
Proclaiming Liberty in Christ in the City

NEWSLETTER | REFORMATION 2017

Luther in the City

by Rev Robert Kieselowsky
Executive Director



The finest mission program began 500 years ago: an urban pastor proclaimed a clear message of pure grace, repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus. Then, he began to collect his pastoral writings into a book, the Large Catechism. Martin Luther first dealt with the corruption of the Gospel in the medieval church but soon faced groups who clouded the Gospel just as much in their zeal to jettison the historic faith by redefining baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The mission program has not changed. People need the same clarity today as they did centuries ago. Christian thoughts and practice in America are so fragmented that some throw their hands up in despair and claim that no one has the truth. At times, eternity is sacrificed on the altar of today. By fighting for material gain and recognition, many have been lulled into thinking that the Christian faith has no bearing on their lives.

All the more reason that we support the on-going work of establishing a new congregation in the heart of the city. Sinners living in rebellion to their Creator need to be confronted with the pure truth of Scripture. Left in their current state of rejection of Christ and pride in their own righteousness, they stand condemned. There is only one way out: a deep and persistent faith in Christ. Faith in what He accomplished on behalf of all and that His shed blood on the cross is the perfect substitution for them.

Reformation begins again with Luther's clarion call to repentance and forgiveness in Christ Jesus in weekly Divine Services in the heart of the city through Logos Lutheran. How better to celebrate Luther's proclamation than being a part of a new body of believers forming in a place where the LCMS has never established a church? The joyous rediscovery of the Gospel is even more relevant today than it was 500 years ago.

The very first item Luther placed on his list of 95 Theses puts our work in perspective: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent' (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." To this end, we are organizing our mid-week prayer and study around Luther's Large Catechism, going through the chief parts of the faith with people who are new to the faith and people who want to refresh their faith.

We rejoice that the Lord is still at work in Philadelphia. For the first time in LCMS history, Logos Lutheran church had the privilege to offer the Lord's Supper on Easter Sunday in the heart of the city. This year will also mark the first time an LCMS congregation celebrates Christmas around the body and blood of Christ in Center City Philadelphia. Lord willing, we will as a group also witness the very first baptism near year's end.

Thanks be to God, He does all things well! What a wonderful celebration of the Reformation!

Meet Vicar Joseph Schlie



We are pleased to welcome Vicar Joseph Schlie to Philadelphia this year. His wife Kristen has been a part of our work in the city for two years already as she has been studying at Villanova University. They were married in June and then moved into Center City for Joe to begin his year of service with us.

Vicar Schlie grew up in a small town in Indiana, the youngest of four boys. His father was a Lutheran pastor and his mother was a Lutheran school teacher. When Joe was in the fifth grade, his father died suddenly and shortly after this his mother was diagnosed with cancer. She began a long battle which she eventually lost in 2014. Experiencing this type of suffering was not easy, but it gave Joe perspective that his hope is in the resurrection and that all need to hear the Gospel. It was during his sophomore year of college at Indiana University (IU) that Joe decided he wanted to pursue the pastoral office.

He earned his bachelor's degree from IU in finance. During his years at IU, Joe was an elder at the LCMS campus ministry and spent a summer at a Lutheran camp serving children. Then, the summer before Joe began his studies at the seminary, Joe returned to camp and met Kristen. Two years later they were married. She is also from a small Indiana town, so they share many of the same memories.

The Schlies look forward to discovering the joys of Philadelphia as Kristen finishes her senior year at Villanova University and Joe continues his preparation for the ministry. As a vicar, Joe serves the church as an intern for a year as part of his seminary training to be ordained in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Luther and Campus Ministry

Saint Peter writes, "...in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you..." The college campus presents unique opportunities for students to grow in knowledge and maturity, but also to defend their faith. The onslaught of pressures brought by professors, students, and the general secular worldview on campus can make life for a Christian student challenging. The church has a unique opportunity through Campus Ministry to provide direction and hope through the gospel for those surrounded by a culture that does not honor Christ.

Campus Ministry has always been an important part of the Lutheran Church, ever since the Reformation. Luther was known for taking into his home students at the University of Wittenberg and comforting them during their various trials. Luther's letter to one student, Jerome Weller, shows his pastoral care for those suffering depression and doubt amidst their university experience. This tradition of campus ministry has carried on since the Reformation and become foundational for many during their college years. I benefited greatly during my undergraduate studies from the local campus ministry at Indiana University. In an environment full of many distractions it was a consistent reminder of my identity as a child of God, not one of this world.

