



## IS THIS THE END OF THE WORLD?

I don't think anyone has asked me this question in the past: "Is this the end of the world?" But in a period of several months, I have received at least a half dozen of those questions, mostly during the days when the smoke and fog was so thick that the sun was a dim red and the streetlights stayed on all day in our part of town. That was certainly weird, but the end of the world didn't happen, and our skies and air quality are back to normal for this time of year.

Still, it is a good question. The disciples of Jesus asked him somewhat the same question when he predicted the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. They asked him, "When will this happen? What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3). They thought the temple would be destroyed at the end of the world, so his answer to their question has two parts. The distinction between the two parts is clearer in Luke's account. Luke 21:1-19 and Luke 21:24b-36 predict the end of the world. Luke 21:20-24a, the middle part of the discourse, predict the end of the Jerusalem temple. Parallel accounts are found in Matthew 24 and Mark 13.

In Luke 21, Jesus began his answer by telling the disciples what are NOT signs of the end of the world: false Messiahs (v. 8), false prophets (v. 8), wars (v. 9), revolutions (like the American and Russian revolutions; v. 9), nation rising against nation (v. 10), kingdom rising against kingdom (v. 10), great earthquakes (like the 1906 and 1989 Bay Area quakes; v. 11), deadly famines in various places (v. 11), deadly plagues in various places (like the 1918 Spanish Flu and the 2020 CoViD virus; v. 11), fearful events (like the 2020 end-of-summer fires on the West Coast; v. 11), great signs in the skies

and outer space (v. 11), and the persecution of Christians (like what is happening again in China, Nigeria and other places; vv. 12-19). None of these are specific signs of the end of the world, just general reminders that Jesus will come back someday.

Then, in Luke 21:24, Jesus did give one specific sign: “Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” The first part of this sentence was fulfilled in 70 A.D. with the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman (i.e., Gentile) armies. The city was conquered again by the Arabian Muslims (also Gentiles) in 638 A.D., and in spite of sporadic Crusader (also Gentile) control, it remained under Muslim (i.e., Gentile) control until 1967 A.D., when the state of Israel conquered Jerusalem in the Six-Day War. It should be noted that Israel’s possession of Jerusalem is disputed by the United Nations, which sees it as part of the Palestinian state.

The year 1967 does offer a specific sign that has been fulfilled **if** the people and places indicated by Luke 21:24 are to be understood literally. However, Jesus did not say in Luke 21:24 that there will be a general conversion of the Jews, or that believers will take possession of the kingdoms of this world. Nor did Jesus or the apostles say that anywhere else in the Bible (see Augsburg Confession, Article XVII; on the origin of these millennial errors, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_Zionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Zionism) ) In any event, Jesus did not say that the end of the world would come if/when the Jews reconquered Jerusalem (see Wilhelm Arndt, *Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to St. Luke* [St. Louis: CPH, 1956], 422).

Jesus gave another specific sign in the parallel passage, Matthew 24:14, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” Many Christians have pointed to the universal spread of the Gospel by the end of the twentieth century as a fulfillment of this prophecy. But if Jesus’ meaning of “will be

preached” means that every nation and every people will have Christian churches with preachers preaching every Sunday, then we are far from that goal. Then we cannot say that this prediction has been fulfilled.

Will there be omens that will warn unbelievers and give them time to repent? Jesus said, in so many words: “No.” He said: “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and **they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came** and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:37-39).

Paul repeated this point when he said that the “day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2). Peter repeated the same phrase (2 Peter 3:10). Noah and his family knew what would happen in advance, of course, but that is because they believed the Word of God. Their faith in God’s Word saved them. The unbelief of the other people is what condemned them to a watery grave. In the same way, the unbelief of many people in the world will cause them to be blind to the signs that Jesus gives.

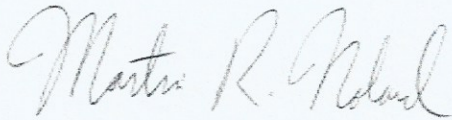
Will Christians be able to know about Christ’s return shortly before he returns? Martin Luther wrote: “There must then be some, at least, who do recognize the signs, and lift up their heads and wait for their redemption, although they do not really know on what day that will come” (see Martin Luther, *Sermons of Martin Luther*, 8 vols., ed. Lenker [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989], 1:62).

The only specific signs that Jesus offered are here: “There will be signs in the sun, moon, and planets/stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time, they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud.” (Luke

21:25-27). Jesus directs our eyes to outer space, where there will be changes in the sun, moon, planets, and stars. He directs our ears to the oceans and seas, in which there will be roaring (Greek, ἤχους, echous; English, “strange sounds”) and unnatural tossing of waves. The natural world will be changing, its order will be upset, and people will be deathly afraid of that.

