

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

1207 West 45 Street Austin, Texas 78756

Rev. Paul R. Harris - 512-453-3835 Church

Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM - Divine Service 10:30 AM

Thy People will Volunteer Freely

Do you recognize the title as part of a Bible verse? It is. It's from Psalm 110, the most frequently quoted Psalm in the New Testament. The entire verse 3a reads as follows: "Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power;"

You find this phenomenon of Its Spirit frequently in the Bible. Read Exodus 36:2-7 about collecting for the building of the Tabernacle. Here are some of the highlights. Verse 3 says, "And they received from Moses all the contributions which the sons of Israel had brought to perform the work in the construction of the sanctuary. And they still continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning." Then verse 5 tells you, "And they [the skillful men] said to Moses, 'The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the Lord commanded *us* to perform.'" Get this: Moses had to issue a command in verse 6 to *stop* the people from bringing anymore. Verse 6b-7 says, "Thus the people were restrained from bringing any more. For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work, to perform it."

Think this is a one and done thing? You'd be wrong. Read about the dedication of the first Temple in 1 Kings 8:64, "On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the Lord, because there he offered the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat of the peace offerings; for the bronze altar that *was* before the Lord *was* too small to hold the burnt offering and the grain offering and

the fat of the peace offerings." O but you says, "This was during the golden reign of King Solomon. That explains the people's bounty."

Okay skip ahead about 200 years to King Hezekiah's reign. This is after Northern Israel had

been carried away by the Assyrians for their idolatry, fornication, and unbelief. This is after that evil influence had slipped into the Old Testament Church. But what do we read in 2 Chronicles 31? Read verse 4, "Also he [Hezekiah] commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the law of the Lord." And then read verse 5 about "the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field;" And don't miss verse 7 "In the third month they began to make the heaps, and finished *them* by the seventh month." Or the kings' and rulers' reaction in verse 8, "And when Hezekiah and the rulers came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord and His people Israel." Then the king wants to get to the bottom of these heaps so to speak in verse 9: "Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps." And the chief priest "explains" in verse 10: "Since the contributions began to be brought into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat with plenty left over, for the Lord has blessed His people, and this great quantity is left over."

I could now jump to the New Testament and the Widow's Mite, Luke 21:1-4, which wasn't her money but the might of her poverty and decades later to the churches of Macedonia who Paul in 2

Corinthians 8 said gave to support the physical needs of the mother church in Jerusalem. Listen to St. Paul's testimony in verse 3, "For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord..."

Christians volunteer freely in the day of the Lord's power. My 'job' is to show you that day. On Sundays, I show the power of the Lord to regenerate with Water; to send your sins away from you by Words spoken in Jesus' name and for His sake; and to show you His Body and Blood are here again in Holy Communion for your highest good.

The difference between Army basic training and Army Ranger training is that everyone in the former tried their best to not volunteer for anything. In the latter, when the instructor said, "I need a volunteer" everyone started pushing forward, hands raised, saying, "Me, me, me", even though you had no idea what was going to be required of you. But that was fake volunteering. You did it – at least I did – out of the Law. Seeing the Day of God's Power to redeem, restore, forgive is Gospel motivation. In such a day as this, wonderful, marvelous, miraculous things happen; I can't tell you exactly what, but it's more than you think, or even dream.

Poisonous Pastor Impostors

Sabrina Price, 60, a widow near Hattiesburg, Mississippi, got an email in February ostensibly from her pastor, saying he was out of town and needed a favor: \$100 gift cards for five women undergoing cancer treatment. He specified eBay or Amazon cards and said he'd pay her back.

The email looked legitimate, so she snapped up \$500 in Amazon cards at Walgreens, took photos of their numbers and texted them to him. The numbers gave the imposter instant access to funds. That evening, he sent a request for ten more \$100

gift cards. Price smelled a rat and fired back: "You are a thief and a liar. God sees what you did."

The Federal Trade Commission labels clergy cons as impostor fraud, which caused nearly \$1.2 billion in losses in 2020. The FTC can't say how many crooks pose as religious leaders, but AARP's Fraud Watch Network says preying on the prayerful has spiked during the pandemic.

For Price, the \$500 loss will delay her dream of buying a home. "I've had opportunities to be scammed before, but this is the first time I fell for it," she says.

