

# THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

MARCH – APRIL 2007

## “Rejoice!”

### Christ died for the ungodly—He died for you.

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

AUGSBURG COUNCIL 2

PICK UP YOUR TRUMPET 3

AUGSBURG CONVENTION 4-5

CHRIST IS NOW OUR LIFE 6

VIEWPOINT 8



## Rejoice!

#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **I Bellevel!** The 2007 ALC Youth Leadership Retreat
- **At Peace With God Through Christ** ALCW Gathering
- **Rejoice! Christ died for the ungodly—He died for you!** 2007 ALC Annual Gathering
- **“Pick Up Your Trumpet”** Dr. Roy A. Harrisville, Jr.

#### Fontanelle, Iowa.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church is proud to host the 7th Annual Gathering of the Augsburg Lutheran Churches (ALC) in Fontanelle, IA, on August 12-14, 2007. Dr. Roy A. Harrisville, Jr., will preach on Sunday evening and speak on Monday and Tuesday morning.

**Christ died for ungodly**—We rejoice this summer because God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Justified by faith in Him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our sins and raised for our justification, we have peace with God. Christ is now our life.

For Christ, the Apostle Paul, and Luther, justification is not a mere polemical doctrine, it is the “first word” and beginning of God’s activity in Christ to reclaim His creation. While others may emphasize other words, Dr. Harrisville writes, “for Paul ‘righteousness,’ or ‘justification’ is the first word.” Being justified by faith in Christ, Paul writes, “we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God” and our suffering, which “produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been

poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom 5:1-6).

“**Peace**,” Dr. Harrisville writes, “means that life has become life with Christ; it thus marks much more than a ‘relationship.’ For Paul **peace with God** spells infinitely more—those who are Christ’s are not merely set in a relationship to him, have not merely ‘taken Jesus as their personal Savior,’ but are held together by his life! To be justified by his blood, reconciled to God by the death of his Son, spells our peace with God. Reconciliation with God through Christ has been achieved prior to any human recognition of it, indeed, in the teeth of rebellion against God.”

**ALCW**—the inaugural Augsburg Lutheran Churches Women (ALCW) gathering, “*At Peace With God Through Christ*,” begins at noon on August 11, 2007. Rev. Dick Smith is our featured speaker.

**Airports**—Participants may fly to the Omaha, NE, or the Des Moines, IA, airport.

**Housing**—We have reserved a block of rooms at the AmericInn of Stuart. Call (800) 634-344 to reserve a room. If you’d like to stay with a host family, please contact Mrs. Norma Huff at (641) 743-2965 or email her at [huffnb@mddc.com](mailto:huffnb@mddc.com)

*The mission of the Augsburg Lutheran Churches is to bear witness to the good news that sinners are put right with God by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. We resist any corruption of this Gospel. Looking to the cross of Christ, we proclaim God’s Word as Law and Gospel for the redemption of his people today. May God help us to the glory of his holy name. Amen.*

## SPREAD THE WORD

## Augsburg Lutheran Churches

### A Caring Community

1 Peter 1.3-6: “<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

We are here to help our brothers and sisters who are experiencing difficulties in their present situation. Please feel free to contact one of us at:

641-745-7060  
Rev. John Emerson  
salvage1@iowatelecom.net

641-347-5398  
Mrs. Dorothy McNaught  
dot@mddc.com

432-362-2549  
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910-916-9130  
Chaplain John Rasmussen  
john.h.rasmussen@us.army.mil

910-489-5508  
Rev. Lenae Rasmussen  
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## FROM THE AUGSBURG COUNCIL

On February 19, 2007 at a special convention in Roseville, MN called by the Augsburg Council, the member churches and chapters of Augsburg Lutheran Churches (ALC) voted to remove a continuing resolution that established an affiliation with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). The status of churches that are members of both ALC and LCMC is unchanged by this action.