But **you** should not be afraid when that happens! Jesus finished this discourse by saying: “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28). In other words, that will not be a time for believers to be fearful or sad, but to rejoice, sing, and shout for gladness. Why would believers be afraid? Our redemption will be drawing near, in which we will be finally be released from the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, and we will join the saints and all the angels in everlasting glory, light, and bliss. That is not a story of gloom and doom, but of joy and gladness which has no end!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martin R. Noland". The ink is a light brown or grey color.

Pastor Martin R. Noland  
Grace Lutheran Church, San Mateo, CA

## FROM THE DESKTOP OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of Grace Lutheran Church in San Mateo, California,

With the news that the State has relaxed the restriction on assembling for worship, we had notices go out to all members announcing the re-opening on Sept. 27th. You should know that our own Health Officer here in San Mateo County did not agree with the last suspension of businesses and churches, and even apologized to us for the state's restriction which he does not agree with. Please read the Health Statement by Dr. Scott Morrow that was posted on September 21, 2020. You can view that by checking here: [September 21, 2020 Health Officer Statement](#) which is found on the San Mateo County Health Department website. I agree with him completely.

Ever since the first official Health Order on March 13th that caused our day school to teach remotely, our Pastor has kept the Elders and Council up to date every week. He has written very detailed letters with links so that you are aware of what was happening and he has consulted the Elders every step of the way. While only Pastor Noland has signed them, he has included the Elders who have been working continuously ever since to provide remote services to you. Since he writes the best letters, none of the Elders felt they needed to sign but he does speak for us all.

When the last order closing us down from worshipping indoors arrived at the end of July, the Elders started to work on video streaming services which are also being planned for Bible Class and possible outreach to the community. Throughout this period, no extra funds have been spent as Marty Udiches and Pastor Noland have used some of their own equipment to make that happen for you.

The Service of Prayer and Preaching, which we have been using during this last shutdown, has been a blessing as that brought the choir back on Saturdays to record the hymns and part of the liturgy. This Divine Service also gave the choir two new Canticles to learn. Marie Creciat played the organ pieces and Mrs. Miriam Hitzeman

accompanied the choir for practice and recording. Thank them both, please!

Though we have been basically locked out of the building to worship, we still are very able to continue to worship the Lord and receive his promises through these streaming services. You should all have a Lutheran Service Book at home as this hymnal was created with home worship in mind. The Lord is present among us in His Word. On Sunday, Sept. 27th, we resumed celebrating the Lord's Supper with Divine Service III in the careful way we have provided the inside worship service.

This has been quite a year for all of us. While many things in your life and mine were put on hold, most of us have been affected in various ways, including boredom and depression, and we are not used to being locked up for months. I know that I lost contact with my Elder Zone members as I had counted on seeing you in church every Sunday. My weakness is phone calling. I'm better in person and need to work on staying in better touch. Please accept my apologies if I have let you down in any way.

Respectfully,



George Melke

President - Grace Lutheran - San Mateo, CA

## THE INTROIT

The Introit is chanted by the choir every Sunday but you may be asking why? What is the importance of this part of our liturgy? To answer that, I will refer to a booklet out of print but so valuable to me, *The INTROITS for the CHURCH YEAR*, published by CPH in 1942. Some may notice that it is one year after the publication of the Lutheran Hymnal.

The Introduction to his booklet was written by Magister (Choirmaster) Dr. Walter E Buszin, at the request of the Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics. Professor Buszin retired in 1966 as Professor of Hymnology and Liturgics at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He was trained as a theologian and musician and was much more. He was a hymnologist, liturgiologist, a writer, a teacher, a preacher, a husband and father, a church organist and a choir director. Our member Mrs. Miriam Hitzeman attended a class of his in 1946 when he was serving at the Concordia Teachers College at River Forest. She is still playing today at age 95.

The Introit was among the first elements of the liturgy dropped in the eras dominated by an antiliturgical spirit. In the era of Pietism it was regarded as superfluous, and the Rationalists of the 18th and 19th centuries saw as little need for Introits as they did for other constituent parts of the Christian liturgy.

Introits have been chanted in the Christian Church ever since the early centuries of her existence. They took the place of the Psalms of the Old Testament Scriptures and our current form was in use in 575 A.D.

The Introit marks the beginning of the church service proper. The word *Introit* mean *entrance*, so called because it was chanted while the officiating clergyman entered the chancel and took his place before the altar. This implies, of course, that what preceded the Introit (Prelude, Hymn of Invocation, Lesser Confessions) was regarded as being Introductory and preparatory in character. The pastor entered the chancel after the Declaration of Grace had been made to the assembled congregation.

