

LCC Seminaries Sunday 2013

SEMINARIES SUNDAY gives congregations across the country an opportunity to support and give thanks for our synod's graduate educational institutions. Did you know that ... ?

- LCC's two seminaries are located in St. Catharines, ON (founded 1976), and Edmonton, AB (founded 1984);
- together they have produced more than 300 graduates;
- nearly 2/3 of LCC's pastors are graduates of her own seminaries;
- deacons and lay people can take enrichment classes on site and online, and can even earn a degree in theology;
- students overwhelmingly prefer to attend seminary close to home; we are blessed to have a seminary in east and west.

OUR SEMINARIES have faced severe challenges in the past decade. At LCC's 2011 convention the two seminaries signed a Memorandum of Understanding, agreeing to reduce their operating expenses, pay off any accumulated debt, and work together on teaching (via internet conferencing), development, and recruitment. Did you know that ... ?

- LCC subsidy meets nearly 1/4 of our budgets from synodical funds;
- our students receive financial aid that covers most of their fees;
- we need regular gifts from congregational members to provide another 1/4 of our budget!

OUR SEMINARIES' greatest need is for dedicated men and women to offer themselves for the pastoral ministry and other church vocations. So please ...

- *pray* that God would stir men's hearts to offer their lives in preparation for the public ministry, to preach His Gospel and give out His sacraments;
- *encourage* men to consider the pastoral ministry and support them in their decision; let the seminaries know about them, so we can help;
- *urge* men and women to consider studying theology for personal enrichment and to see if they might be suited for church work;
- *support* the seminaries and their students with gifts of money and food;
- *volunteer* your time and skills for the needed work at the seminaries.

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LCC Seminaries Sunday 2013

*Christ Is Our Cornerstone
(Ephesians 2:20)*





CONCORDIA
LUTHERAN
SEMINARY

Resource Materials for Seminaries Sunday

September 2013



Propers

Lutheran Church–Canada no longer designates a specific day Seminaries Sunday, but encourages her congregations to remember the two seminaries with prayers and offerings. You may wish to observe it in conjunction with an Education Sunday in September, remembering the opening of our academic year. We encourage you to use the propers appointed for the day, but you may also choose to make use of the seminaries' joint theme verse. Study notes are attached in case you wish to preach or hold a Bible study on the text.

*“So, then, you are no longer strangers and sojourners,
but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and members of God’s household,
having been built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself” (Eph. 2:19-20)*

Suggested hymns relating to the theme

(all from LSB)

- 571 “God Loved the World So That He Gave”
- 575/576 “My Hope is Built”
- 587 “I Know my Faith is Founded”
- 644 “The Church’s One Foundation”
- 645 “Built on the Rock”
- 647 “Lord Jesus Christ, the Church’s Head”
- 728 “How Firm a Foundation”
- 729 “I am Trusting Thee”
- 909 “Christ is Made the Sure Foundation”
- 912 “Christ is our Cornerstone”

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

(from LSB with numbers of other hymnals following titles)

- 558 “Not unto Us” (*HS 98 874*)
- 573 “Lord, ’Tis Not That I Did Choose Thee” (*TLH 37*)
- 582 “God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage” (*TLH 283, LW 333*)
- 583 “God Has Spoken by His Prophets” (*LW 343*)
- 585 “Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide” (*TLH 292, LW 344*)
- 586 “Preach You the Word” (*LW 259*)
- 589 “Speak, O Lord, Your Servant Listens” (*TLH 296, LW 339*)
- 602 “The Gifts Christ Freely Gives”
- 682 “God of the Prophets, Bless the Prophets’ Sons” (*TLH 483, LW 258*)
- 685 “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus” (*TLH 409, LW 381*)
- 688 “‘Come, Follow Me,’ the Saviour spake” (*TLH 421, LW 379*)
- 690 “Hope of the World” (*LW 377*)

