruelty of Heresy: An Affirmation of Christian Orthodoxy*. Any book I've read 5 times, highlighting almost every sentence, is a gem. And since Allen's (the former Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina) focus is on how the early Church addressed heretical objections, distortions, and misunderstandings of orthodox Christianity, it's certainly "on point!"

## Christ Yearns to Forgive Skeptics Too

Third, the most important thing about encountering skeptics – even belligerent, insulting ones – is to remember that *they, too, are persons for whom our Lord Jesus suffered, died, and rose.* Christ yearns to forgive, heal, and enlighten them, bestow faith through the Holy Spirit, and receive them into his Father's Kingdom in an eternal relationship of love, life, and joy. It's important to have this at the center of every encounter we have.

Fourth, it's not necessary to rebut every argument of a skeptic. Sometimes all we can do is explain or answer objections as honestly and faithfully as possible and ask "leading" questions to get at the heart of the other person's hostility. It may not be what is first disclosed! Many unbelievers haven't "thought



... defending  
the faith of the  
Church  
against hostile  
critics.

Hostility is  
nothing new in  
the church.

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# A Lament for the ELCA

by Pr. Dennis D. Nelson, CORE Director and President

The outcry that I have heard about the choice of speakers for the recent ELCA Youth Gathering is far stronger than anything else I have experienced since the events leading up to and following the ELCA's 2009 Churchwide Assembly (CWA). People are outraged that the ELCA would choose someone who rejects marriage by any definition as normative for sexual activity and a transgender activist to address our young people.

## Grief Over 2009 CWA Actions

One of the persons I heard from in response to my June letter from the director is a retired missionary. She told me that the grief I expressed over recent events reminded her of the grief that she felt over the Churchwide Assembly's actions in 2009. She wrote—

“The 2009 CWA took me completely off-guard. I had only recently returned to the U.S. after spending decades overseas as a missionary, and I realized that I had some serious ‘catching up’ to do about the ELCA. I know that while we are



called to love all people and to display God's grace toward them, we are also called to live under the authority of God's Word. I am still trying to learn what this means in my own life. I do know that we cannot do one at the expense of the other.

## No Place in the Church of Jesus Christ

“As I did my research I was distressed by what I learned about the ELCA leadership. I found that at least some of the ELCA leaders did not hold to the same standard of exegesis as their predecessors, a standard that I also as a Bible translator need to hold to. In reading about the CWA itself, I was convinced that in various respects what went on there had no place in the church of Jesus Christ:

- ⇒ the marginalization of wise and respected leaders of the past,
- ⇒ the arrogance and disrespect shown toward global partners attending the CWA who urged the assembly to not take the steps they took,
- ⇒ the lobbying that was allowed to take place, with the goal of influencing the votes of delegates.

“The result was a breach of trust resulting in widespread grief by faithful followers of Jesus — globally, across the U.S., and on down to individuals.”

## Dealing with Trauma and Grief

About a month after the 2009 CWA she went to a Scripture Impact conference at which one of the breakout sessions was about Trauma Healing. The presenter mentioned that composing laments can be a powerful way of dealing with trauma and grief. A few weeks later she decided to write one. She did indeed find that writing the lament had a powerful impact upon her. Even though it did not change what had happened, she no longer felt like she was being crushed by the load. Her lament follows this article.

**We are called to love all people. We are called to live under the authority of God's Word. We cannot do one at the expense of the other.**

## Nothing Less than the Fall

What we have experienced in the ELCA in the last few years is nothing less than the fall of traditional Biblical values, the destruction of a reliance upon the authority of the Scriptures, and a Babylonian captivity of God's people as they are being carried away by church leaders into a foreign land of a strange theology and a strange concept of the mission of the church.



The Old Testament reading for July 1 was from Lamentations 3. Even while grieving over the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple, and the deportation of the people, the prophet Jeremiah still says,

*“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3: 22-23)*

It is important that we be able to express our grief. It is important that we be able to lament. But as we lament, we need to turn to and rely upon the promises of God, just as Jeremiah did. God's steadfast love will never cease. His mercies will never come to an end. Great is His faithfulness.