The Introit consists of three parts: the Antiphon, a Psalm verse, and the Gloria Patri. From a liturgical point of view, the Antiphon is the most important part of the Introit, since from it sounds forth the keynote of the day. F.R. Webber wrote that 'it is bad form not to repeat the Antiphon after the Gloria Patri'. Friedrich Lochner, a trustworthy and well-informed authority, agreed that this short passage of Scripture proclaims not only the significance of the day, but also the cardinal truth concerning eternal salvations which is to be stressed on the particular day of worship. (to be continued next month)

George Melke - Music and Choir Director, Grace Lutheran Church San Mateo.



# October 2020 Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Martin Semmler
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Julia Semmler	Paul-Stacey Soals					
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Marcus Brownlee					
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## Prayer Page

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." ~Galatians 6:10

Egon Adam	Charlotte Custino	Donald Iocco	Patty O'Donnell	Gina Tuft
Bella Archer	Robert Doody	Heather Iocco	Elizabeth O'Donnell	Mark Tuft
Marilyn Baillie	Natalie Dubbel	John Iocco	Gil Ramirez	Sue Tuft
Patricia Bailey	Bob Egan	Judy Iocco	Kathleen Ramirez	Martin Udishes
Richard Bailey	Maria Eggert	Ko Ishikawa	Fred Robinson	Leann Udishes
Rev. Frank Balgeman	Doris Emery	Mariko Ishikawa	Robert Robinson	Christine Ullrich
Valerie Balgeman	Bill Eng	Yuzo Ishikawa	Akram Saber	Zachary Ullrich
Chandler Balgeman	Sara Eppler	Lance Johnson	Doreen Johnson	Octavian Vasilescu
Mike Bannister	Carly Eppler	Doreen Johnson	Katarina Johnson	Diana Vasilescu
Tami Bannister	Larry Franquez	John Kilcullen	John Kilcullen	Flora Lisa Vasilescu
Nathanael Bannister	Shelly Franquez	Nick Franquez	Stefanie Kilcullen	Joan Weckerle
Mike Beebe	Chad Franquez	Chad Franquez	Katie Kilcullen	Randy Wimmer
Jolene Beebe	Pam Frisella	Pam Frisella	James Kilcullen	Caden Young
Kay Bell, III	Shirley Gangelhoff	Shirley Gangelhoff	Michael Kilcullen	Rebecca Young
Kay Bell, Jr.	Rev. Glendon Genthner	Rev. Glendon Genthner	Barbara Kilpatrick	Chandler Young
Nathanael Bell	Brooke Genthner	Brooke Genthner	Bill Koester	Logan Young
Adele Bergstrom	Alex Gomez	Alex Gomez	Faye Koester	Rowan Young
William Bethke	Anjanette Gomez	Anjanette Gomez	Ryan Koester	Eugene Zahnow
Susan Bethke	Angelique Gomez	Angelique Gomez	Amanda Koester	Judy Zahnow
Alice Boerschinger	James Graziano	James Graziano	Glenn McEnroe	Charles Zimbelman
John Bordy	Roger Guse	Roger Guse	Alison McEnroe	Ethan Smith
Ellen Bordy	Dan Hahn	Dan Hahn	Alexis McEnroe	Dave Smoot
Judy Boyd	Lori Hahn	Lori Hahn	Fred McKenna	Barb Smoot
Fred Brauer	Abby Hahn	Abby Hahn	Marilyn McKenna	Paul Soals
Karla Brauer	Arthur Hayame	Arthur Hayame	Steve McLaughlin	Stacey Soals
Jordyn Brauer	Barbara Hayame	Barbara Hayame	Heather McLaughlin	Jacquelin Soals
Justin Brauer	Tim Hayame	Tim Hayame	Sandra Means	Dimitry Spencer
Klayton Brauer	Darren Hayame	Darren Hayame	George Melke	Tamaray Starling
Paul Brownlee	Joy Hayame	Joy Hayame	Molly Munson	Darryl Sterner
Lois Brownlee	Hannah Hayame	Hannah Hayame	Caroline Nagy	Sandra Sterner
Marcus Brownlee	Miriam Hitzeman	Miriam Hitzeman	Pamela Nelson	Michelle Sterner
Scott Brownlee	Richard Hoffmeister	Richard Hoffmeister	Rev. Martin Noland	Chris Strom
Katherine Brownlee	Theresa Mui	Theresa Mui	Karla Noland	Brett Toensing
Robert Crews	Robert Innes	Robert Innes	Renee Noland	Anne-Marie Toensing
Veronica Crews	Shirley Innes	Shirley Innes	Heidi Noland	Brooke Toensing
Clara Crews	Michael Innes	Michael Innes	Doug O'Donnell	Ryan Toensing
Celeste Crews				Hans Tuft