



CELIC Newsletter

April 2023

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes from the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

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Chairman's Word

From the Chairman: Rev. Andrew Miao

The beggar born blind in John 9:1-41 reminds me of more than ten years ago our churches was in need of reform. It was time for CELIC to face reform. At that time the CELIC had already been paralyzed for ten years by sinful desires, fighting for power, and counting profit. They just like this man born blind—in darkness, hopelessness, and powerless to change. When we were in trouble, we could only call on the Lord for mercy and help. When we did, we all saw God's work, and received peace that passes all understanding. We saw and followed the light, as Jesus said in the Gospel of John, "It was not this man who sinned, nor his parents, but it was in order to show the works of God in them."



Now that the CELIC has been in reform for more than ten years, are we still longing for God to show His deeds among us or are we gradually and once again relying solely on our own human abilities. Have we forgotten that we are beggars born blind? The Jews focused on worshiping in Jerusalem, and the Samaritans focused on worshiping on Mount Gerizim. The Jews focus was not on solving the problems of sin and need for healing; on the contrary, they focused on whether their Sabbath traditions were violated. But our Lord tells us: "Let us believe in Him," because he is the light of the world, and we who are blind from birth can be given His grace to see.

If, like the Pharisees, we rely on our human power and not on the Savior; if we do not admit that we are blind, we too will remain in blindness, and will be judged. (Revelation 3: 17-18). The experience of the CELIC in the past few decades has proved that we have organizational systems and traditional norms, and we also have sufficient resources and property. We also have pure theological teachings we received from the Reformation. So, why has our church not developed in the past seventy years? Is it because we cannot see what God has done? Are we still blind and in sin? May the Lord bless each of our co-workers and protect us. We live and serve in faith. We still desire to see God's works, so that we can be formerly blind people, blessed to see, instead of man who continue in blindness. Let's encourage each other!



China Evangelical Church Songshan Church Introduction

/Vicar Zhao Danxiang

Church History:

The history of Songshan Church is that in 1965 Pastor Chaozong Lin established a mission on Songshan Avenue (near the future Shanpi MRT station). The current site at Songde Road, Lane 25 was purchased in 1991. Since that time the congregation has been served by Pastor Lin Chaozong, Evangelist Shangru, Pastor Joseph Lu, Evangelist Youting Huang and others. The current senior pastor is Pastor Joseph Lu and the resident minister is Evangelist Danxiang Zhao.

Church Features:

During the Reformation, Martin Luther pointed out: Christian worship is not us serving God, but God serving us. So, in worship, God ministers to us with His Word and baptism and the Lord's Supper, and we respond with gratitude. Songshan Church upholds the spirit of this traditional liturgical service and expects everyone who comes to experience God's true service to us again.

The characteristics of Songshan Church are: (1) Worship using traditional etiquette and singing traditional hymns. (2) Value the Word of God. (3)

Provide educational courses offering truth on the Word of God for all age groups. At present, Sunday School for Adults, Sunday School for Children, Mini-Sunday School, English Fellowship, Sisters' Fellowship, and an eight-course Introduction to the Lutheran Church. A Couple's Fellowship and a Men's Group are also being prepared.

Current situation and intercession:

(1) Please pray for the smooth start of the new season of Adult Sunday School--The Epistle to Timothy, and the Introduction to the Lutheran Church. May the Lord lead brothers, sisters and new friends to participate in the courses to come to knowing God's true plan of salvation.

(2) Please pray for members to have peace of mind and body in Christ, to grow spiritually in the truth, to serve neighbors at work and at home, and to be filled with the Lord's peace and joy.

(3) Pray for the smooth progress of the monthly "Couples' Fellowship" and Men's Group in preparation.

(4) The church is at the missionary stage, please pray for the self-reliance of the future church.

Annual Pastoral Conference Report and Suggestions

/Deaconess Yuching Yang

On February 27, 2023, the China Evangelical Lutheran Church held the "2023 Annual Pastoral Conference", with 23 pastors, preachers, colleagues, and Vicars as well as their wives at the meeting. The topic of this annual meeting was "Aspects of Pastoral Care." An update was given on the development of the CELC and an opportunity to offer suggestions was provided. Our Conference included spiritual food via morning and evening prayer, Dr. Paul speaking on Lutheran Theology and Church Design, LCMS Asia Regional Director Pastor Charles Ferry described the Asia Regional mission and introduced the missionaries working in Taiwan. In the afternoon CELC President Pastor Andrew Miao shared the call and practice of the church, broke listeners into small groups for discussion. CELC Missions Supervisor Pastor Joseph Lu reported on the current and future of the work of the CELC. Then group leaders reported group discussion responses.

Co-workers used dinner time to communicate with each other, and people that hadn't met for a long time were able to reconnect.