783/784 "Take My Life and Let It Be" (TLH 400, LW 404)
825 "Rise, Shine, You People" (HS 98 871)
826 "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying" (TLH 496, LW 318)
827 "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling"
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)
834 "O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth" (LW 319)
835 "On Galilee's High Mountain" (LW 320)
836 "O God of Light" (HS 98 869)
837 "Lift High the Cross" (LW 311)
848 "Lord, Whose Love through Humble Service"
853 "How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord" (HS 98 879)
856 "O Christ, Who Called the Twelve"
857 "Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way"
862 "Oh, Blest the House" (TLH 625, LW 467)
865 "Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain" (TLH 288, LW 477)
TLH 493 "Thou Who the Night in Prayer Didst Spend"

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)

Notes on Ephesians 2:20: Christ Is Our Cornerstone

1. Context

- a) Audience for Ephesians = Gentile Christians (2:11)
- b) Their former state: desperate! (note various aspects of their need, v.12)
- c) Their present state: “brought near,” in Christ (v.13)

2. The sole cause of their salvation: the active work of Christ (13-15)

- a) Shed his blood, 13b (on the cross, 16)
- b) Made both groups one (14a) by destroying the middle-wall of partition (μεσότοιχος, 14b)
 - this is where the architectural motif that surfaces prominently in v.20 is first introduced ***
 - the “middle-wall” *could* be a reference to the 1.5m high *soreg* (balustrade) warning Gentiles against entry to Court of Israel (Josephus *Ant* 15.417, *BJ* 5.193-94)
 - background: Num 1:51
 - text inscribed on this wall (recovered in archaeological expeditions, 1887 & 1936): “*No intruder is allowed in the courtyard and within the wall surrounding the temple. Whoever enters will invite death for himself.*” (CIG 2.1400)
 - Acts 21:29, “They had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him [Paul] previously, and they assumed Paul had brought him into the inner temple courts”
- c) Christ nullified in his flesh the law of commandments in decrees, 15a

3. New life, together (14-18)

- a) Christ *is* our peace (14)—and thus, peace is also *preached* (17)
- b) *One* new man, no longer two (15); reconciliation between the two, the death of hostility (16)
- c) *Access* to the Father, in one Spirit, 18

4. The result of Christ’s work: the “building” of the church (19-22)

a) Corporate, political imagery

--in v.12, this language emphasized the advantages of *Jews* (πολιτεία)...but now (v.19) describes the privileges extended to all *Christians* (συμπολιται τῶν ἁγίοι, 19)

--members of God’s household, 19 (οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ)

--background: Israel as God’s house (Exod 16:31; 2 Sam 1:12; Num 12:7; Ps 127)

--NT: children of God belong to God’s house (2 Cor 6:18, ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ) (cp Eph 1:5)

--here: being given *access* to him as head of household implies *intimacy* and *belonging!*

b) Temple imagery (and see the note on 2:14, above)

--Christians have been built into this structure, 20 (ἐποικοδομηθέντες)

--the building pre-existed their particular addition to it

--this “static” use (people as an edifice) has precedent (cf 1 Cor 3:9, θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴ ἐστε; 16, ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν)

--**foundation**, 20 (ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ)

--cp 1 Cor 3:10-22, “Like a skilled master-builder I laid a foundation ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκα ... No-one can lay any foundation other than what is being laid, which is Jesus Christ θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδεμὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν κείμενον, ὃς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός”

--**apostles & prophets**: these are *two* groups, despite the shared article governing both
--in what sense did they “found” the church?

--temporal: they’re figures in the past

--causal: it was their labours that helped it get established

--normative: their preaching gave the church its shape

--missional: cf 3:5, they were involved in transmitting the divine command to evangelize the Gentiles

--**a building, 21; a holy temple**, 21

--the grammar is tricky, but it’s probably a *single* building (πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὖξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ)

--**it’s said to grow!** (21, αὖξει)

--this implies that the church is presently *incomplete*

--rare verb, συναρμολογουμένη (the only other NT use is at 4:16)

-- parallel in v.22, συνοικοδομείσθε (hapax legomenon)

--this bespeaks the importance / quality of the building

--*possibly* by addition of Gentiles to Jewish believers, though in context this is not so likely... *better*, by addition of individuals to the whole

--the *present* tense passive of συνοικοδομείσθε (22) suggests this

--*Who* causes the growth? Builder not identified here (in 1 Cor 3:10, it’s Paul)