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## A Lament for the ELCA

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### Cries Along the Journey: Lament for the ELCA

Can you hear God's people crying  
From far across the sea?  
"Our companions have taken another road,  
We cannot follow them there!"  
Be their companion on the road, Lord,  
Make them strong and wise.  
Give them courage to resist and confront,  
And send them to lead us home.

Can you hear God's servants crying,  
From all across our land?  
"We taught them your path but they wouldn't  
come.  
They've been deceived!"  
Hear your faithful servants, Lord,  
Wipe away their tears.  
Let them end their lives in peace,  
Send others to carry on.

Can you hear God's people crying  
From churches everywhere?  
"They have taken away our solid foundation  
And moved to one of sand!"  
Give them new companions, Lord,  
As they begin a new road alone.  
Give them vision, courage, and joy,  
And lead them safely home.

Can you hear God's people crying  
Here in this very place?  
Their silent grief is so heavy,  
And they feel so very alone.  
Man of sorrows, you know their grief,  
Carry their burden now.  
Be their companion along the road  
As they travel home.

Can you hear my cries of sorrow,  
Like Jesus for Jerusalem?  
"You missed the road! Turn back!" I cry,  
"Turn back before it's too late!"  
If you don't come with me,  
I'll have to go on alone."  
Lord, be my companion and my guide  
And lead me safely home.

## LUTHERAN CORE NURTURES GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

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

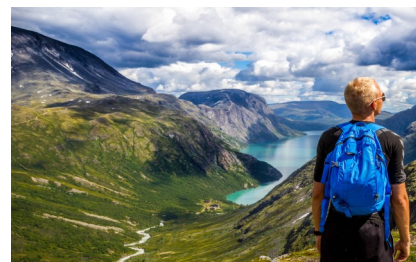
Lutheran CORE seeks to be a source of encouragement and connectedness not only for confessional Lutherans here in the United States, but also for those in other parts of the world. We are in frequent contact with twelve confessional Lutheran church leaders in Germany and Scandinavia as we share with them about the work we are doing and the challenges we are facing and also ask them how we can pray for them.

I recently emailed my [June letter from the director](#) to these twelve European Lutheran church leaders. I wanted them to know about the great distress we feel over the choice of speakers for the ELCA's Youth Gathering, and how those choices reveal that the ELCA cannot be trusted to keep the commitments that were made and to respect the boundaries that were set at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. We are very grateful for the words of encouragement that we have received from them and want to share with you how they are asking that we pray for them.

A pastor from Copenhagen, Denmark asks for prayer as they seek to reach some of the thousands of students in their city. He also requests prayer for a conversation he will be having with a Muslim person and for the search for an additional pastor for their church.

A pastor from Norway wrote, "This is really sad to read, but not surprising. I think many members of the Norwegian Lutheran Church feel the same pressure as you describe." He then added, "The pressure is hard all around. Please keep praying for us in the leadership positions, that we may have wisdom to handle this right. Pray that our church will, in the grace of God, keep His Word as the holy truth."

I am reminded of the words of the hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." We are blessed to have these connections with fellow confessional Lutherans in Germany and Scandinavia.



## The ELCA Breaks Trust

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committee of the ELCA Youth Gathering scheduling, as one of the keynote speakers, a prominent face in the ELCA who has now publicly condemned any perspective on same-sex erotic behavior but the most revisionist. She is not only a signer of the "[We Are Naked and Unashamed](#)" document, which rejects marriage by any definition as normative for sexual activity, but now she has gone even beyond that. She has described the traditional view of human sexuality as a lie from Satan that needs to be renounced.

**The traditional view of human sexuality is no longer one acceptable option among many.**

### 2009 CWA Vote Opened Flood Gates

How are we now to view all of the language that we were given leading up to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly? How shall we now trust the ELCA? In the time leading up to the 2009 assembly, we were told that what was being proposed would merely allow churches who wanted to call a pastor in a same gender relationship to do so. Any congregation that did not wish to, would not need to do so. Given the public denunciation of traditional teaching (before youth, no less), how can we view all of that chatter as anything other than a set up? Once those who have been driving this revisionist agenda got the vote that they had been working relentlessly to get, the flood gates were opened. The true agenda is revealed. The traditional view of human sexuality is no longer included as one acceptable option among many. Rather it is characterized as a lie from Satan that needs to be renounced.

