

# THE VICTORY

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Newsletter

January 2021

## Salvation looks good on you.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising" (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Isaiah's words ss God's people as they're sitting down, dejected, at the end of their hope. The darkness out in the world would perhaps be easier to deal with mentally if it wasn't so eerily similar to the darkness inside us. It's not hard to imagine that the world is going to hell, and we along with it. A chapter earlier, Isaiah confirmed these worst suspicions, "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom" (Isaiah 59:2, 3, 7, 9). Many people make New Year's resolutions, which is a fine habit. However, people should remember that no human resolution or self-improvement will bring us and our world around to glory and light. The darkness of sin and the gloom of death are beyond our ability to undo.

From this humble posture, we hear Isaiah cry out, "Arise, shine, for your light has come." Like mourners surprised and shaken when the dead body in the casket springs up to life, we jump up from our seats in amazement and joy as Christ, the "light of the world" arrives and shines on us (John 8:12). His journey through the gloom of sin brought him into the darkness of death. When he rises from the grave, having paid for all our sins, we can't help but get out of our seats. If his dead body rose, our dead bodies will too! Paul writes, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:3-5). The light of Christ shines on us in the gospel, making us glow with a new life.

Through our faith and love, God draws others to the light. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). Those still holding their head in their hands with fear and sadness see out of the corner of their eyes our peace and joy, purity and compassion, contentment and patience. Through sobs,

they hear our confession of sins and the news that God forgives us. There is hope again. They jump up, kings and nations, because the glory of salvation is for them, too. As you make New Year's

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**Worship Service**  
Sunday at 10 a.m.

**Bible Class**  
Sunday 9 a.m.

**Sunday School**  
Sunday 9 a.m.

**Service Broadcast**

◆ **Sunday 8 a.m.**  
Radio WKCQ 98.1  
FM

◆ **Monday 7 p.m.**  
Charter Cable TV  
channel 191

**Office Hours :**  
Monday—Friday  
10 a.m.—4:30p.m.

**Office Phone:**  
(989) 652-6201

**Pastor Patrick Ernst**  
(612) 845-9152

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resolutions or at least begin the season of Epiphany, resolve yourself to be light. Resolve yourself to confess your sins regularly, to take the Sacrament often. Resolve yourself to let Christ be the sufficient strength for your weakness. Then resolve yourself to be like your Savior. Resolve to serve others, and you will find the Holy Spirit improving you along the way, shaping you into Christ's image.

The tradition we have on Christmas Eve of lighting candles for the singing of "Silent Night" should never be taken for granted. The symbolism knocks me off my feet every time. The Christ candle in the Advent wreath reminds us Jesus is the source of our light and life. From that candle, we receive light and pass his light to those around us. As you share the light, your candle remains just as bright as before, but now there is more of Christ's light shining as a beacon to the lost and hopeless. Christ is born. Our light has come. When Jesus' power shines into our lives through the Word and Sacraments, it can't help but shine off us into the lives of others.

*As darkest night must fade and die  
Before the sun's appearing,  
So fades my grief away, when I  
Think on these tidings cheering,  
That God from all eternity  
Hath loved the world, and hath on me  
Bestowed his grace and favor;  
I'll ne'er forget the angels' strain:  
Peace— peace on earth, good will to men,  
To you is born a Savior!*

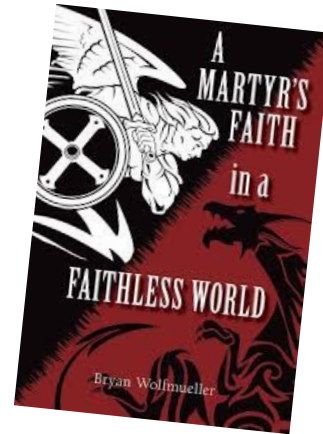
*"I denne sode Juletid"/"In This Our Happy  
Christmastide"  
— Hans Adolph Brorson (1694–1764), tr. C.  
Doving  
Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary 150:5*

Pastor Patrick Ernst

## **Book Review ~ Jeremy Aiello**

January's book recommendation:

*A Martyr's Faith in a Faithless World*



by Pastor Bryan Wolfmüller  
Lutheran theology is glorious and mysterious. It is relatable and applicable. It is for everyone, in any time, in any place. But it also can be intimidating. *A Martyr's Faith in a*

*Faithless World* serves as a starting point for those looking to start reading theological works and deepen their understanding of Lutheran theology.