AARP.ORG/BULLETIN

Something Better – visit to an Evangelical Lutheran Synod church

Posted on May 10, 2021, by Rev. Paul R. Harris

I'm conflicted. I reported on a virtual visit to an LCMS contemporary service. Today I report on a confessional Lutheran service. It was virtual too; virtually mind blowing. The contemporary LCMS congregation had more liturgy, better contemporary songs, more explicit references to Christ, and better law and gospel. But she also had open Communion. I couldn't find a Communion statement on the ELS's webpage, but I assume all ELS congregations have closed Communion.

Low church worship is still worship and is not necessarily contemporary. Luther had plans to develop a service for mature Christians that was basically Bible reading, prayers, and preaching. It's interesting that he did have the plan; even more so that he never went through with it. The Geneva gown is not heretical, but it is an academic gown, and it fit here. The pastor's sermon was a power point presentation. It contained charts on different types of the coronavirus and a 2- or 3-minute clip from the CDC.

The sermon theme was “A Better Resurrection” and like the contemporary LCMS congregations who are following the trend-setting Evangelicals, it was part of a larger sermon series, “Something Better.” The Gospel is Jesus promises something better. He reaches out with real answers. A better way to live is with faith in a bodily resurrection. This life can’t be all there is, and God promises it’s not. The Covid-19 crisis is providing us with opportunities to share with people whose life has been turned upside down that there is something better.

The sermon abruptly shifts to a very moving video of Mary Magdalene telling Peter and John that the tomb is empty and them running to it while thoughts of Peter’s denial are running through his head. Video is the new preaching and something foundational has changed, and it is unforgiving. Video allows the receiver to take whatever meaning they want from a clip. People communicate in short memes because multiple seconds of video say too much. A picture is worth a 1,000 words, so better limit the picture. Watch this sermon – and make no mistakes it’s meant to be watched not heard – and the video hits you with a freight train of emotion that is neither law nor gospel. At best it’s hope. At worse, it’s the “Aww” reaction that garners multiple thumbs-up on social media.

Two of three songs were contemporary. The second song was “I can only Imagine.” It was in the genre of “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” Only this wasn’t a Negro Spiritual, just spiritual. It was contemporary in tone and tune and country in style. There wasn’t one word of Law or Gospel, but a lot about what I can and can’t imagine. The closing song “Bless the Lord” was contemporary and centered on what we’re doing. It was upbeat and up-tempo. It was paraphrasing Scripture, but it was all about what the singer was doing.

In fairness, this was a virtual service. For all I know the pastor doesn’t stand in front of wooden altar with a 72-inch flatscreen TV above it which gives the impression that’s the object of worship. For all I know this was just stripped-down order of service. However, he only mentioned in passing the Vicarious Atonement and the resurrection as the Father’s acceptance of the Son’s payment. But neither was the something better. The better was there’s something more than life in a pandemic. And that to me is a “duh” point.

And what do we do with low church worship? Wearing an academic gown on purpose? Does Apology, XXVII help? “...the Mass is retained among 2] us and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added 3] to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned 4] be taught [what they need to know of Christ].” I quote this not in reference to them not having the Sacrament because of Covid. Can we use this to understand this congregation’s use of contemporary songs, PowerPoint presentations, and videos as the denouement of the sermon? Are these the equivalent of our forefathers adding German hymns and endeavoring to teach the unlearned?

Second, since they are a Confessional Lutheran congregation does FC, SD, X, 31 apply: “Thus [According to this doctrine] the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, provided they are otherwise agreed with one another in the doctrine and all its articles, also in the right use of the holy Sacraments, according to the well-known saying: *Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei*; “Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in the faith.” Does this

mean what is offensive in an open Communion church would not be in a closed Communion one?

I came away from this service at Abiding Shepperd, Cottage Grove, Wisconsin having been promised “Something Better” thinking in fact I got something worse. I came away thinking, if this sort of worship is tolerated in the ELS, they really are no better than the LCMS. Finally, I came away thinking I owe Bethel, Bryan an apology.

Happy bicentennial

Remembering the first state law that specified abortion.

by Marvin Olasky, Post Date: April 22, 2021
Issue Date: May 8, 2021

If there’s no written law against abortion, is it legal or illegal? That’s what some legislators wondered early in 1821. That’s why May 5th is a day to sing happy birthday to America’s first statewide pro-life law, created in Connecticut 200 years ago.