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### Survey Regarding ELCA Youth Gathering

We want to know what you think and how you feel about the recent ELCA Youth Gathering. What have you heard from those who attended? Besides the concerns that we have expressed regarding some of the keynote speakers, we have heard many reports of positive opportunities for fellowship, learning, worship, and service in the Greater Houston area.

This survey can be found [here](#). Your answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time and effort in answering these questions, and thank you for your support of the historic Christian faith and traditional Biblical morals and values.

## Sharing the (Not So) Good News

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through" their unbelief; it's a pastiche of feelings, experiences, and lines from more articulate, popular personalities. They are often muddled, inconsistent, and illogical. They know little or nothing about the Bible, Christian doctrines, history and worship. Their idea of God is a caricature at best.

### Some Believe Christianity is Awful

But at the same time, some skeptics are fiercely convinced that Christianity is so wrong and so awful that there's no reason for them to investigate or understand it better. Why should they waste their time understanding something founded on lies, hatred, and ignorance?

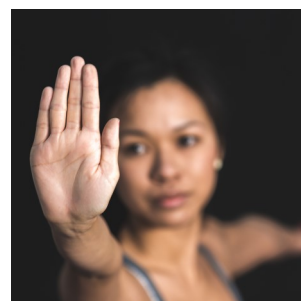
That means, finally, that Christians are constantly being put on the defensive. We don't believe what many atheists accuse Christians of believing, yet they aren't interested in hearing what we *do* believe because they already "know" it's just as horrid and false. No, we don't believe in a "Sky Fairy" who magically bestows goodies. We don't believe that reserving sexual intimacy for marriage between a man and a woman is oppression or an over-spiritualized denial of the body's goodness. We don't believe that confessing Jesus as true God and true man is a garbled rehash of ancient fertility god myths, topped with a dollop of delusional wish-fulfillment foisted on the Church by semi-literate, power-grabbing apostles. Yet these, and a whole host of other goofy things, are accusations and descriptions routinely hurled at Christians. And often we can't seem to get a word in edgewise!

### We Can't Get a Word in Edgewise!

But now and then, we can. Occasionally, someone is intrigued – God willing, by our commitment, "grace under pressure," or ability to forgive. Occasionally, someone is confused: how can we who are such bigoted, evil people establish, fund, and volunteer in so many homeless shelters, food kitchens, relief organizations, and the like, often among the very people we're supposed to be hating and oppressing so badly? And they want to know more.

Those moments of confusion and intrigue may be the only "in" we'll get with many present-day atheists and skeptics. God give us the faith, deeds, and words to share the Gospel with them however he deems best!

Until next time...



# Scriptural Authority To Suffer Another ELCA Blow in 2019?

*By Pastor Steven K. Gjerde, CORE Vice President*

If you're following trends in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), you may have heard already about the [draft Social Statement on Women and Justice](#) slated for discussion and adoption in 2019. It has started earning some just criticisms —

**One critique will sound familiar: the continuing loss of Scriptural authority.**

I recently heard one pastor, a Palestinian and self-proclaimed feminist, complain that the document confuses justification and the Christian life — and Lutheran CORE will be adding its own critique over the next year. One critique will sound familiar: the continuing loss of Scriptural authority.

## Repeat After Me

In 2009, the ELCA attempted to deal with disagreements over sexuality by acknowledging differences of Biblical interpretation among its members and insisting that the ELCA had room for everyone. This compromise created the untenable situation of a church saying two opposite things about the same subject. In contrast, the draft statement on women and justice, concerned with resisting sexism and patriarchy, seeks no such interpretive compromise and seems to want everyone to say the same thing. To achieve this end, it takes a broad swipe at the Bible.