Short, poignant chapters show the practical side of Lutheran theology and extol the doctrine of the catechism and the Lutheran Church as true, good, and beautiful. Ultimately, readers will come away with a desire for more theology and a renewed confidence and comfort in God's Word.

The budding theologian, the newly catechized, the curious college student, and the inquiring visitor all will be at home in this book. *A Martyr's Faith in a Faithless World* serves as a great next step for those who have just finished adult confirmation classes and are looking to continue growing in their understanding of Lutheran theology.

You can order this book online from Concordia Publishing House at [cph.org](http://cph.org)

# Happy NEW YEAR

*You crown the year with Your goodness,  
And Your paths drip with abundance.*

PSALM 65:11



*Our thoughts  
and prayers  
Are with you*

*I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone~ for kings and all those in authority. 1 Timothy 2:1-2*

May God's comfort surround the family and friends of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus and give them peace in knowing that their loved ones have found eternal peace.

The following Memorials were made in honor of Horst Biging, Harold Braeutigam, Clara Jammer, Harold Maurer, Arnold Palmreuter, Ron Schroeder and :

**General Fund: \$7,035**  
**Altar Guild: \$ 75**  
**Jammer Scholarship: \$ 50**



## The Colors of our Liturgy

In the Christian tradition colors are used for vestments and paraments. For the most part, Lutherans, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and some other protestant denominations use similar systems of liturgical colors. They have their root in the European Christian tradition, which, through mission work, has been spread by these churches around the world.

It is also helpful to realize that colors have different associations across the globe, just as they have had different associations over the course of the church's history. For example, white is the color North American and European Christians typically associate with Christmas and Easter, the color white signifying the purity of Christ, light or joy. In many Eastern cultures, however, white connotes mourning. Red, associated with energy, blood or fire among other things in Western culture, is the color associated with purity in India.

The colors serve to adorn the worship space, and to call attention to the nature of the season or festival being celebrated. A brief summary of their usage, according to the church year, follows.

**Advent:** Blue is associated with Advent, suggesting hope. This association originated in Scandinavia, probably because purple dye was too expensive for churches to use. Some assemblies use purple in Advent, a color associated with royalty as the church awaits the newborn king.

**Christmas:** White, calling to mind the purity of the newborn Christ, and to our light and joy in him. Some also use Gold.

**Epiphany of Our Lord:** White (see Christmas).

**Baptism of Our Lord:** White (see Christmas).

**Time after Epiphany:** Green is used for its symbolism of our growth in Christ. Green, in a sense, is a "neutral color," used when more festive or more somber color is not appointed.

**Transfiguration of Our Lord:** White (see Christmas).

**Ash Wednesday:** Purple is the preferred color as this is the first day of Lent. Historically, black has also been used on this day, since it is the color of the ashes to which we will all return.

**Lent:** Purple is typically associated with Lent, suggesting repentance and solemnity.

**Sunday of the Passion:** Scarlet is the preferred color of this first day of Holy Week, as it suggests the deep color of blood. (Scarlet is to be distinguished from the brighter color of red, which is appointed for the Day of Pentecost, martyrs' days, and certain church celebrations). If a parish does not have scarlet vestments, purple may be used.

**Days of Holy Week:** Scarlet or purple may be used for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week.

**Maundy Thursday:** For this fourth day of Holy Week, celebrated as the institution of the Lord's Supper, scarlet or white is used.

**Good Friday:** No vestments or paraments are used on this day, after the stripping of the altar on Maundy Thursday night.

**Vigil of Easter:** White or Gold suggests of joy in the Resurrection is used on this night.

**Easter Day:** White or gold is suggested for this day. The gold color symbolizes that this day is the "queen of feasts," unique in the entire church year.

**Sundays of Easter:** White suggests the joy of the resurrection.

**Day of Pentecost:** Red as the color of fire is used on this day when we remember the tongues of fire descended on the crowd in Jerusalem. In contrast to the color of scarlet, Pentecost's red is a bright color.