The two main reasons for disaffiliation expressed at the convention was concern over the theological direction (or perhaps lack of clarity and multiple directions) within LCMC, and its ambivalence towards ALC’s high regard for, and traditional Lutheran understanding of, Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. The by-law changes enacted at LCMC’s October 2006 convention and the motion to investigate ALC also fundamentally changed the relationships between ALC member churches, ALC as their “district” and LCMC as a support organization for its member churches in that it interfered with the previously clear authority that ALC churches and chapters have over ALC and its elected leaders.

These actions by LCMC have caused much distraction and created a lot of heat, but no light—most importantly, they have caused

unnecessary hurt and distractions that interfere with the proclamation of the Gospel. There were numerous attempts, both amicable and determined, to resolve these issues with LCMC prior to, during and subsequent to the October 2006 LCMC convention—all failed to dissuade LCMC and its instigators from their ill-advised courses of action. (Please contact a member of the Augsburg Council if further details are desired.)

Therefore, for the sake of our mission to proclaim Christ crucified to the world, and fulfill our calling as disciples of Christ rather than be mired down in disputes with an organization in conflict with itself and Scripture, ALC and its member churches and chapters are moving in a positive direction and looking forward to a time of fellowship, deliberation and renewal of friendships at our gatherings this summer and fall.

Blessings,

John Emerson  
salvage1@iowatelecom.net  
(641) 745-2415



AUGSBURG LUTHERAN CHURCHES  
P. O. Box 332  
Fontanelle, IA 50849  
[www.augsburgchurches.org](http://www.augsburgchurches.org)

### 4th Annual ALC Youth Leadership Retreat I Believe! Heart Ranch, West Texas June 13-17, 2007

Join us in the beautiful foothills of the Davis Mountains for the 4th Annual ALC Youth Leadership Retreat. Come experience the wonders of West Texas and learn about God’s gracious gift *for you* in creating and sustaining the heavens and the earth.

**Questions?** Call: (432) 362-2549  
Email: [lcri@grandecom.net](mailto:lcri@grandecom.net)

More information, registration forms, and travel release forms are on the website:  
[www.augsburgchurches.org](http://www.augsburgchurches.org)

**August 11, 2007**—Inaugural ALCW (ALC Women) Gathering: *At Peace With God Through Christ* begins at noon at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Fontanelle, IA. Rev. Dick Smith is our featured speaker.

**August 12-14, 2007**—Seventh Annual Augsburg Gathering: *Rejoice! Christ Died for the Ungodly—He died for you!* is being hosted by Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Fontanelle, IA. Keynote Speaker is Dr. Roy A. Harrisville, Jr., distinguished author and Professor Emeritus, New Testament, Luther Seminary.

**September 10-11, 2007**—ALC Fall Theological Conference & Clergy Retreat at the Old Sanctuary in Brookings, SD



# “Rejoice!”

**Christ died for the ungodly—He died for you.**

**AUGUST 12–14, 2007**

## PICK UP YOUR TRUMPET

The old spiritual reads, “All God’s chillum got a horn.” Now that may be, but it’s a lead-pipe cinch not many are blowing. The brass choir of Christendom has put down its trumpet and trombone, pulled up its shirt, and entered into an era of poking around in its navel. One section of that choir has already stared long enough at that spot to conclude there never was an umbilical cord attached to it. What a crazy sight! The world, like a crowd at Lower Basin Street, ready, perhaps not willing, but ready to hear some sound and noise from out of our old tubes, only to be treated to an hour and a half of wholesale, practical anatomy!