**The draft statement on women and justice takes a broad swipe at the Bible.**

## Scripture Requires the ELCA's Critique?

While citing the "misuse" of Scripture as its main target, it plainly presents Scripture itself as a problematic text that requires the church's critique:

We confess that there are problems within the Scriptures themselves and that our theological tradition has led to a theological understanding of humankind that is overly male-identified. These problems even become idolatrous as deeply rooted but false beliefs. (lines 876-879)

## Scripture Threatens Your Spiritual Health?

The more I read these sentences, the more fascinating I find them to be. Although the authors squish some talk of "theological tradition" in the middle, the first and last part of this passage focuses on the "problems" found in Scripture and makes a simple assertion about them: if believed, they lead to idola-

try. The qualifiers placed on beliefs ("deeply rooted" and "false") do not mitigate that assertion at all. Of course the beliefs involved in idolatry are false, and even "lightly rooted" beliefs (whatever they may be) could lead, I suppose, to lightly-held idolatry. The point is clear: Scripture contains texts that (in and of themselves) endanger your spiritual health and tarnish the glory of God.



## Sinful marks of Patriarchy?

Within the context of the whole draft statement, these "problems" are clear: Scripture contains words, phrases, symbols, patterns, etc. that bear the sinful marks of patriarchy and sexism — indeed, certain words of Scripture are quite simply sin, denying the article of justification by faith. This latter assertion becomes clearer in another telling but almost off-hand comment about First Timothy 2:15.

This verse by St. Paul reads, "But women will be saved through childbearing if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety." Certainly, those words have garnered all kinds of attention, and most commentary that I have read does what the statement repeatedly suggests: it takes into account historical context, especially then-current understandings of a woman's primary vocation in society, and states that Paul is promising that women will be saved and healed in the course of that vocation by Christian faith and its life.

But now enters the ELCA's draft social statement (lines 1344-1355):

"Indeed, gender-based rules are even presented in one letter as a form of works righteousness (1 Timothy 2:15)." With no further explanation or acknowledgement of alternative interpretations, this verse of Scripture falls to the cutting floor, condemned as contrary to the [article of justification by faith](#). Earlier in the same paragraph, the au-

**The draft statement sets out to determine which passages of Scripture are sinful and ungodly, and which are true and God-breathed.**

**Contrary interpretations are woven into strawmen and set aflame.**

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## Scriptural Authority ... Blow?

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thors also cast a subtle sneer on the household codes of Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, censoring the belief that descriptions of marriage based on Christ and the Church are “God-assigned.” So there you have it: the draft statement sets out to determine which passages of Scripture are sinful and ungodly, and which are true and God-breathed.

### Flawed Approach

As a female colleague once noted, this approach means that Scripture’s clearest prohibition of marital rape and abuse (Ephesians 5:25-30) now loses its divine authority. It was only those pagans who insisted on treating their wives as their own flesh, tenderly nourishing and caring for them, and Christians adopted all that claptrap because talk of tenderness and love appealed to their sexist, patriarchal minds. Beware! And let the church help you navigate your way around such chatter.

### Take Note of the ELCA’s Shift

More broadly speaking, the draft’s approach to Biblical interpretation signals a shift from how the ELCA operated in 2009, and traditional believers in the ELCA should note it. Fading is that postmodern tolerance, officially adopted with regard to sexuality, to which confessing Lutherans might still appeal for some consideration. Now showing is a new and aggressive willingness to identify error and silence it, starting with the Bible itself. Contrary interpretations are not so much engaged or considered (much less handled charitably) as they are woven into strawmen and set aflame. That approach, far more than the subject itself, should be marked.



### Sin! Your Name is Patriarchy!

Back in 2009, the social statement of the day understood itself to be making room for differences of interpretation. Now this social statement goes so far as to exclude certain Biblical texts from the faith. Add to this mix an ambiguous relationship to the Incarnation (how much distance can one sentence put between God and that boy from Nazareth?) and the strange decision to use an abstract concept

**Now showing is a new and aggressive willingness to identify error and silence it, starting with the Bible itself.**

(“patriarchy”) as the name for a sin (note to the ELCA’s ecumenical partner, Patriarch Bartholomew:

“Surprise!”), and you have far more than a draft social statement. You have a brave, new church that might just leave you in the dust, right next to Ephesians 5.

