



**Lutheran Study Centre**  
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L. S. C.  
 NEWSLETTER

6th Edition

June 2016

## Letter from the Director



*Dr. Eric Trozzo's Lutheran Identity Class at the Lutheran Study Centre*

The walls of the Lutheran Study Centre have been filled with the echoes of discussion about the use of the law in Luther's theology and meaning of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. I write this only a few days after the last class session of the 1st Semester for 2016. This semester sixteen students from the BM and English departments were in the introductory course, "Lutheran Identity." The students came from BCCM, PCS, and LCM. The class read some of Luther's writings, made presentations on sections of the Large Catechism, and wrote papers distinguishing law and gospel in biblical texts. Digging into core dimensions of Lutheran theology generated a great deal of excitement for many of the students, as it stretched their theological understanding in new ways. I must admit that it brought me great pleasure to have students asking me questions outside of class – out of interest, not merely to find out what was on the exam! –

and to hear hallway conversations among students. While the course is only taught every other year, it is a foundational block in the long-term work of the LSC is fostering theological discussion within the Lutheran churches of the region. The course this year was also greatly enhanced by the work of resource development the LSC has undertaken in recent years. For instance, new translations of several of Luther's writings greatly aided the student's ability to immerse themselves in Luther's thought.

In addition to this course, the end of the semester also saw a busy few weeks, with the visit of ELCA pastor and Lutheran scholar Bill Russell from Minneapolis. He helped lead seminars with LCM and BCCM-English pastors, and then stayed for guided studies with our Masters program students. His presence added a helpful additional layer of discussion of Luther to the

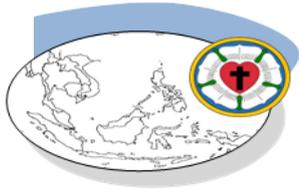
halls of STS these past few weeks.

Two of the biggest issues that have come out of these various forums for discussing Lutheran theology have been the role of the Holy Spirit in Lutheran theology and the theological understanding of the aim of a sermon. These two themes seem to be of particular relevance within the Sabah context. I have the sense that many of the students were surprised how central the Holy Spirit is to Large Catechism, and many found great inspiration in Luther's description of the meaning of the 3rd Article of the Creed in the Small Catechism. This may be a topic for greater future consideration in LSC events. The role of the distinction between law and gospel in preaching, meanwhile, was already a major theme for this year. As other articles in the newsletter will explain more fully, we have begun a quarterly preaching newsletter from the LSC to help pastors in their preparations for a law/gospel sermon, and in July Rev. Graham Harms will be leading a seminar on preaching with the BCCM-BM pastors. Continued focus on these two areas, I suspect, would be of great value to the churches in Malaysia and Singapore. Eric Trozzo

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## Preaching Newsletter



The new LSC preaching newsletter, Pathways to Preaching or Laluan Berkhutbah, was launched in March. The newsletter provides ideas to help preachers with sermon preparation. Each issue considers two themes and a biblical passage related to that theme. The passage is then considered through asking three questions: how is God's law known to us in this passage? how is God's grace known to us in this passage? what transformation does God bring through this passage? A theological reflection on the topics then concludes the discussion of the theme. The first issue contained the themes "God's Promises" and "Crucifixion." The second issue turns to the themes of "Doubt" and "The Trinity." The newsletter will be issued quarterly in English and BM to the five Lutheran churches of Malaysia and Singapore. It is edited by Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo.



## Dr. Eric's Travels

Due to the requirements of his visa, Dr. Eric Trozzo needed to spend three months outside of Malaysia, from September-December 2015. He used this time to deepen the LSC's connections outside the country. Most of his time away was spent visiting India and the Lutheran Churches there. He gave the Reformation Day lecture in Chennai at Gurukul Lutheran Theological Seminary and Research Centre and spoke with the

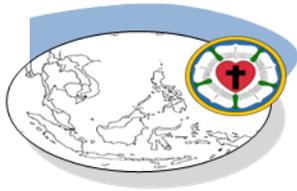
staff of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India about Martin Luther. He also brought greetings to the 150th Anniversary Celebration of the South Andhra Lutheran Church. While out of Malaysia, Dr. Trozzo also visited Australia. He spoke at Australian Lutheran College about the Sabah churches, as well as at two congregations in Queensland that have ties to Sabah. While programs within Ma-

laysia needed to be scaled back during this absence, this time away allowed a chance to focus on enhancing the LSC's role in the regional networking of Lutheran churches, which is also part of LSC's function.

