



CONCORDIA
LUTHERAN
SEMINARY

Resource Materials for Seminaries Sunday

September 2011



Propers

The month of September is officially set aside by Lutheran Church–Canada for Seminaries Sunday. You may wish to observe it in conjunction with Education Sunday. This year’s opening services at the seminaries (10th in Edmonton and 11th St. Catharines) offer a weekend for focus on LCC higher education. We encourage you to use the propers appointed for the day, noted below from year C of the 3-yr series. The epistle texts in particular are appropriate for preaching on the pastoral ministry. We have also provided notes on the text for the seminaries’ theme verse, Matthew 9:38, “Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field.”

Propers for Christian Education Sunday

Deuteronomy 6:4-15

Psalm 119:126-136 (antiphon: v. 105)

Acts 2:37-41

Luke 18: 15-17

Hymn of the Day:

LSB 861 “Christ be My Leader” (LW 365)

LSB 864 “Shepherd of Tender Youth” (TLH 628, LW 471)

Suggested hymns relating to the seminaries’ work and the office of the ministry

(all from LSB with numbers of other hymnals following titles)

570 “Just as I am, Without One Plea” (LW 397)

584 “Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing”

588 “Jesus Loves Me! This I Know”

594 “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It”

596 “All Christians Who Have Been Baptized”

597 “Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying”

601 “All Who Believe and Are Baptized”

708 “Lord, Thee I Love With All My Heart”

740 “I am Jesus’ Little Lamb”

725 “Children of the Heav’nly Father”

863 “Our Father, by Whose Name”

865 “Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain” (TLH 288, LW 477)

866 “Lord Jesus Christ, the children’s friend”

867 “Let Children Hear the Mighty Deeds”

973 “Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet”

Suggested hymns relating to the theme

586 "Preach You the Word" (LW 259)
589 "Speak, O Lord, Your Servant Listens" (TLH 296, LW 339)
685 "Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus" (TLH 409, LW 381)
688 "'Come, Follow Me,' the Saviour Spake" (TLH 421, LW 379)
783/784 "Take My Life and Let It Be" (TLH 400, LW 404)
826/827 "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying" (TLH 496, LW 318)
830 "Spread the Reign of God the Lord" (TLH 507, LW 321)
831 "How Shall They Hear, Who Have Not Heard" (HS 98 868)
833 "Listen, God is Calling" (HS 98 872)
848 "Lord, Whose Love through Humble Service"
853 "How Clear is Our Vocation, Lord" (HS 98 879)
857 "Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way"
861 "Christ be My Leader by Night as by Day"

Notes on the Theme

**"Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers
into his harvest field."** (Matt 9:38)

The following notes are extracted from "Homiletical Helps," Concordia Journal April 2005, pp. 168-171. Thanks to the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for permission to reproduce this excerpt.

**Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Matthew 9:35-38
June 12, 2005**

The Waiting Harvests

Dear Christian Friends,

Now, our Lord was wonderful with people. He loved them. In turn, they were attracted to Him. Hundreds, yes, thousands of people came to Him. Eagerly and gladly they heard His Word. Our Lord was popular with the people. Seldom was He ever alone, except in rare moments to find much needed rest in a quiet place.

1. The Harvest

Jesus had an eye for the world's people. He compared them to a great harvest. We read, 'Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful"' (Matt. 9:37a). So many people! Beginning with the first verse of Matthew, chapter nine, we note that Jesus spent some hours teaching in a man's house to an overflow crowd (v. 1f), healed the man sick of palsy (v. 6), recruited His disciple, Matthew (v. 9), debated with the Pharisees (v. 10f.), raised the daughter of Jairus from death (v. 18f), healed the woman with a blood disorder (v. 20f), restored sight to two blind men (v. 28), and cast out a demon from a man possessed (v. 32f.). Then, as if St. Matthew cannot keep pace with Jesus and all His works among so many people, he summarizes, "and Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity" (Matt. 9:35).