It’s not the bicentennial of abortion illegality, though. Based on moral law (derived from the Bible) and common law (the English and American legal tradition), abortion was always illegal in early America. Nevertheless, no state had a specific law concerning it.

Some local laws existed. A New York City ordinance passed on July 27, 1716, required midwives to swear that they would “not Give any Counsel or Administer any Herb Medicine or Potion, or any other thing to any Woman being with Child whereby She Should Destroy or Miscarry of that she goeth withal before her time.”

For a time, further legislation seemed unnecessary: Humans outside the womb viewed humans in the womb as human life, so general laws against murder applied. We don’t have separate laws today banning the killing of people

at age 10, age 20, age 30, or age 40: Murder is murder.

Besides, prosecutions for abortion always faced higher hurdles than the standard murder investigation, because it was easier to dispose of the corpse. Non-prosecutable via lack of evidence was not the same as legal: It’s not legal to murder a person in a distant place as long as no one is looking, and the murderer leaves no footprints. Still, abortion in early America was rare, and part-time legislators had other work to do—until a Connecticut scandal hit newspaper pages.

Politicians there responded to citizen outrage after celebrity Pastor Ammi Rogers added to his list of seductions, teenager Asenath Smith—and then pressured her to have an abortion.

The *Norwich Courier* criticized Rogers’ “cold calculating depravity of heart.” The jury agreed, yet the judge gave Rogers only a two-year sentence, to be served not in the hard-time state prison, but a relaxed local jail.

Given that laxity, the Connecticut General Assembly decided it had to target abortion specifically. The text of the 1821 law shows an obvious response to the Rogers case. The rascally reverend said the abortion might “have been produced by sickness, infirmity, or accident in the mother.” The new law stipulated that anyone who made a pregnant woman consume an abortion-causing substance, regardless of results, could spend not only two years in jail, but the rest of his life in state prison, if the jury and judge so determined.

As cities grew, other sensational cases emerged. Laws followed. From 1865 through 1920, pro-life laws within the context of a culture of life saved millions of lives. Doctors led the way, writing medical journal articles with titles like “A Plea for the Protection of the Unborn” and “The Rights of the Unborn Child.” They cited 19th-century scientific discoveries to show that “life begins at

conception” was a matter of science and not only faith.

Female doctors were especially influential as they wrote popular books. Dr. Prudence Saur wrote in *Maternity* (1889), “That the embryo is alive and hence quick from the moment of conception, modern science has abundantly proven. It follows, then, that this crime is equally great whether committed in the early weeks of pregnancy or at a more advanced period.” Dr. Minnie C.T. Love in 1903 summarized progress: Americans had learned that life begins at conception, as “science demonstrated, social economics demanded, and religion exhorted.”

Yet Saur also wrote regarding abortion that “the influence of Christianity has ever been to banish the practice ... as Christianity becomes weakened or destroyed, the fearful evil in question reappears and extends.” That’s where we are now. We need more pro-life laws. The Supreme Court needs to stop acting as the Supreme Legislator. But the heart change that can lead to a culture of life is crucial—and the root of “crucial” is *crux* (cross).

Honor Connecticut’s bicentennial and Jesus’ bimillennial.

—Marvin Olasky’s latest book is *Abortion at the Crossroads* (<https://wng.org/articles/happy-bicentennial-1618879925>)

A Lion, an Ox, and a Warning, O My!

Posted on June 1, 2021 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

Dr. Horace Hummel has this story in his wonderful commentary on Ezekiel. He tells of the church in Nebraska where he spent his childhood. He describes the reredos having a statue of Christ flanked by Peter and Paul and accompanied by a lion and an ox respectively reflecting the early association of Peter with Mark the Evangelists and Paul with Luke. He had many childish fantasies about those animals, but no one ever explained to

him what those two animals were doing above the altar. Much later his own studies informed him.

This was a failure to teach the rich things behind our liturgy, art, and the Divine Service. Historically, Christians didn’t pull things out of popular culture and place them before the people. This was what the Banner Theology of the 1970’s did for us or more aptly to us. But this failure to teach, of which I too am guilty, leads to a side darker than childhood fantasies of what a lion and an ox have to do with the Lord. Dr. Hummel tells us this, too. He says, long after he left home “the church underwent what I can only label a Protestantizing, iconoclastic ‘renovation,’ and today nothing but a bare cross stands above the altar. The worship life of the church is poorer for the loss” (*Ezekiel*, I, Hummel, 18).