Since 2021 the CELC has refocused on returning to "Word and Sacrament Ministry." The organization was downsized, restructured, and the administration was systematized. More effort has been made to expand publishing, energizing and training pastoral staff in mission work, ending improper use of CELC properties, all litigation is nearing an end, so the CELC can return entirely to normal church development.

Summary of conclusions from group discussions

Topic One: Please share your feelings, ideas or observations throughout the day today:

(1) The annual meeting is more and more different, not just a fellowship of eating and drinking, there is also teaching of the law and the gospel. The meeting time is very streamlined and efficient in meetings.

(2) We return to the orthodox direction and the system is being perfected. The reports in all aspects are transparent and clear, and we can also see the progress of the mission. The determination of the LCMS mission to station missionaries in Taiwan fills the CELC with hope.

(3) These courses help the preachers to be correct and implement the confessional theology. It helps us to "establish a Lutheran mind." We are returning to "the center of the holy word and sacraments." Only by knowing "The Truth" will the church be able to truly implement the Word





and the Sacraments correctly as the true Church.

(4) Through sharing with each other, facing problems together, and giving church workers an opportunity to speak freely, we can fully express

our ideas. We especially appreciate the statement "This time belongs to everyone." It is good to feel trusted by the pastoral relationship.



Topic Two: I hope that the CELC can provide more knowledge in theology and pastoral practice on the following topics:

Provide Sunday School materials for all ages along with seminars on 1) adult Sunday school courses, 2) training for teachers, pastors' wives and deacons, child-centered, day school teaching assistance and various training courses to help church brothers and sisters can continue to live in the Word of God which they



have received. Repetition and practice.

Topic Three: Regarding the training and recruitment of future pastoral staff of the CELC what are your opinions and suggestions?

(1) We hope that the CELC will formulate and provide a complete set of systems and methods for reference in established churches.

(2) Hold continuing training courses for long-term co-workers to help the church workers continue to proper understanding and grow in becoming good helpers for church members.

Topic Four: What have you seen and thought about our return to "the center of the Word and Sacraments."

(1) In addition to providing pastoral staff with teaching in this direction please also assist churches to organize deacon and staff retreats. Provide congregation with lectures on topics on Word and Sacrament help in training of deacons and staff of

other churches, so they also can participate in the CELC, with everyone going the same direction.

(2) In the past, Lutheran preachers rarely communicated with each other; hold regular fellowship among evangelists, or do pulpit exchange so that we can learn about each other's churches.

Thank God! The Annual Pastors' Conference was successful. The CELC and all who participated in the conference were satisfied. The participating pastors also gave many suggestions on administration and pastoral care, to guide the future development of the CELC. Thank the Lord for His mercy, so that the CELC can continue to grow in the right way.



“Intensive Baptism Seminar” Summary and Feedback



The Significance and Practice of Holy Baptism Part 1

/ Pastor Junzi Ke

The way to return to "the center of the Holy Word and the sacraments" is a service indicator of a Lutheran pastor. I am grateful to the CELC for inviting me to attend, and to Dr. Gifford Grobien for coming to Taiwan to teach this intensive course: Holy Baptism--Meaning and Practice.

At the beginning of the class, Dr. Grobien mentioned that Luther's the Six Parts of Luther's Small Catechism best summarize the teachings of the entire Bible. Using this guide, we can see everything the Bible teaches about baptism.

The Israelites of the Old Testament were often reminded that they were daily living an unclean life. They used water or sacrifices for purification. This included repentance, and becoming a new creation (cf. Numbers 19, Leviticus 11-15). In the Old Testament the cleansing ceremony centered on water was not baptism, but a type, showing through the ceremonial life, what would be a Christian life.

In class, Dr. Grobien also used several Bible events to make us understand more about how the biblical God baptism teaches His people:

The relationship between the Flood and Baptism: After the Fall, man destroyed God's original perfect creation. The Holy God wanted to destroy everything and begin again with a new creation. God flooded the whole world, and out of

the water He made a new creation. The flood is a type of baptism, a symbol of the New Creation Jesus brings.

The Relation of Exodus and Baptism: In Exodus chapters 14-15, God uses water and the Holy Spirit to work. The waters of the Red Sea restricted the liberty of the Israelites. But when Moses stretched out his rod, the LORD made the sea water recede overnight. The waters parted, and the sea became dry land (19:21). The Spirit of God restrained the water so that it could not harm the Israelites. This water gave the Israelites new life and freedom. Likewise, God and the Holy Spirit work in baptism. Baptism water destroys the flesh so that the new man can come out.