**You have a brave new church that might just leave you and Ephesians 5 in the dust.**

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## COME TO CHICAGO FOR ENCUESTRO 2018

*by Pr. Keith Forni, Lutheran CORE Board Member*

Encuentro (Encounter) 2018 will again be hosted by Saint Timothy Lutheran Church- ELCA, 2101 North Kildare Avenue in Chicago’s Hermosa neighborhood, gathered around the theme “Fight the Good Fight of Faith / Pelea la Buena Batalla de la Fe,” 1 Timothy 6:12.

The Inter-Lutheran Hispanic-Latino / Bilingual Ministry resourcing event, sponsored annually by Lutheran CORE, will take place Friday, October 12, 2018.

Featured presentations will focus on Neighborhood Ministry, Advent-Christmas Celebrations including Las Posadas, Liturgical Spanish 101. The “Misa Panamericana” will be celebrated with Mariachi musicians.



Keynote speakers will be announced soon. *There is no cost to attend.* Meals will be provided by St. Timothy, Chicago and First & Santa Cruz, Joliet.

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# The North American Lutheran Seminary in a Nutshell

by [Dr. Amy C. Schifrin](#), President, North American Lutheran Seminary

Thank you for this opportunity to say a word about the theological education and pastoral formation that are being offered at the North American Lutheran Seminary, the seminary of the North American Lutheran Church. We are located at Trinity School for Ministry (TSM): an evangelical seminary in the Anglican tradition, and location is the first thing I would like to speak about, because this seminary is not simply an idea but an incarnate reality in which pastoral candidates are being formed daily.

## Location, Location, Location

The North American Lutheran Church has chosen to locate its Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, PA for reasons that are theological, ecclesial, and practical.<sup>1</sup> As a young denominational expression of confessional Lutheranism, we needed a place for formation of our pastoral candidates. The NALC had neither a

**For the life and health  
of our congregations  
we will need pastors  
who are ...**

system of parochial schools nor of church colleges. So, we began to think creatively and ecumenically. For the life and health of our congregations we will need pastors who are not only people of good character and compassionate hearts, but who are also competent to translate biblical texts, who study and listen to the voices of the Fathers, who take joy in the faithfulness of the Reformers, who bear witness to the living presence of Jesus Christ in water and word, bread and wine, and who can parse the law/gospel dialectic in such a way that those among whom they minister might come to trust in the love of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is our source and our destination, and in whom we indeed live and move, and have our very being.

Having this time of intentional preparation in the midst of a broadly ecumenical community will not only give our seminarians the theological knowledge that they need, but it will shape each of them to pay attention to neighbors far and near, and to the beauty and kindness of those whose Christian expressions may be nuanced in a different key, but whose love of God and neighbor is pure, holy, and just. Such an intense time together will help them to speak and enact God's mercy within communities to which they will be called.

## Requirements

On the practical side, all of our [M.Div. and M.A.](#) students who graduate from the NALS at Trinity

School for Ministry receive an ATS accredited degree through TSM. ATS is the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. Within the 90 hours required for an M.Div. (60 hours for an M.A.) students in the Lutheran track take 27 hours of required Lutheran courses. (They may also have Lutheran faculty for TSM required and elective course as well.) The required Lutheran courses are Creeds and Catechisms, Lutheran Confessions, Theology I, Theology II, The Theology and Writings of Martin Luther, The Modern Church (Lutheran Track), Homiletics I, and Introduction to Lutheran Liturgy. Along with all M.Div. students at TSM our students are required to have a full year each of Greek and of Hebrew, as well as a full complement of courses in biblical studies, church history, pastoral theology, and mission and evangelism.<sup>2</sup>

## Personal Relationships

We also believe that full pastoral formation requires the ability to relate to others in person. So, while one of the trends in seminary education is online/distance learning, and all of our courses are offered annually either in an online or a one or two-week intensive format, we still understand this to be a supplement to a full-time residential course. We offer these class sections so that NALC students who are either attending non-Lutheran seminaries or full-time residential students who are choosing to remain in their current locale can begin their studies before they make a geographical move for their required two-semester residency at the seminary center.