Now Paul was a different breed. Like old Satchmo, he blew and blew till his cheeks were like an old balloon, till his lips split a thousand different ways, and when they flung his body away like garbage outside the walls of Rome, he still had that funny little red circle around his mouth. And if ever there was a fit subject for navel-gazing, it was Paul. He had that “thorn”; he was a poor match in public debate; he had a face which the Corinthians claimed would stop a clock; he couldn’t hang on to his friends, and he’d been beaten and jailed in every hick-town and capital of the Mediterranean. He was a physical and psychic mess by our standards. But oh, the sweet sound that came out of the battered old trumpet of his! Give me a maladjusted, split-lipped old bag of bones who’ll blow me right out of death into life any day against your integrated, mosquito-pond of a man with that *still-waters-run-deep look!*

And he had a reason for blowing his heart out, that Paul. For though some preached from envy and rivalry, [Paul knew] it was still Christ who was preached [through them]. Though the generation was crooked and perverse, some shone like lights in the world. Though he’d scarce get out of this prison alive, Timothy still came to visit. Though many lived as enemies of the cross of Christ and not even church-folks like Eudia and Syntyche could agree, the Lord was at hand! He could tell us something about logo-therapy, about a man’s needing a furnace or a bit of trouble and

pain here and there, a bit of failure and repression and inhibition and frustration and death thrown into the bargain to make him come out a “trouble-born star.”

Given the variations, from First Thessalonians to Philemon, the tune and the beat were always the same: “We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved . . .” “Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” “As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” “I thank God always when I remember you in my prayers.” That portrait of an anti-sex, woman-hating, gloomy, brooding misanthrope who built mausoleums for guilt and grief was sat for by his interpreters and not by Paul!

Now the church may require a new theology, though there has not been an era in its history when its logic hasn’t hobbled about on crutches. And the church may require new structure, though with every revolution she seems to have established a status quo worse than the first. What she requires indeed is that those staid, moderate, pent-up introverts who belong to her suddenly shrug off their Narcissism in a hot hankering for a split lip, pick up their brass and break up the neighborhood with the sweetest, hottest tune this old world has ever heard! Rejoice, give thanks, glorify, praise, be comforted, be of good cheer, widen your hearts, abound, boast, sing, shout, blow Gabriel, blow!

Roy A. Harrisville

*Dr. Roy A. Harrisville, Professor Emeritus, New Testament, Luther Seminary, and noted author and translator, is the featured keynote speaker at the 7th Annual Augsburg Gathering in Fontanelle, IA, August 12-14, 2007.*

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**“Rejoice!”**

**Christ died for the ungodly—He died for you.**

**DR. ROY A. HARRISVILLE, JR.**

Author of

**Fracture:**

**The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers**

**The Seventh Annual ALC Gathering**

**August 12-14, 2007**

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church ▪ Fontanelle, Iowa**

# 7TH ANNUAL AUGSBURG GATHERING

## GATHERING SCHEDULE

### August 11, 2007

- 12:00 p.m. Lunch  
 1:30 p.m. Rev. Dick Smith  
 "At Peace With God Through Christ"  
 3:00 p.m. Organizational Meeting  
 4:00 p.m. Fellowship

### August 12, 2007

- 2:00 p.m. Registration Open  
 5:30 p.m. Dinner  
 7:00 p.m. Worship  
 Rev. Dr. Roy A. Harrisville, Jr.  
 9:00 p.m. Dessert & Fellowship

### August 13, 2007

- 9:00 a.m. Opening Worship  
 10:00 a.m. Dr. Roy A. Harrisville  
 11:00 a.m. Council/Committee Reports  
 12:00 p.m. Lunch  
 1:00 p.m. Workshops & Consensus Building  
 5:30 p.m. Dinner  
 7:00 p.m. Evening Worship  
 CH (MAJ) John H. G. Rasmussen  
 9:00 p.m. Fellowship

### August 14, 2007

- 9:00 a.m. Opening Worship  
 10:00 a.m. Dr. Roy A. Harrisville  
 11:00 a.m. Elections  
 12:00 p.m. Lunch  
 1:00 p.m. Workshops & Consensus Building  
 3:00 p.m. Business Meeting  
 5:30 p.m. Banquet  
 7:00 p.m. Evening Worship  
 Rev. Dick Smith  
 9:00 p.m. Fireworks & Fellowship