*"Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times."*  
Martin Luther



**FAITH**  
is like Wi-Fi,  
it's invisible but  
it has the power  
to connect you to  
what you need.



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### Introduction to Martin Luther's Theology



In April, LSC held a seminar with the BCCM-English pastors. The seminar lasted two days, covering some of the basic elements of Lutheran theology. There were fifteen participants. Dr. Eric Trozzo and Dr. Bill Russell led the sessions. Topics included: Distinguishing Law and Gospel, Two-Kingdoms Thinking, Theology of the Cross, and Sacramental Theology. There was plenty of lively conversation on topics such as the church's role in dealing with social issues and the details of communion practices.

### Contemporary Relevance of the Lutheran Confessions

While in Malaysia, Dr. Russell also spent time with the Lutheran Church in Malaysia. He led a two-day continuing education event, speaking about the continued relevance of the Lutheran Confessions for the church today. He also visited two congregations to bring greetings and have discussion.



Dr. Bill Russell with seminar participants in Kuala Lumpur



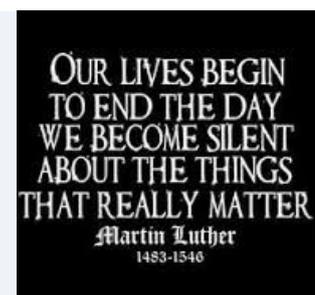
Dr. Russell at the Lutheran Church of Malaysia's Lutheran Centre in KL

### Resources

We continue to produce BM resources for studying Luther and Lutheran theology. New resources now available include: The second volume of Buku Konkord in Bahasa Indonesia is now available in digital form upon request. This volume of the Lutheran confessional writ-

ings includes the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord. The first volume was printed three years ago; this volume completes the set and includes the index for both volumes.

Translations of several of Luther's writings were prepared for the Lutheran





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### Resources continue...

Identity class. The writings include the Heidelberg Disputation, How Christians are to Regard Moses, A Brief Explanation of What to Look for and Expect in the Gospel, and Two Kinds of Righteousness. For now, these translations are only available for classroom use, but hopefully it will be possible in the future to make them more widely available.

We still have many copies of the Small Catechism in BM available. Please contact the LSC office if you are interested.

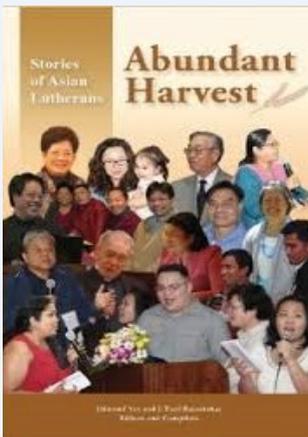
In English, we still have copies of Introduction to Lutheran Ethics available. This book is a compilation of presentations on ethics topics from previous LSC seminars.

The LSC office can also help direct those looking for Chinese language recourses.

### Book Spotlight

One of the recent additions to the LSC library is *Abundant Harvest: Stories of Asian Lutherans* (Lutheran University Press, 2012). The book seeks to give a “people’s history” of Asian Lutheranism. That is, rather than telling all of the details of the history of Lutheranism in Asia, it focuses on telling the stories of indigenous Lutheran leaders from Asia, many of

whom are likely to be familiar to readers. Lutherans in the Asian diaspora are also considered. The book is accessible in its writing style and gives a good portrait of the range of Lutheran expressions across Asia. It is a helpful addition in recognizing Asian Lutheranism as a living and faithful community rather than focusing solely on institutional structures.



Abundant Harvest

### Upcoming Visiting Lecturers

LSC will welcome two more visiting lecturers this year.

In July, Rev. Graham Harms will come from the Lutheran Church of Australia. Rev. Harms is no stranger to STS or the LSC. He is a former faculty member at STS and more recently has taken part in several LSC seminars. Most recently, last year he spoke about Luther’s interpretation of Galatians. This year, he will lead a seminar with BCCM-BM on Saturday, July 16 at the Lutheran Study Centre. The

topic will be “The Bible and Preaching,” where he will discuss the Lutheran understanding of Law and Gospel in a sermon.

In October, Dr. Uwe Hummel from Mission 21 will be visiting. He currently teaches at STT Banjarmasin in Indonesia. He will lead seminars and guided studies in Bahasa on Reformation ecclesiology and its relevance to contemporary Southeast Asia.

We look forward to the contributions both will bring.