And the Protestantizing has gone on unabated. In *Law and Gospel*, Walther points out that Protestants point to Lutheranism as the least-reformed: “for they say, it still retains much of the leaven of the Romish Church. For proof they cite the gown worn by the our ministers when officiating, the wafers used by us instead of ordinary bread at Communion, the crucifix, and the lights on our altars, the liturgical chanting of our ministers at the altar, signing persons with the holy cross, and bowing at the mention of the name of Jesus” (167 Dau, 184 Harrison).

Walther points out that these are innocent ceremonies which our Church doesn’t condition or connect to man’s salvation, “but which it will not permit to be pronounced sin” (Ibid.). Then he says the Protestants mentioned in this context “go a step farther when they assert that the worst papistic leaven and the most abominable remnant of the Papacy in the Lutheran Church is absolution” (Ibid.).

My real point is this final warning. Absolution has disappeared from contemporary Lutheran churches, but what proceeded its going were the loss of vestments, crucifixes, chanting, the sign of the cross, and bowing at the name of Jesus. The disappearing of these one by one is a bellwether of which way the wind is blowing. And they start disappearing when we fail to teach not only that we are free to have (or not) but why we historically did have them.

They don't consecrate our worship; this is the error you have to teach against. But they do concretize our worship. Jesus' real presence in both Word and Sacraments in our space time affects what we do to our bodies (vestments) and what we do with them (liturgical gestures).

Two Birds One Article

The below reprinted article touches on the subjects of abortion and Bible translation. If you engage with pro-abortion people or read the 2011 NIV you'll want to read this. Katie Martin, our member and a veteran of Pro-Life causes, had the best advice when a pro-abortion people uses the argument below. "O, You are interested in what the Bible says." (PH)

Translation abuse

by Leah Hickman, **Post Date:** March 24, 2021
Issue Date: April 10, 2021, *World Magazine*

Some abortion advocates point to a passage in the New International Version as Biblical justification for abortion. But the NIV's speculative translation clouds rather than clarifies.

A young man dressed in pink holding a Planned Parenthood sign picked Michele Hendrickson out of the thousands in front of the Supreme Court building during the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. "Are you a Christian?" he asked abruptly.

Hendrickson, then a regional coordinator for Students for Life, responded yes. The man shot back, "Well then, what do you have to say when your God supports abortion?" Then he quoted a psalm and Numbers 5:27. "He had them memorized," says Hendrickson.

She had heard the Numbers passage before. It describes what a man in ancient Israel should do if he suspects his wife has committed adultery but has no proof: Bring her to the priest, who will mix into water dust from the Tabernacle floor and tell her to drink the concoction. The man quoted what

Hendrickson thinks was the 2011 New International Version (NIV) translation of the verse, which says if the woman has been unfaithful, the drink "will enter her, her abdomen will swell and her womb will miscarry."

Hendrickson knew scholars contested an interpretation that pegs the event as a miscarriage, but the protester presented it as an example of God mandating abortion. Since then, college students have repeated the claim to her. On a recent Zoom meeting with Christian students, one asked her how pro-lifers should respond to their opponents on campus who sometimes use the verse to challenge a Biblical view of life.

"Miscarry" may not at all be what's meant in the Scripture," Hendrickson told me, explaining her general response to these kinds of questions. "The text is to talk about a situation of adultery. There's not even confirmation that she's pregnant."

The 2011 NIV is one of only two English translations (out of 39 WORLD checked) that describe the event as a miscarriage—and that was a change from the 1984 NIV. So, why take this interpretation? Can it justify a pro-abortion position?

To get to the root, I talked to four scholars and asked about the Hebrew text, different interpretations, and how one ended up in the NIV. I wanted to know what significance, if any, the passage should have on debates about abortion. I learned that even those who support the NIV's language as legitimate expressed surprise that it was being used to defend abortion.