With over 400,000 university students and more than 100 degree granting institutions, students in the city of Philadelphia are in great need of Campus Ministry. Even though it is a daunting task this work is what we have inherited to do as Lutherans. This is why PLM has stressed the need for having a presence on these campuses. Through weekly Bible study and prayer, Sunday Divine Service, and other fellowship activities we can provide the one thing needful in the face of secularism.



Vicar Schlie at Villanova University's Activity Fair

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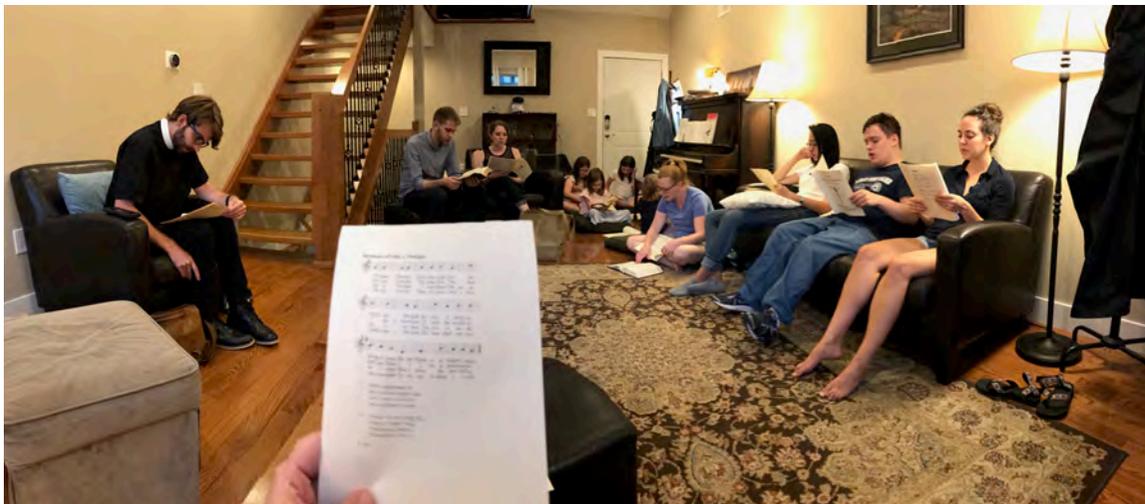
We have been very encouraged by the group that has formed thus far from universities such as Villanova, Eastern, University of Pennsylvania, and Temple University. Many of these students come from unique backgrounds, such as, a doctoral candidate in history who is a new convert to Lutheranism, and an international student from a province in Northern China. Surely, God is at work in the city to grow His church and spread His gospel. We commit the students of the city into God's care knowing that the Holy Spirit will work to produce faith in the hearts of unbelievers, and strengthen the faith of those already His own. Please pray that God's work would continue here unhindered among the students in the city of Philadelphia.

Summer Children's Program



Volunteers organized and developed a 3-night summer children's program to introduce families to Christ through passages in Genesis, Psalms and Isaiah.

Arch books donated by local LWML chapters were read aloud in a local park as part of the program.



(above) The campus ministry study group gathers in the Kieselowsky home to pray Vespers and read through Luther's Large Catechism.



(above) On Saturday, October 21, Dr. Phillip Cary presented a seminar on the history of Martin Luther's 95 Theses.



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Thank you for your continued support!

Please Pray For . . .

- **Vicar and Kristen Schlie** as they begin their life together in Philadelphia.
- **Students** in the Philadelphia region, that Christ's Word would be unhindered.
- **Logos Lutheran**, the first-ever LCMS congregation in Center City

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Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries

Proclaiming Liberty in Christ in the City

NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2017

Faith Among the Ruins

by Rev Robert Kieselowsky
Executive Director



Every day,
when I
leave my
front door,
I see a
beautiful
Roman
Catholic Church.

My daughters ride bikes in its shadow and hear its bells toll every half hour. It is one of the most beautiful structures in Philadelphia.

Except, it isn't a church.

There has been no congregation meeting in the building for twenty years. Instead, it serves as an assembly hall for a prestigious boys' preparatory school during the week and sits empty all weekend.

I began to wonder about the other church structures in our neighborhood in the center of the city—how many are still in service to the Word of God?

When visitors first see Philadelphia's magnificent skyline from the bridges and highways, they often notice what seem to be church spires. But those spires alone do not tell the whole story of the churches in Philadelphia.

In 1922, the city began building what is now known as the Ben Franklin Bridge.



One casualty of construction was the oldest English-speaking Lutheran church in the world. It was torn down to make room for the bridge.

A quick stroll through our neighborhood reveals a more recent trend for church buildings: condos. Rather than completely tearing down buildings, investors renovated them into high-end luxury condominiums.