Seminarians need to be formed relationally, or they will have a greatly diminished ministry. We know what value comes from sharing meals together as well as from gathering daily to pray. As helpful as all the technological tools are they cannot replace the ministry that comes in the type of pastoral care that occurs when a pastor is fully present in hospital room or nursing home or even a dining room table or on a city bench. Parishioners, as well as those whom we meet outside of the confines of our church rolls, need



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## NALS in a Nutshell

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to know that the one who asks them, “How are you?” cares enough about them to listen and to sit with them. In such an incarnate way, pastors represent the church, and thus they represent the One who loves them in all their frailties, Jesus Christ our LORD. This is central to the pastoral life for which we are preparing our seminarians.

### Full Tuition Scholarships

There is a cost to such an education, but the cost of not having residential education is too much, too much for the health of the body of Christ. Thus, the NALS is committed to helping full-time residential students who have been accepted into our NALC candidacy process to receive full-tuition scholarships.

In the years to come, we plan to expand and offer seminary and continuing education courses in sites throughout North America. In 2013 the NALC Convocation adopted a “hub and spokes” model as its primary design. In essence, we hope to have multiple communities for pastoral formation that are geographically accessible to more seminarians.

A step towards this growth is inviting students into the discernment process at an earlier age. We are in the process of entering into agreements with a few undergraduate schools with excellent faculty in Religion/Theology. These agreements will enable our students to receive an accredited B.A. and M.Div. degrees in 5 or 6 years (plus Internship/Vicarage) which will also reduce student debt, always a concern for pastors and their families.

### Visitors Welcome

Visitors are always welcome. We regularly schedule “Be a Seminarian Day” so that potential students can spend a day on campus. There are also opportunities for continuing education for pastors, from auditing a short course or attending a conference, to enrolling in the S.T.M. or D. Min. program under Trinity’s auspices. Lutheran faculty both teach and supervise theses in these degree programs.

Thank you again for an opportunity to introduce the NALS to you and I ask you to join me in prayer, that God will bless this ministry so that the NALS can provide faithful theological education for many.

*[This is an edited version of a longer article that will appear in the [Forum Letter](#) later this year.]*

<sup>1</sup>A detailed chronology of the history of the NALS is available at, <https://www.thenals.org/history.html>

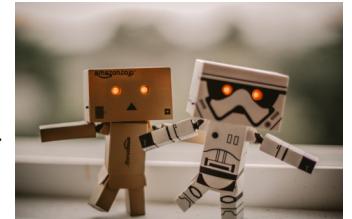
<sup>2</sup> The degree worksheets can be found at <https://www.tsm.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017FALL-degree-worksheet-MDiv-Lutheran.pdf>

## We Need a Translator!

*by Pr. Brett Jenkins, Lutheran CORE Board Member*

Twenty two years ago I started in ministry as a full-time youth minister. I was twenty six years old and looked the part; I had a passion for Jesus, I played guitar, was willing to get down on the floor to chat with the youth... and I had way more hair than I do now. I was never exactly cool, but I still knew what cool looked like. I understood and remembered in my bones what it felt like to face all the trials that accompany being 12-21 years old.

No more... and it’s not just me or people in my age group. My wife’s research assistant of 25 tells her that she doesn’t understand undergraduates anymore, let alone high school and middle school students. They seem to possess a language all their own, and that language changes faster than anyone even a few years older can account for.



Digital immigrants and digital natives, Fortnite, Post Malone, #ByeByeBikini, Yanny vs. Laurel, Childish Gambino, 13 Reasons Why, Amino Apps, Sick Boy, Black Mirror, Anti-Heroes... if most of these words seem foreign to you, join the club of which I’m president. I know I need to connect with the youth in my life and ministry who understand the world to which these terms belong, but to be honest, I’m not sure I have the time — or ability — to make the leap.