BIBLICAL SCHOLAR BRUCE WALTKE is a member of the NIV Committee on Bible Translation. He's been on the committee since the 1970s and helped with the 1984 edition of the NIV. In that version, the Numbers 5 passage sticks to a literal translation of the original Hebrew, which makes no explicit mention of a miscarriage: "If she has defiled herself and been unfaithful to her

husband, then when she is made to drink the water that brings a curse, it will go into her and cause bitter suffering; her abdomen will swell and her thigh waste away.” (Footnotes in the 1984 and earlier editions do list “miscarrying womb” as an optional translation.)

Waltke, 90, is now writing a commentary on the Psalms for the Gospel Coalition and works from a home office in his daughter’s house near Seattle.

During our phone conversation, Waltke read word-for-word from the original Hebrew: “‘And her belly will swell up and her thigh will fall.’ ... That’s what it says literally.” He opened the old lexicon that he and the NIV translation committee primarily relied on while working on the early editions of the NIV: a lexicon first published in 1906 known as Brown–Driver–Briggs (or BDB). He said it offers little commentary on the Numbers passage.

“Back then, we didn’t have a lot,” said Waltke. “We didn’t have the research that we now have.” The 1984 NIV hit bookshelves a decade before today’s leading Hebrew lexicon, the Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT), came out in English. HALOT translates the event in the passage as a miscarriage, even though the original German version of the lexicon did not. But other studies and commentaries, some dating back to the early 1900s, also provided this interpretation. Some even described the drink as having abortive effects. The NIV translation team adopted the miscarriage language in the 2011 NIV update.

Waltke said he found the 2011 NIV change helpful: “I never really understood the passage until I began to realize it could refer to a miscarriage.” Waltke pointed to a 1975 study that explains the phenomenon as a false, hysterical pregnancy, in which the woman shows all the signs of pregnancy but does not have a baby. Such cases, Waltke explained, are a modern psychological reality and could have happened

then too: If the woman is under duress and guilty of adultery, her mind will trouble her and her body will act like it’s pregnant. If she’s innocent, her mind won’t trouble her.

Citing this explanation, Waltke said the miscarriage described in verse 27 is not an actual miscarriage but the end of a false pregnancy. What about using the translation to justify abortion? He replied, “A person [who] wants to believe that is going to believe it. It’s very difficult for me to get that out of this passage. Because obviously she becomes swollen not due to sexuality but due to the drinking of the water.”

Waltke admitted, “Maybe ‘miscarry’ isn’t the best translation. But I think it carries the intention of the passage: there will be no baby.” Because of that, he called the translation “sensible.” I emailed him for his further thoughts on the pro-abortion use. He replied, “Never heard of it until you called. Using it to justify abortion shocked me.”

I SPOKE WITH the editor of the English HALOT, Mervyn E. J. Richardson, a former professor at the University of Manchester in England. He still works as an honorary researcher at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

Richardson stood by the introduction of “miscarriage” to the English version of HALOT. In fact, he almost took it a step further. “Perhaps I should have said ‘abortion’ and not ‘miscarriage,’” he said when we spoke via Zoom. The only hesitation? “That raises an ethical issue.”

He admits interpreting the event as a miscarriage or abortion is “speculative” since the language is obscure in the original Hebrew. But he thinks it’s “pretty obvious” and “not taking too much for granted.” Even then, he emphasized he wouldn’t want to use this verse to argue a pro-abortion or pro-life position.

“It’s something I hadn’t thought of until talking with you. I haven’t realized it would be so crucial,” Richardson said. “The focus of the whole thing is punishment much more than producing an

abortion or a miscarriage. ... Even though I have used ‘miscarriage’—and I’m saying I could have used ‘abortion’ and so on—it’s only one view of this unusual expression.”

He concedes it may have been better to stick with the literal translation that the “thigh will collapse” in the English HALOT entry and simply note that the meaning was uncertain. But at the time, he felt his approach was adequate and didn’t want to expand HALOT’s original German text unnecessarily.

THE 2011 NIV is an outlier among translations of the Numbers passage. When we asked for interviews with the NIV translation team through Biblica, the NIV copyright holder, it sent us a statement pointing to examples of God’s judgment affecting children, including the death of David’s child in 2 Samuel 12 and the children of Achan in Joshua 7.

The English Standard Version (ESV) on the other hand, like most other translations and the 1984 NIV, sticks to a more word-for-word translation: “her womb shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away.”