Recently, condos were carved out of the remains of a Swedish Lutheran church (*below*) just two blocks from where Logos Lutheran meets for worship. It underscores the need for a central location where the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus is proclaimed and where people can find liberty from sin, the pain of the world, and the wiles of the evil one. (*continued on next page*)



The Ben Franklin Bridge connects Philadelphia to Camden, NJ.



Faith Among Ruins *(continued)*

Within our neighborhood alone, at least five other church buildings have been renovated into living spaces. The same number have also been torn down.

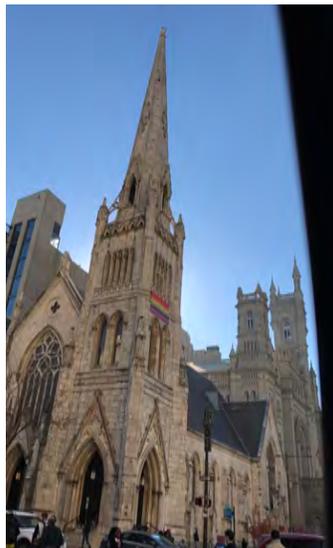


(right) This week, a dumpster appeared in front of this church three blocks from our house as a crew readies to build more apartments.

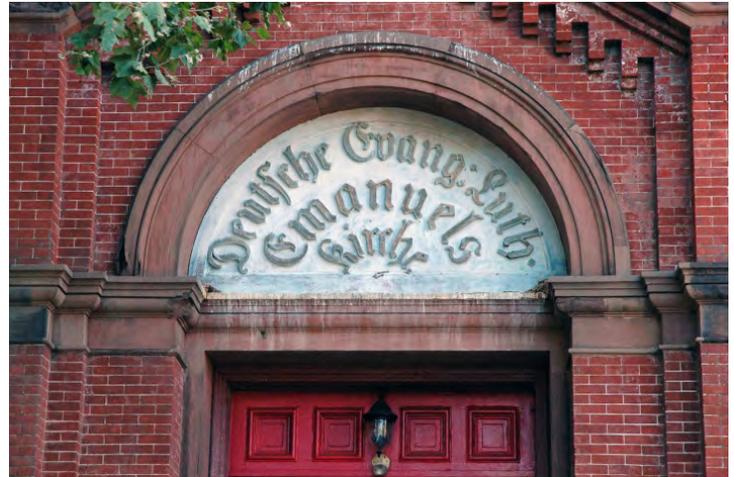
Not only are many churches being torn down or converted into condos, those still holding services have often abandoned the basic tenets of the historic Christian faith.

The Gospel of salvation from sin and death in Jesus Christ is often replaced with popular ideologies that are not part of the teaching of Holy Scripture. *(right)*

Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries exists to proclaim liberty in Christ Jesus. It is imperative that the proclamation of Christ continues in our section of Center City.



I have recently spent a great deal of time on the phone with students who are coming to the city to study and professionals coming to the city for work—each looking for a Lutheran congregation focused upon Christ’s Word and Sacraments in the heart of the city. It is a delight to invite them to worship with us at Logos Lutheran.



We certainly live among the ruins of faith, as religions other than Christianity take root in the city. The Emanuel Lutheran church building *(above)* has been converted into a space for a Buddhist temple in a neighborhood of primarily Vietnamese immigrants.



Last year, a new Mormon temple and meeting hall were completed on the main parkway *(left)*. With them, we have seen a growing number of Mormon missionaries walking the streets of the city.



Islam also has a growing presence in many parts of the city. Just north of us on Broad Street, a four million dollar mosque was recently built, the largest in Philly. The sign at a neighborhood mosque *(left)* directly attacks the Christian teaching of the Trinity.

In the middle of so many influences, Christ gathers His beloved church around His Word to lead them to forgiveness and salvation. What a privilege to be a part of it!

Key factors behind establishing Logos Lutheran in Center City:

- Philadelphia lost over one third of its population during the second half of 20th century. Churches left the city as people moved into the suburbs. During the last 15 years, however, the trend has reversed.
- Downtown Philly has grown by about 200,000 since 2000. It is second in the U.S. only to Manhattan in population density.
- More than 43% of Philly jobs are located in Center City, along with many colleges and universities.
- Within the 10-block radius surrounding Logos Lutheran, the largest number of people identify themselves as “no religious preference” or “spiritual without religious preference.” (source: *Mission Insight Demographic Study, 2015*)
- The worship space for Logos is just blocks north of the intersection of the major highways, subway, trolley, and regional rail lines. This provides the greatest accessibility for people across the entire region.
- Logos Lutheran’s Easter Divine Service was the first time an LCMS congregation gathered in Center City to receive the Lord’s Supper and to celebrate His resurrection.
- The light of Christ’s Gospel shines brightest in the darkness. ***Your help is essential! Please continue to support the first-ever LCMS congregation in Center City.***

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Vicar Updates

- Many thanks to **Vicar Jacob Benson** for his dedication and work this year. We wish him godspeed as he returns to his studies at Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne).