Our Lord's ministry to people was entirely absorbing. His work was never finished. And who was helping Him? Until now, His disciples were little more than observers, men who watched and admired the Master and His ministry. Until now, they did not get involved. Many of us never become more than observers, watching and admiring the pastor or a spirited lay Christian or even a famous evangelist, while we ourselves sit back in our comfortable pew year after year. We are content to watch the action. But the early verses of Matthew, chapter ten, record how Jesus thrust His disciples into the harvest of souls waiting for reapers. Jesus calls us this day to be part of the action!

Every farmer knows that there is a thin line of separation between a harvest gathered too early and a harvest taken too late. With God's harvest, the time is always just right. We cannot get into the world's harvest of souls too soon! Now is the time! Our redemption, their redemption draws near! When our Lord commissioned His disciples, He said, "You are witnesses!" (Luke 24:28). He did not ask, "Are you in the mood?" "Do you feel up to missionary work?" "Would you like to be My disciples?" He said, "You are witnesses!" Not tomorrow, but today! This is no time to be sitting on the fence, sharpening our sickles and knives. This is a time to be in the field, every man, woman, youth, and child. For, "The harvest [of souls] is plentiful!" (v. 37a).

II. The Reaping

In most communities across America, fifty percent of the people are unchurched. Why are we not more eager to get into this field and reap the harvest of souls? The Gospel lesson reads, "When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them" (Matt. 9:36). Our Lord had compassion on the multitudes. But first, He saw the multitudes! He had an eye for the lost. We could be missionaries if we cultivated essential awareness of the people around us. The crowds, the masses are a burden, sometimes even a threat. In the cities, we drive around and over the population on interstate highways. In the country, we take the road out of town just to get away from people. They don't suit us in one way or another.

Do you think that the multitudes of people in Jesus' time were nice and well-adjusted persons? Among them were the petty criminals, the slothful who were poor by their own fault as well as by circumstances they could not help. There were indiscreet women. There were braggarts, cutthroats, shylocks, cheats, misfits. "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them!" (Matt. 9:36 KJV).

How do we react to the masses of people who have not yet heard the Gospel of Christ, but need desperately that blessing of Christ in a particular way? How do we react to the alcoholic, the addict, the unfaithful in marriage, the divorcee, the sleuth in business, the mugger, the prisoner, the headstrong youth bent on rebelling against cherished values? How do we react against persons who reject God as old hat, a phony figurehead of institutional religion? How many such persons have we reached or helped? Do we react frequently like James and John who requested that the Lord command fire from heaven to fall and consume the Samaritans?

Jesus said, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:56 KJV). Not rejection or judgment, but compassion was the spirit of the Savior. "He was moved with compassion on them" (v. 36 KJV). Yes, "He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (v. 36b). In our information age, knowledge on any subject is at our fingertips on a computer keyboard. Yet, people are restless, searching for meaning and not finding it. Like sheep without a shepherd, they turn to web sites in order to link up with unknown partners in search for meaningful relationships. Cyberspace challenges the venturesome person who seeks psychic or spiritual experiences. Out there, self-appointed experts are eager to prey upon confused and lonely souls and lead them, wherever, into bizarre indulgences, one kind or another. Many of these forays are a dead end. Some may even be harmful.

Whatever these seekers are finding, short of the Good News of God and His grace and goodness, they go wanting. They are sorely lacking. In the deep recesses of the human heart, every person cries for

God, for that peace and security with God, which the world cannot give. The renowned British thinker and philosopher, Antony Flew, now in his eighties, reportedly questions his lifelong courtship with atheism. The profound complexity of DNA, Flew indicates, cannot be explained except by acknowledging a higher being, God. Prof. Flew is a serious thinker. We wonder, in his private thoughts, does the professor himself desire peace with God? All we like sheep, says Isaiah, are not only confused. We have gone astray. And peace and reconciliation with God is only through Jesus Christ on whom the Lord laid our iniquity. It was all carried away by Christ on the cross! And this peace with God through Jesus Christ is the great answer to that quest of the restless heart.

