



Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries

Proclaiming Liberty in Christ in the City

NEWSLETTER | LENT 2017

Temptation: Now

By Rev Robert Kieselowsky
Executive Director



The impatience of a toddler can lead to remarkable moments. “I want a banana.” “We don’t have a banana.” “But I want a banana,” she retorts with confidence that somehow her wish will magically make the banana appear.

Now. I want it now.

Adults are not much better at resisting the idea that we deserve now what we’ve been promised.

The Lenten season began with the church reading together the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness, fasting and finally being tempted by the devil (Matt 4, Mark 1, Luke 4). The devil repeats the same question he has been asking for all ages: “Don’t you want it now?” Jesus faces the temptation to take prematurely what the Father will give Him after His passion and resurrection.

You are hungry, Jesus. Don’t you want bread now?
Your Father will send angels to attend you. Jump and get their help now.
You will reign over all things. Worship me and you can rule now.

In fact, after Christ’s resurrection, the Father does send angels to attend and Jesus does ascend to the place of authority over all the nations of the world. But these things come in God’s time and according to His good pleasure.

Although Jesus is God incarnate, He does not attempt

to reply to the devil with innovative ideas. Instead, Christ quotes God’s Word, the words His mother spoke to Him when He was a child from the book of Deuteronomy. He drew strength in the face of this tremendous test from the words of Scripture.

Working in the city, the temptation is to want results now. We want full pews now. We want an ideal worship space now. We want programs now. But these things are not guaranteed now, and it’s easy to fall into despair when they do not materialize.

Instead, we have been given God’s Word to proclaim. Like Jesus, we need to embrace the message of salvation freely given according to God’s good pleasure.

In Philadelphia, a number of churches have closed and been renovated into condos. Churches that remain open drift from Christian teaching to accommodate the culture around us, emphasizing social justice and inclusion over the proclamation that Christ was crucified and rose again for the forgiveness of sins.

But I have recently had coffee with two different men who are seeking churches that hold fast to the Word of God even under the pressure of culture to bend. The Lutheran teaching of God’s Word presents a clear message in which people can find liberty in Christ from the devil, the world, and their own sinful natures.

Please partner with us in the city to proclaim His Word to all people and to celebrate the forgiveness of sins.

It’s what we have now.



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Vicarious

By Vicar Jacob Benson



While introducing myself to people throughout this year, I commonly hear, “Nice to meet you, Victor.” I have a well-rehearsed response: “Well, actually it’s Vicar,” after which I proceed to explain I am still in seminary, currently on my practical-internship year, and am not ordained. I work under and in the stead of the pastor—vicar, from the word vicarious.

I cherish this title.

To be ‘vicarious,’ to be the ‘stand-in’ for the pastor, is no easy task. It may mean that I’m not culpable for much, but it also means that I need to be ever-mindful to speak and act in a way that always reflects what my supervising pastor would say or do. This forces me to die to myself and to my own ego. I may strongly feel as though a particular point should be in a sermon, but if my pastor disagrees, I follow his guidance.

But I don’t see myself as any lesser in God’s eyes because of my subordination to the pastor; rather being under authority is the perfect way – the only way – to prepare for the Office of the Holy Ministry. Pastors must, in all they say and do, be mindful of how scripture speaks of prayer, of loving the neighbor, of obeying God. Pastors must be mindful of what Christ said and did, so that when they stand and speak “In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ,” they do so in a way that gives proper honor to our Lord.

Vicarage is not merely a box to check during one’s seminary education in preparation for the Office of Holy Ministry. It is rather a crucial step in the journey of being formed into a pastor, of being formed into the image of the One who sends ministers to His Church. Thanks be to God for this wonderful practice of our Church. And thanks be to God for the excellent example I have seen on vicarage of Pastor Kieselowsky, who patiently teaches and demonstrates to me all the virtues he has cultivated during his ministry.