- We are delighted to welcome **Vicar Christian Einertson** this summer, following his first year at Concordia Seminary (St Louis).



Vicar Einertson is a native of Marietta, Georgia and has degrees in Modern Foreign Languages and Music-Voice with Sacred Music Emphasis from Augustana University (Sioux Falls, SD). He has performed as a vocal soloist with orchestras and choirs, enjoys singing in Laudamus, the touring choir at Concordia Seminary and regularly plays organ at congregations in the St. Louis area.

An avid traveler and student of languages and cultures, he has been blessed to study in a number of countries. During his travels, he has enjoyed getting to know some of the churches in fellowship with the Missouri Synod in other countries, and he is passionate about the spread of the gospel and the promotion of sound Lutheran doctrine throughout the world.

He looks forward to the opportunity to explore Philadelphia and learn about the unique joys and challenges of ministry in urban areas. Most importantly, he is thankful for the opportunity to get to know the saints in Philadelphia and be of service to the people of God here.

Rev Adam DeGroot has accepted a call to St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Albuquerque, NM. Please continue to pray for him and his family during this time of transition.



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Upcoming Reformation Event

Dr. Phillip Cary

Professor of Philosophy at Eastern University; author, lecturer, blogger



Saturday, October 21, 2017

1:00pm-5:00pm

628 North Broad Street

Philadelphia

Dr. Cary will present a seminar on the life and theology of Martin Luther. This is part of PLM's celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.



Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries

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NEWSLETTER | LENT 2017

Temptation: Now

By Rev Robert Kieselowsky
Executive Director



The impatience of a toddler can lead to remarkable moments. “I want a banana.” “We don’t have a banana.” “But I want a banana,” she retorts with confidence that somehow her wish will magically make the banana appear.

Now. I want it now.

Adults are not much better at resisting the idea that we deserve now what we’ve been promised.

The Lenten season began with the church reading together the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness, fasting and finally being tempted by the devil (Matt 4, Mark 1, Luke 4). The devil repeats the same question he has been asking for all ages: “Don’t you want it now?” Jesus faces the temptation to take prematurely what the Father will give Him after His passion and resurrection.

You are hungry, Jesus. Don’t you want bread now?
Your Father will send angels to attend you. Jump and get their help now.
You will reign over all things. Worship me and you can rule now.

In fact, after Christ’s resurrection, the Father does send angels to attend and Jesus does ascend to the place of authority over all the nations of the world. But these things come in God’s time and according to His good pleasure.

Although Jesus is God incarnate, He does not attempt

to reply to the devil with innovative ideas. Instead, Christ quotes God’s Word, the words His mother spoke to Him when He was a child from the book of Deuteronomy. He drew strength in the face of this tremendous test from the words of Scripture.

Working in the city, the temptation is to want results now. We want full pews now. We want an ideal worship space now. We want programs now. But these things are not guaranteed now, and it’s easy to fall into despair when they do not materialize.

Instead, we have been given God’s Word to proclaim. Like Jesus, we need to embrace the message of salvation freely given according to God’s good pleasure.

In Philadelphia, a number of churches have closed and been renovated into condos. Churches that remain open drift from Christian teaching to accommodate the culture around us, emphasizing social justice and inclusion over the proclamation that Christ was crucified and rose again for the forgiveness of sins.

But I have recently had coffee with two different men who are seeking churches that hold fast to the Word of God even under the pressure of culture to bend. The Lutheran teaching of God’s Word presents a clear message in which people can find liberty in Christ from the devil, the world, and their own sinful natures.

Please partner with us in the city to proclaim His Word to all people and to celebrate the forgiveness of sins.

It’s what we have now.



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Vicarious

By Vicar Jacob Benson



While introducing myself to people throughout this year, I commonly hear, “Nice to meet you, Victor.” I have a well-rehearsed response: “Well, actually it’s Vicar,” after which I proceed to explain I am still in seminary, currently on my practical-internship year, and am not ordained. I work under and in the stead of the pastor—vicar, from the word vicarious.

I cherish this title.