III. Reapers

Persons in our circle of family and friends, add the larger circles of society and world, all searching for peace with God, are a great harvest of souls. Where are the reapers? We send missionaries. Also, we are missionaries. There are corners in this great harvest of souls which only you may reach. During the harvest season, have you noticed how the great combines move through a field of ripe grain? When the combine has done its work and gathered most of the crop, there are yet stalks of good grain standing in the corners of the field where the machine could not reach. Yes, professional pastors and teachers and missionaries can reach many persons with the Gospel. But there are people in corners of our society beyond their reach. There are corners of the field where only you can go and reap this harvest for Christ.

Each of us has some talent for missions, some way to bring Christ to others. I once knew a retired streetcar conductor in the city of St. Louis. At the end of each run, he would walk the middle aisle of the streetcar. Here and there, on the seats or in the window panels, the conductor would place a Christian tract. Amazing, at the other end of the line, he had to replenish those tracts. Many passengers took the pamphlets. No doubt, many read about Christ as Savior and Lord. The conductor was a reaper in that waiting harvest of souls.

Are we prepared for the action:

1. To see the world's people as a great harvest of souls, to see people with the eyes of Jesus?
2. To sense, to feel in our hearts the world's need for His compassion?
3. To do for the world what Jesus would have us do, bring to every soul His deliverance from sin and His gift of peace with God?

Are we prepared to be God's answer to our Lord's petition, "Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (Matt. 9:38)?

Richard H. Warneck

Prayers

For the seminaries of Lutheran Church–Canada

O God, through Your Holy Spirit You illuminate the minds and sanctify the lives of those whom You call to the work of pastors and teachers. Look with favour upon Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton and Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines as they instruct and form men to serve in the sacred ministry of Your Church. Bless those who teach and those who learn, that they may apply themselves with ready diligence to the knowledge of Your Word, which alone is able to make us wise unto salvation;

through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.** *or* Lord in Your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

(adapted from LSB Agenda, p. 188, prayer #593)

For seminary students

O Lord God, merciful and gracious Father, we give thanks for all the blessings You have bestowed on our church's seminarians who have been moved to begin preparation for the office of the ministry in Your kingdom. By Your Holy Spirit grant them an open mind and heart to hear and learn Your holy Word. Support, strengthen, and protect them during the years that lie ahead so that by Your Word Your Church may be built and increased. Fill them with a loving concern for Your people, and equip them with the competence to be able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter but of the Spirit;

through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.** *or* Lord in Your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

(adapted from LSB Agenda, p. 207, prayer #598, and p. 188, prayer #592)

Seminaries Sunday 2011

“Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field.” (Matt 9:38)

Seminaries Sunday is recognized in September in Canada’s LCC churches. It’s an opportunity to celebrate our graduate educational institutions in our Lutheran congregations across the country.

Lutheran Church–Canada operates two seminaries, located at Edmonton, AB, and St. Catharines, ON. Our seminaries are dedicated to forming church workers who bring God’s message of reconciliation through proclamation and ministry. Over 300 pastors have graduated from the seminaries and serve congregations throughout the world.

Graduate seminary education has blessed the church throughout its history. There is still a pressing need to prepare more students as servants for congregations, missions, and service.

Your involvement keeps the seminaries ready to form pastors for the church. Without prayer, communication, and money that you provide, Lutheran Church–Canada would quickly find itself without pastoral leadership.

With your support, seminaries can meet the need for full-time servants working in God’s harvest field:

- ⊗ pray that God would stir men’s hearts to offer their lives in preparation and commitment to public ministry as pastors who proclaim God’s message of reconciliation and administer God’s sacraments,
- ⊗ encourage men to consider pastoral ministry and support them in their decision; let the seminaries know about them,
- ⊗ encourage men and women to consider the needs of church workers for a variety of tasks,
- ⊗ support the seminaries financially and encourage students, faculty, and staff as they pursue the tasks of seminary life.
- ⊗ volunteer your time and your skills to the work needing to be done at the seminaries.

More detailed information about the seminaries and ways you can help to support them is available on the seminaries’ websites or by calling their offices:

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Seminaries

Sunday



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