NOTE: Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries has submitted the necessary paperwork to the district to request a vicar for the 2017-18 academic year. **PLM is currently raising \$12,000 to cover the housing expenses of the vicar for one year.** Please consider giving to support urban vicar training.



(above) Zachary and Vicar Benson attend a seminar at the LCMS-U conference in January. (right) Sarah, Ciara, Zachary, and Vicar met with Rev Dr Hardy, Bishop of the English District.



LCMS-U Conference

A group of young people who regularly attend Logos Lutheran in Philadelphia took a road trip to Washington, D.C. in January in order to attend the LCMS-U conference. The Campus Ministry division of Synod established LCMS-U to help connect students during their years at college.

It was encouraging for the group to meet other Lutheran college students from around the nation, to interact with pastors and to worship together.

March for Life

The group of young adults that has been meeting for weekly Bible study with Vicar Benson drove to Washington D.C. for Divine Service and the National March for Life at the end of January.

The group marched with other English District congregations and Lutherans for Life. Participants marching with the LCMS carried large photos and signs promoting #eyesofflife, a hashtag created for this year’s march.



It was invigorating to see hundreds of thousands of people standing in solidarity to declare that we must protect the sanctity of life from conception to natural death.

New Partnership with Alpha Care



Alpha Care's mobile labs allow registered nurses to take testing services and wellness visits to women throughout the city. Outfitted with ultrasound machines, lab tests for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and basic nursing equipment, these vans are mini-clinics on wheels.

In February, Pastor Kieselowsky met with Karen Hess, the director of Alpha Care in Philadelphia, and toured one of the its new mobile lab units.

Alpha Care provides prenatal counseling and care, testing, and parental support services. As they are renovating office space at a property adjacent to a former abortion clinic, Alpha Care has put two mobile labs on the streets of Philadelphia. Registered nurses drive the mobile labs to various neighborhoods in the city to take Alpha Care pregnancy testing and counseling services to people in need.

Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries is talking with Alpha Care about parking one of its mobile lab units on PLM's property in northeast Philadelphia. A great deal of foot traffic and hundreds of high school students pass the property each day.

Shepherd of the City

Saints gathered for services at Shepherd on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.



Christmas service at Shepherd

In January, a group of volunteers arrived for a service event sponsored by LCMS-U. They cleared an area to increase heat output from radiators, took down large mirrors in the undercroft, and repainted parts of the wall. In addition, the group cleaned the sanctuary and cleared snow. We are grateful for the time they spent with us and the help they provided.

Volunteers from Texas and New Mexico help paint and clean at Shepherd in January.



Proclaiming Liberty in Christ to the City

Please contribute today the work of Christ in Philadelphia. Return this form with your check in the envelope provided. Make checks payable to **Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries**.

Please ensure we have your correct contact information.

Name _____
 Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Email address: _____ (optional)

Donate online at phillyministries.org

Your contribution to Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. You will receive a letter as a tax receipt. PLM is a Registered Service Organization (RSO) of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

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Rev Kieselowsky
tours an Alpha
Care mobile lab.
*See inside for more
information.*



First service at
Logos Lutheran in
Center City with
the Lord's Supper.



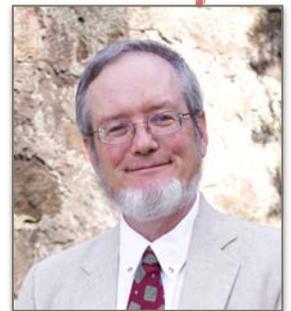
A group of young
people who
regularly attend
Logos Lutheran in
Center City gather
at the Kieselowsky
home to watch the
Super Bowl.



Upcoming Reformation Event

Dr. Phillip Cary

*Professor of Philosophy at Eastern
University; author, lecturer, blogger*



Saturday, October 21, 2017

1:00pm-5:00pm

628 North Broad Street

Philadelphia

Dr. Cary will present a seminar on the life and theology of Martin Luther. This is part of PLM's celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.