--ἐν ᾧ *could* be instrumental, in which case Christ is the builder... *or* locative, in which case the growth happens “within” or even “into” him

--**a dwelling-place of God in the Spirit**, 22

--νάος = the actual sanctuary where the God dwells, not the whole complex

--Jerusalem temple = “house of God” (1 Kgs 8:13; Matt 23:21)

--Paul applies this to *the Christian community* (1 Cor 3:16f; 2 Cor 6:16)

--note the OT precedent for this idea as well: Exod 25:8, 29:45; Lev 26:11

--cf. 1 Peter 2:4f (but: in Peter Christians do not comprise the Temple but rather serve *within* it, cf. Rom 12:1f; 1 Peter 2:5; Heb 13:15f) (cp 1QS 5:5f, 8:4-9)

--**dwelling-place of God** (κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι)

--rare word: only other NT use = Rev 18:2

--εἰς = purpose: this is the *reason* why believers are joined together!

--two grammatical possibilities for “holy”: “holy temple” or “holy in the Lord”

--“in the Spirit”: the main sense is that it’s a *non-material* “building” being envisioned

c) “**Cornerstone**”? (ἀκρογωνιάου, 21)

--literal meaning: a stone “lying at the extreme corner” (BDAG)

--problem: is this a cornerstone (at/beneath ground level) or a capstone (keystone of an arch)?

--note the parallel issue in Luke 20:18 (people can fall over it, *and* it can fall on them!)

--contrast 1 Peter 2:6 [and 4-8, generally], where the emphasis is not (so much) on this stone’s position or function but rather on its preciousness (same word used)

--cornerstone:

--this would seem to be a stone at a corner which is used in squaring off the building, ensuring its dimensions are stable in both directions

--support: Isa 28:16 (“Look, I am laying a stone in Zion, an approved stone, set in place as a precious cornerstone for the foundation.”)

--so also 1 Peter 2:6-8 (the stone is clearly at ground level and people can trip over it)

--*but*: “It cannot be proved that such stones existed, for none has ever been discovered in ancient buildings of the Greco-Roman world.” (Ernest Best, *Ephesians*, 284)

--*and*: very few Greco-Roman public buildings (if any) attached any particular significance to any *particular* stone; the *opus quadratum* building technique (using squared-off stones) derives its stability from the interlocking of *many* stones which are *equal* in function

--*and*: ordinary domestic architecture often had no special foundation-stones at all

--capstone (of an arch, not a dome, since these hadn’t yet been invented/built):

--3 nonbiblical Jewish texts use the word to refer to the stone that locks together an arch, in contexts referring to the Temple

--*but*: a high-up stone like this would imply a building that’s largely complete, but v.21 makes it clear that the building is still growing

--*and*: it seems odd to suggest that Christ plays an essential role, yet may not have even been present until the building is nearly finished!

5. Implications

a) Christ is the centre of the entire passage

--overall logic of the passage:

--it’s upon the basis of what he has already done (note past tense) in vv. 13-15 to remedy Christians’ prior sad state (vv.11-12) that the wonderful affirmations of vv.16-22 are made

--key statements, parallel in both form and substance:

--it is “because of / through him” (18) that we have access to the Father in the Spirit

--it is “in him” (22) that we become a dwelling-place of God [Father] in the Spirit

b) Corporate, collective language dominates the descriptions of the advantages Christians enjoy because of Christ

--“political” terms, both for the former advantages enjoyed by Israel (v.12) and now extended to all Christians (v19)

--architectural terms, both for the “destruction” (λύω) of a central feature of the Jerusalem temple (v.14) and for the erecting (in its place?) of a new structure (vv.19-22)

c) Throughout, note the *flexible* and *creative* way in which language is used!

--repeated interplay / alternation of political & architectural imagery

--ambiguity of referent regarding the term we’re focusing on (ἀκρογωνιάου, 21)

d) This flexible, multi-referential, overflowing language points to *one* reality: the *single* new entity of the Church

--one new man (out of two), 15

--one citizenship (in place of the Gentiles’ former exclusion), 19

--one building (in place of the wall that formerly excluded Gentiles), 19-22 (cf 14)