#### Featured Speaker:

**Dr. Roy A. Harrisville, Jr.**

Professor Emeritus, New Testament  
 Luther Seminary  
 Saint Paul, Minnesota  
[rharrisv@luthersem.edu](mailto:rharrisv@luthersem.edu)

The Seventh Annual ALC Gathering  
 at

Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
 Fontanelle, Iowa

(641) 745-2415

# REJOICE!

**Christ died for the ungodly—  
 He died for you!**

**August 12 - 14, 2007**

**Worship ▪ Bible Study ▪ Workshops**

**Educating & Training Pastors**

**Ministry ▪ Fellowship ▪ Fun**

*(40 miles west on I-80 from Des Moines, IA, south on Hwy 25  
 to Greenfield, west on Hwy 92 to Fontanelle).*

### Annual Gathering Lodging

A block of rooms has been reserved at the

AmericInn Lodges & Suites  
 420 SW 8th Street  
 Stuart, IA 50250

**Reservations:** (800) 396-5007 US Toll Free

**Telephone:** (515) 523-9000 **Fax:** (515) 523-1763

When you call, say "AUGSBURG" to get the group rate  
 of \$99.90 per night.

# ALC NEWS, REPORTS AND EVENTS

## Thought for the Day

Rev. Dick Smith

Second Sunday in Lent—March 4, 2007

Gospel: Luke 13:31-35

Jesus cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold your house is forsaken! And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ""Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord"" (verses 34-35)!

Authentic life, the only authentic life one can have, is one that is built upon a negative. It can only be had through death and the gift of new life. So Jesus told Nicodemus, you must be born again. That is, one must die and then be given a new life.

The problem, of course, is that no one wants to forfeit their life. After all aren't we basically good people? Don't we try to do the right? Don't we hold up our moral values to the world so that we can point the way to righteous? Sure we make mistakes, but then everyone does. We can even call those mistakes "sins" if we want to, but they in no way place us in the categories of being a "bad" person or even one who does "evil." This is so much the attitude of Churchism or churchianity in our society giving the impression that Christianity is most importantly about moral values and getting people to be "good."

Ironically this places it along Jerusalem, over which Jesus lamented. Like Jerusalem we all seek a comfortable position on the moral continuum. The moral continuum runs from legalism on one extreme to libertinism on the other extreme. It seems to me that churchianity people generally like some kind of middle position between the two extremes. The problem, of course, is that the moral continuum is expressive of "the elements of the world" (in the Greek) that Paul warns against in his Letter to the Galatians. (See Gal. 4:3, 9. Also, Col. 2:8, 20. The RSV translates the Greek into "the elemental spirits of the universe" which is inferior to "the elements of the world" ). God gave us the Ten Commandments to make real to us our enslavement to the moral continuum. But we don't much like being told that we are slaves to the morality so we ignore it, deny it, and strike out against anyone who declares it to us. After all, aren't we entitled to claim that we are better people than many others! We just can't give up and accept the fact that no one does good and there is NO DIFFERENCE between sinners, we're all in the same boat!

**"CHRIST  
is now  
our life."**

Jesus came preaching grace and forgiveness to free us from our enslavement. Jerusalem hated him for it. We hated him for it. Finally to silence him we joined forces with the Jerusalem folks and put him to death - on a cross! The disciples forsook him!

In the face of all this Jesus performs his coup de grace. He says, "Father, FORGIVE THEM!" As Paul writes, "While we were yet helpless at the right time Christ died for the UN-GODLY" (Romans 5:6)! "For if WHILE WE WERE ENEMIES we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10).

In our baptism we are drawn right up on the cross with Christ and are crucified with him. We are put to death. WE die to the Law. We die to the Moral continuum. We die to the "elements of the world." NOW it is CHRIST who lives in us. HE IS THE NEW LIFE IN YOU!

The only authentic life is built on a negative. That is, our death in baptism and NEW LIFE IN CHRIST. He is our authenticity. He is our redemption. He is our righteousness. He is our sanctification. (See I Corinthians 1:30).