### The Culture Translator

A few months ago I came across a youth ministry resource called *The Culture Translator*. Headed up by a group of thoughtful and engaged younger Evangelicals, this weekly email to my inbox gives me a couple of highlights of what’s happening in teen culture that week so I am not completely in the dark and out of touch. As with any resource, you are not going to agree with everything you read there, but their thoughtful, even-handed, non-reactionary approach to a teen culture that appears to me at times (as a 48-year-old) to range from simply frenetic to downright disturbing is extremely helpful. Their parent ministry Axis also offers pamphlets and downloadable video curricula for congregational or family use.

I have found these resources to be enormously helpful as I minister both to teens and to their parents. I would encourage you to check them out at <https://axis.org> whether you are a pastor, parent, grandparent, or just someone who loves the kids in your congregation

## 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 CORE's editor, Kim Smith at [kss01ohio@gmail.com](mailto:kss01ohio@gmail.com).

## Coming Events

<b>LCMC Youth Event</b>	Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa	July 17-20, 2018	"Called 2 Follow"	<a href="#">Click here.</a>
<b>Lutheran Week</b>	Crowne Plaza Denver Airport Convention Center, Denver, Colorado	August 13-17, 2018	Includes <b>Women of the NALC gathering</b> , <b>Braaten-Benne Theological Lectures</b> , and the annual <b>NALC Convocation</b> .	<a href="#">Click here.</a>
<b>LCMC Annual Gathering</b>	Des Moines, Iowa	October 7-10, 2018		<a href="#">Click here.</a>
<b>Encuentro (Encounter)</b>	Chicago, IL	October 12, 2018	Hispanic-Latino / bilingual ministries	<a href="#">Click here.</a>

## COME TO ... ENCUENTRO 2018

continued from [p. 7](#)

Lodging available at Comfort Inn O'Hare (25 minutes north of St. Timothy.)

Register by September 14th (Holy Cross Day) to receive a complimentary resource packet at the Encuentro.

Contact:

*The Rev. Keith Forni*  
*Encuentro Convener*

*First & Santa Cruz Lutheran  
Church - ELCA*

*55 W. Benton Street, Joliet IL  
60432*

[keithforni@gmail.com](mailto:keithforni@gmail.com).

815.722.4800



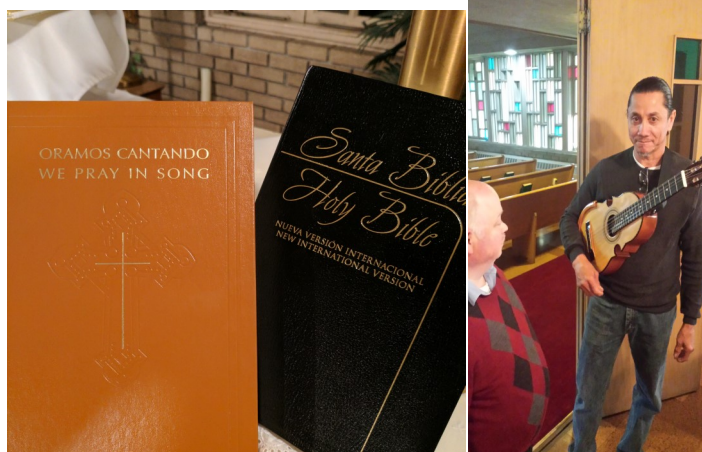
*Changing World, Changeless Christ* is now available from the ALPB. Although focused on the over 100 year-old American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, this well-researched history by *Forum Letter* Editor Richard Johnson captures the major movements, controversies, and significant figures behind American Lutheranism for the last century. From early questions about Americanization to later debates about human sexuality, *Changing World, Changeless Christ* provides behind the scenes insight into critical moments in the struggle of a Lutheran movement that seeks to be faithful to Christ. Available from [ALPB.org](http://ALPB.org) for \$16 plus s/h.

### Thank you for your prayers for and financial support of Lutheran CORE!

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PO Box 1741 Wausau, WI 54402-1741  
or online at [www.lutherancore.org](http://www.lutherancore.org).

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## CORE Voice

### Lutheran CORE's Newsletter

Published by

Lutheran CORE

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