**The Holy Trinity:** White is suggested, the expression of joy in the mystery of the Triune God.

**Time after Pentecost:** Green is used, to indicate our growth in faith as we follow the teachings and ministry of Christ. Some assemblies use differing shades of green throughout the Sundays after Pentecost, a lighter green in summer and a darker green in fall.

**Christ the King:** The final day of the church year uses white, a festive color suggesting light, joy, and the celebration of our Lord.

**Lesser festivals and commemorations** are white, unless a martyr is celebrated, in which case bright red is suggested.

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## Inspiration

There is no middle ground between accepting Scripture as completely, thoroughly inspired by the Holy Spirit, and rejecting Scripture as God's Word. For, if Scripture really is God's Word, as it says of itself and as Christians have believed since the days of the apostles, then it cannot be left to any human being to decide which portions of Scripture are from God and which portions are not from God.

Many teachers after Schleiermacher's time (1834) have sought to appeal to the so-called "Christian consciousness," and they want to use that as a basis to decide what in Scripture is from God and what I not from God. But where does this "Christian consciousness" come from? Either it comes from the Holy Scriptures, which require obedience in everything and explicitly demand that we shall not "*go beyond what is written*" (1 Corinthians 4:6 ESV), or the so-called "Christian consciousness" must have come from a special, later revelation, which was to have taught us which portions in Scripture we do not have to believe. But as far as we know, no one has claimed to have received such a new revelation from God. And if someone does assert it, then we must demand proof: "*The signs of an apostle in signs and wonders and mighty deeds*" (2 Corinthians 12:12). Until that happens, we will and we must believe the Scriptures as they stand if we wish to be true Christians.

We can see from the Scriptures themselves that there is a difference between revelation and inspiration. If by revelation we understand a true communication from God to a person about something which a human being could not otherwise know, then inspiration is a special, powerful influence of the Holy Spirit on those people

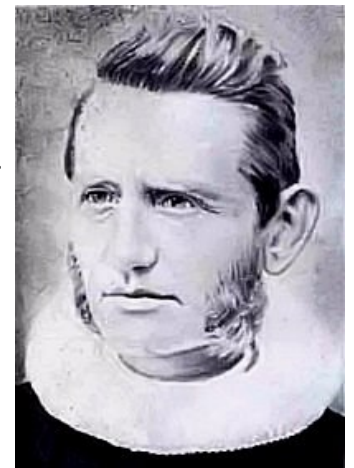
whom He has chosen as His instruments either for speaking or writing. Since revelation is given by God through "*the Word*" which from eternity "*was with God and is God*" [John 1:1], then inspiration is given by God, the Holy Spirit.

The patriarchs already had revelations, but they were not inspired to write them down. The prophets had revelations, but not all of them were inspired to communicate them in writing. Thus, we have no writings from the prophets Elijah and Elisha. St. Paul had both revelation and was inspired to write it down. It does not say of St. Luke that he had any revelation, but God's church has always recognized that his writings are inspired.

What do we mean, then, when we say that the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit? According to the Scripture's own words, we mean a special activity of the Holy Spirit, by which He led His chosen instruments [writers] to say the things which He wanted said and to write the things which He wanted written, the way He Himself would have said or written those things.

Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, *U. V. Koren's Works, Volume 2: Addresses* (Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 2014), 329-331.

U. V. Koren (1826-1910) was an early pastor and president in our Synod's predecessor church body. He is considered the "patriarch of Norwegian American Lutherans."



# Liturgical Colors

The Queen of Feasts  
which is symbolized by  
this color. \_\_\_\_\_

A historical color once  
used often on Ash  
Wednesday. \_\_\_\_\_

A color that suggests hope  
in Advent is \_\_\_\_\_.

The most common  
color used through-  
out the liturgical  
year. \_\_\_\_\_

This color indicates growth  
in our Christ. \_\_\_\_\_

The tongues of fire  
are represented by  
this color. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank  
You

To all who made our  
*Christmas Giving Tree*  
a success. Gifts were  
delivered to Training &  
Treatment Innovations.