Baptism as the New Creation: The Sacrificial System of the Old Testament

In the sacrificial system, debts for sins are continuously transferred (people → via Tabernacle → sacrificial lamb → wilderness). But sin is completely dealt with and redeemed in Jesus. All sins were placed directly on Jesus, there was no transfer, God put his wrath on Jesus. Jesus' death and resurrection dealt with sin. This is a new creation beginning. By baptism we are forgiven of sins, and we are united with Christ and have the title and privilege of "Son of God."

Baptism in the New Testament: The Journey of Jesus Begins with Baptism

At the beginning, when Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit fell on Him, and the work of the Holy Spirit continued through the journey of temptation in the wilderness. The highest peak was at Jesus' ascension when He opened the gates of heaven so that His people can enter heaven. The most basic work of baptism is to give the Holy Spirit.

Thank God! This intensive course on baptism has been prepared for pastoral staff to learn more about the biblical God of baptism. When we follow Jesus commanded and baptize people in the name

of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that person receives the Holy Spirit. We don't have to be fanatics trying to seek special manifestations and assurances. Because where the is God's Word united with water, that is baptism. As St. Paul says in Titus 3, "He saved us; ...according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 The saying is trustworthy."

The Significance and Practice of Holy Baptism Part 2

/ Pastor Alex Wu

Dr. Grobien's teaching on baptism this time is quite rich. It's hard to share them all here. Just to share one or two of my new findings on the Old Testament roots of baptism:

In this class, Dr. Grobien spent more than half of the class time leading us to "explain" many passages of the Old Testament and New Testament and use these "explanations" to point to the teaching (theology) about baptism. Some of these verses seem to have nothing to do with baptism on the surface but using the method of "typology" makes these verses affirm the correctness of Lutheran theologians' understanding of baptism.

For example: Dr. Grobien used the "water for impurity" (Numbers 19:9), which is rarely mentioned in our general church, as a type related to baptism. Because the Holy Spirit washes away the sins of our God's people in the New Testament through water in baptism, and the Old Testament has the making and use of "water for decontamination" (the function of washing and cleansing), so this "water" is established. Purgative waters were a type of baptism in Old Testament times.

This typology helps us see that God's mind and ways of doing things are similar (or even identical) in the Old and New Testaments.

Dr. Grobien also pointed out that according to the laws in Chapter 15 of Leviticus and other chapters, God's people in the Old Testament were very easily contaminated and defiled and could become unclean "every day." If they were not careful, they needed to be cleansed with water. And so are our New Testament people of God, for the Lutheran Catechism states in the teaching of baptism: "This baptism with water shows that ... old Adam, with all ... lusts, should be ... "daily" ..., drowned and died." God's people in the Old Testament often needed to be cleansed with water, and we in the New Testament also often need to commemorate our baptism and repent to be cleansed and forgiven. Our "old self" was drowned and has died.

We originally regarded the above-mentioned verses as ceremonial laws specially given to God's people in the Old Testament. We thought God's people in the New Testament didn't need to pay too much attention. However, Dr. Grobien's teachings helped me gain a new understanding of baptism. The Old Testament ceremonial law showing God's cleansing of spiritual defilement (sin) with water is consistent with the New Testament's approach and understanding of holy baptism. We can thus apply these texts of the liturgical law to Holy Baptism which was given by Jesus Christ.

Introduction of New Publications

／ Deaconess Xie Yulun

Counseling at the Cross

Christians are troubled by various mental illnesses or symptoms and seek various psychological aids. What can church pastors do when it comes to counseling and therapy? God's wonderful tool — God's Word "Law and Gospel" is publicly proclaimed on the pulpit, and it can also be used in one-on-one visits and care. Pastor (H. Curtis Lyons) shared his more than 40 years of experience of caring and pastoral care, helping us see how using righteousness as the foundation, and the gospel as the solution, can be used to guide Christians with all psychological symptoms, to come to the cross again, experience the power of the gospel to forgive sins, and return to true peace with God.



Of Good Comfort : Martin Luther's letters to the depressed and their significance for pastoral care today

Martin Luther, a famous melancholy, was also a preeminent theologian and pastoral adventurer. As an adventurer, he wrote many letters of comfort to the depressed people he shepherded. Stephen Pietsch selects 21 of Luther's 102 letters, to give us a glimpse into Luther's theology as it is applied in life dilemmas and struggles of confidence. His thesis won the 2014 Ph.D. President's Award for Thesis Excellence. This book is adapted from his dissertation, clearly sorting out melancholy including comprehensive information on disease history, medicine, and psychological counseling, focusing on Lutheran pastors' theology and method of caring, hidden in caring for yourself and caring for others, and the wisdom and inspiration needed to hone the art of helping others.



China Evangelical Church logo commemorative cup

VDMA is an abbreviation of the Latin words Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum which means "God's Word Remains Forever" (1 Peter 1:25)



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