Vern Poythress, a member of the ESV Oversight Committee, explained the reasoning to me in a phone call from his book-filled home office in a Philadelphia suburb, about a half mile from where he normally would be teaching classes at Westminster Theological Seminary. He’s skeptical of the NIV’s miscarriage interpretation.

“It’s not as if the editors of the NIV are trying to be manipulative. They honestly think that this is a euphemism,” he said, referring to the description of a falling thigh in the original Hebrew. But that translation is based purely on postulation, he said: Other Biblical passages that describe a miscarriage use more direct expressions to make the meaning obvious. The particular Hebrew phrase that appears here doesn’t appear anywhere else in the Bible, leaving little guidance for interpretation.

Either way, “it’s not really parallel to someone using modern abortifacients,” Poythress said. The water’s effect is supernatural, Poythress argues, because it varies depending on whether the woman is guilty or innocent, not on whether she is pregnant.

“Another factor is this special role that God has here: that He Himself is doing a supernatural judgment,” Poythress added: “That doesn’t authorize human beings in general to bring a judgment on other people. ... What Christians could say is we believe in protecting the life of the unborn child, but God has a right to take life whenever He wants, and of course He does.”

Dr. Wayne Grudem, general editor of the ESV Study Bible and a research professor at Phoenix Seminary, called the NIV’s version of Numbers 5:27 a “doubtful translation” that rules out “other possible understandings of the verse.”

Grudem talked to me from the landline of his house in Arizona after consulting resources in his home office. He had not heard of using the verse as justification for abortion until I questioned him.

“The problem is that there are two Hebrew words for miscarriage, and neither of them is used here,” Grudem said. “If it meant miscarriage, why not use the common words for miscarriage?” He said the NIV is continuing a pattern that committee has already set: When a passage has several possible meanings, translators select one they think is the most likely. Although it makes the passage seem clearer, it prevents the reader from recognizing the other possible interpretations of the verses.

“It’s a strange expression. So what ‘falls’? Is it the unborn child?” Grudem said. “Who knows what’s going on. It’s all interpretation, and that’s why most translations have gone with just literally saying ‘her thigh shall fall’ and let the reader decide what it means.”

THOUGH THE NIV committee may not have intended to give fuel to pro-abortion arguments in

choosing this translation, it's not just pink-clad protesters flinging the verse at pro-lifers.

In a white-walled room of the South Carolina House of Representatives office building in February, a Democratic opponent of the state's heartbeat bill quoted the verse during a House Judiciary Committee meeting. Sitting with the other legislators around an oblong, red-brown desk, Rep. Justin T. Bamberg urged others to set aside their personal beliefs when voting on the legislation.

"There are those who say ... abortion shouldn't happen because the Bible doesn't allow them," he said. "Well, it depends on which version of the Bible you read." He pointed to Numbers 5:27 in the 2011 edition of the NIV and its miscarriage description.

In her own discussion with the pro-abortion protester in front of the Supreme Court, Michele Hendrickson noticed something "reckless" about this application of the verse: "It's telling people we can pull a verse out of context, without research, without consideration of the Bible as a body of work, and without consideration to God's character and everything we know is constant and true about Him across Scripture."

Pro-abortion bible verses?

Those who profess faith in Christ while supporting abortion have rightly been on the defensive for almost 2,000 years—but as Leah Hickman shows, abortion advocates are weaponizing the New International Version's translation of one mysterious Old Testament passage.

The 2011 NIV translation breaks with earlier NIVs as well as at least 37 other translations in making three obscure verses—Numbers 5:21, 5:22, and 5:27—suggest that God forces an adulterous woman to "miscarry." Most of those 37 are like the 2015 New American Standard Bible's translation: "her abdomen will swell and her thigh

will waste away." Nothing about miscarriage or abortion.

The NIV has a history of fashionable translation. As Daniel Vaca writes in his scholarly *Evangelicals Incorporated*, in 1997 *WORLD* exposed "the Stealth Bible," a previously unpublicized NIV retranslation that bowed to feminist pressure. Under pressure, translators backed off. The NIV's reputation took a hit and the version lost "market share," but the NIV is still the best-selling English translation.

The only other translation *WORLD* found that inserts the word "miscarry" is the relatively little-used Common English Bible, also published in 2011. Four of the five denominations responsible for the CEB—the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the United Methodist Church—were abortion proponents. The fifth, Disciples of Christ, wanted abortion to be legal but rare.