WHAT DID WE DO TO GET THIS NEW LIFE? NOTHING! While we opposed Him He captured us, the law killed us, and He gave His life into you as YOUR NEW LIFE. Dead to the Law, dead to the Moral Continuum, CHRIST IS NOW OUR LIFE. Thus HIS LOVE CONTROLS US! (See II Cor. 5:14ff).

The Second Lesson for today, Philippians 3:17-4:1, has Paul speaking in tears of those who are slaves to the "elements of the world." They are still alive. They have not died and been given CHRIST as their NEW LIFE. He writes, "Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things" (3:19). Then he goes on to say, "BUT OUR COMMONWEALTH is in heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself"(3:21).

To ALL THIS one can only say: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through whom the world is crucified to me (that is, dead to the "elements of the word" - the moral continuum) and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14)!!!

FODM-WLIC ("From one dead man- whose life is Christ"),

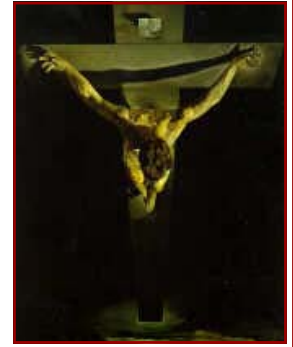
Dick Smith

# “Rejoice!”

**Christ died for the ungodly—He died for you.**

**AUGUST 12–14, 2007**

**EMMANUEL LUTHERAN • FONTANELLE, IA**



Romans 5: <sup>1</sup>Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. <sup>6</sup>For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. <sup>8</sup>but God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. <sup>11</sup>And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Please mail completed registration forms and payment to: **Augsburg Lutheran Churches  
P. O. Box 332  
Greenfield, IA 50849**

2007 ALC Gathering Registration from

*Please Print*

Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax or cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Church Member [  ] Chapter Member [  ] Observer [  ] Guest [  ] Vender [  ]

**Registration Fee: \$ 70.00** per person Paid by check # \_\_\_\_\_

Church or Chapter Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax or cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor or Convener's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration**

**THE CRUX OF THE MATTER**

MARCH — APRIL 2007 VOL. 6, NO. 4

**AUGSBURG LUTHERAN CHURCHES**

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Greenfield, IA 50849  
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Rev. Lenae Rasmussen  
Executive Chair  
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**THE CRUX OF THE MATTER**

**VIEWPOINT**

Page 8

**“Mission”**

by Lenae Rasmussen

Our mission, as Christians and disciples of Christ, is to bear witness to the good news that sinners are put right with God by faith alone in Christ alone. It sounds rather simple, and one could wonder what all the fuss is about regarding “Christian Mission.” This shouldn’t be so hard! Yet, being an “ambassador for Christ” in the world is more difficult than it seems. It means “putting your head on the chopping block” in a post-modern, politically correct society where truth is relative and belief in an absolute faith claim (i.e., “justification by faith alone) is thought of as being closed minded. Witnessing to what God has done in Christ on the cross, and providing pastoral care in light of the Gospel, is “risky business” in our cultural milieu. Yet, this is where Christ is calling us; to be a Christian is to be *in* the world, in *Christ’s* mission.

In the understanding of Scripture which I hold, what is the place and the task of the local congregation? John 17 seems to me to express this most clearly. We read there of the flock which follows the voice of the good shepherd, that it is in the world but not of the world. Not of the world - the context shows that this is said only in connection with the Word which is being addressed to us. It is not we who are, or are to become, heavenly. Nevertheless, under the Word we do cease to be 'world' in quite the same sense as all men are 'world'. We become again God's world, the creation in which God's Word is heard afresh and the way which is Christ himself has its beginning. If we ask whether this way and this discipleship lead, we receive a very remarkable answer. John 17.15 says: 'I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world'; while 17:18 continues: 'As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.' The place and task of the Church, therefore, is - the world. In no other way than by working out this mission can it be what it is called to be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 278.