To be ‘vicarious,’ to be the ‘stand-in’ for the pastor, is no easy task. It may mean that I’m not culpable for much, but it also means that I need to be ever-mindful to speak and act in a way that always reflects what my supervising pastor would say or do. This forces me to die to myself and to my own ego. I may strongly feel as though a particular point should be in a sermon, but if my pastor disagrees, I follow his guidance.

But I don’t see myself as any lesser in God’s eyes because of my subordination to the pastor; rather being under authority is the perfect way – the only way – to prepare for the Office of the Holy Ministry. Pastors must, in all they say and do, be mindful of how scripture speaks of prayer, of loving the neighbor, of obeying God. Pastors must be mindful of what Christ said and did, so that when they stand and speak “In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ,” they do so in a way that gives proper honor to our Lord.

Vicarage is not merely a box to check during one’s seminary education in preparation for the Office of Holy Ministry. It is rather a crucial step in the journey of being formed into a pastor, of being formed into the image of the One who sends ministers to His Church. Thanks be to God for this wonderful practice of our Church. And thanks be to God for the excellent example I have seen on vicarage of Pastor Kieselowsky, who patiently teaches and demonstrates to me all the virtues he has cultivated during his ministry.

NOTE: Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries has submitted the necessary paperwork to the district to request a vicar for the 2017-18 academic year. **PLM is currently raising \$12,000 to cover the housing expenses of the vicar for one year.** Please consider giving to support urban vicar training.



(above) Zachary and Vicar Benson attend a seminar at the LCMS-U conference in January. (right) Sarah, Ciara, Zachary, and Vicar met with Rev Dr Hardy, Bishop of the English District.



LCMS-U Conference

A group of young people who regularly attend Logos Lutheran in Philadelphia took a road trip to Washington, D.C. in January in order to attend the LCMS-U conference. The Campus Ministry division of Synod established LCMS-U to help connect students during their years at college.

It was encouraging for the group to meet other Lutheran college students from around the nation, to interact with pastors and to worship together.

March for Life

The group of young adults that has been meeting for weekly Bible study with Vicar Benson drove to Washington D.C. for Divine Service and the National March for Life at the end of January.

The group marched with other English District congregations and Lutherans for Life. Participants marching with the LCMS carried large photos and signs promoting #eyesofflife, a hashtag created for this year’s march.



It was invigorating to see hundreds of thousands of people standing in solidarity to declare that we must protect the sanctity of life from conception to natural death.

New Partnership with Alpha Care



Alpha Care's mobile labs allow registered nurses to take testing services and wellness visits to women throughout the city. Outfitted with ultrasound machines, lab tests for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and basic nursing equipment, these vans are mini-clinics on wheels.

In February, Pastor Kieselowsky met with Karen Hess, the director of Alpha Care in Philadelphia, and toured one of the its new mobile lab units.

Alpha Care provides prenatal counseling and care, testing, and parental support services. As they are renovating office space at a property adjacent to a former abortion clinic, Alpha Care has put two mobile labs on the streets of Philadelphia. Registered nurses drive the mobile labs to various neighborhoods in the city to take Alpha Care pregnancy testing and counseling services to people in need.

Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries is talking with Alpha Care about parking one of its mobile lab units on PLM's property in northeast Philadelphia. A great deal of foot traffic and hundreds of high school students pass the property each day.

Shepherd of the City

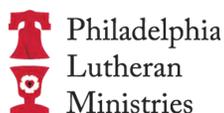
Saints gathered for services at Shepherd on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.



Christmas service at Shepherd

In January, a group of volunteers arrived for a service event sponsored by LCMS-U. They cleared an area to increase heat output from radiators, took down large mirrors in the undercroft, and repainted parts of the wall. In addition, the group cleaned the sanctuary and cleared snow. We are grateful for the time they spent with us and the help they provided.

Volunteers from Texas and New Mexico help paint and clean at Shepherd in January.



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Rev Kieselowsky
tours an Alpha
Care mobile lab.
*See inside for more
information.*



First service at
Logos Lutheran in
Center City with
the Lord's Supper.



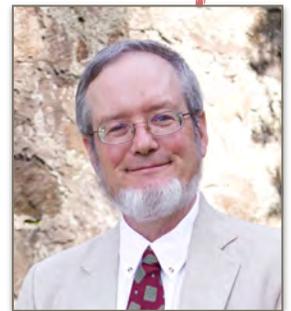
A group of young
people who
regularly attend
Logos Lutheran in
Center City gather
at the Kieselowsky
home to watch the
Super Bowl.



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Dr. Phillip Cary

*Professor of Philosophy at Eastern
University; author, lecturer, blogger*



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