The Bible's many clear pro-life verses include Luke 1:44 and Psalms 51:5 and 139:13, where David says of God, "You knitted me together in my mother's womb." Some abortion proponents have tried to turn this into special cases—yes, God knit David and John the Baptist, but not others. Even if that were not such a stretch, it runs up against passages such as Isaiah 44:2, addressed to everyone in Israel: "Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you from the womb." —Marvin Olasky

Leah Hickman

Leah is a reporter for *WORLD Magazine* and *WORLD Digital*. She is a World Journalism Institute and Hillsdale College graduate. Leah resides in Cleveland, Ohio.

A Look Back at What we Left

This is part of an email advertising the latest conference of the Association of Confessing Evangelical Congregations. This pastor was ordained 30 years after I. He is describing the LCMS as he sees

it today, which is how I have been describing it for almost 40 years. He is a faithful confessional pastor, even as righteous Lot was in the midst of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:8), but read Genesis 19 and see where years of living there ended up taking him and his family (PH).

The Binding Key: The Lutheran Theology of Church Discipline. Our culture tolerates nearly everything. Conforming themselves to the world, many churches have accepted this pagan doctrine of tolerance.

Even more concerning, congregations in our own Synod have followed suit. They preach acceptance instead of repentance. Open Communion is the norm. The vast majority of cohabiting couples sit impenitently in the pews without any admonishment or correction whatsoever. Many divorce with no grounds for divorce. And the list goes on. Yet, faithful pastors who do admonish, discipline, and excommunicate their members to bring them to repentance are considered to be unloving, intolerant, and rude.

To many, church discipline is a thing of the past—an old, hateful, barbaric practice from medieval times that has no place in our churches. Much of the time, those called to repentance don't repent - they simply leave the church and join another LCMS church with a pastor who won't practice church discipline.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Rojas+
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Winter Garden, FL

Breathing

A 9-Part Advent-Lent Sermon Series on the 3rd Chief Part of Luther's Small Catechism The Lord's Prayer

Our 2021 Vacation Catechetical School had the theme "Breathe" which was a collaboration between myself and three volunteers. This sermon series is an extension of that. Both themes grew out of this line from the hymn *Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire*: "Prayer is the Christians vital breath, the Christians native air," (TLH 454:5). As usual, the Wednesday services start at 7:30 PM. With the exception of Ash Wednesday, you can be heading to the parking lot by 8:30.

Dec. 01	A Deep Breath	Introduction
Dec. 08	A Breath of Holiness	1 st Petition
Dec. 15	Breathed Into	2 nd Petition
Mar. 02	Controlling Your Breathing	3 rd Petition
Mar. 09	Breathtaking	4 th Petition

Trinity Lutheran Church
1207 West 45th Street, Austin, TX 78756
512.453.3835
www.trinityaustin.com

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All articles must be approved by Rev. Paul R. Harris.

Articles with no author are written by him.

Mar. 16	Holding Your Breath	5 th Petition
Mar. 23	Catching Your Breath	6 th Petition
Mar. 30	Breathe Your Last	7 th Petition
Apr. 06	The Last Breath	Conclusion

AUGUST 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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1 ADULT CLASS 12:15 PM MID-SUMMER MEAL	2	3	4 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	5	6	7
8 MEMORY PRE-TEST ADULT CLASS 12:15 PM	9	10	11 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	12	13	14
15 ADULT CLASS 12:15 PM	16	17	18 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	19	20	21
22 ADULT CLASS 12:15 PM	23	24	25 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	26	27	28
29 ADULT CLASS 12:15 PM	30	31				

SEPTEMBER 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	2	3	4
5 ADULT CLASS 12:15 PM	6	7 ELDERS MEETING 6:30 PM	8 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	9	10	11
12 LUNCH & GUEST SPEAKER NOON	13 FIRST JR. CONFIRMATION CLASS 5:30 PM	14 VOTERS MEETING 7:00 PM	15 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	16	17	18
19 ADULT CLASS 12:15 PM	20 JR. CONFIRMATION 5:30 – 7 PM	21	22 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	23	24	25

26	27	28	29	30		
ADULT CLASS 12:15 PM	JR. CONFIRMATION 5:30 – 7 PM		DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM			

AUG - SEPT 2021