

December 2020

Dear Friends,

“And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness. ¹Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. ²The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. ³Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. ⁴For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. ⁵For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. ⁶For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”
Isaiah 8:22-9:7

At the end of the eight chapter of the book of Isaiah, the prophet certainly paints a gloomy picture of the situation confronting the nation of Judah. The people have turned away from their God, a blatant refusal of His blessing of protection and prosperity. Now they face almost certain destruction at the hands of their enemies. It was indeed a dark time for God’s people.

This past year has been a difficult year for our nation as well. We have seen the effects of a serious global pandemic, a devastating shutdown of our economy, chaotic civil unrest in our cities and a tumultuous presidential election. The darkness seems to surround us as well.

It is easy to lose hope when the circumstances seem so desperate. The nation of Judah mistakenly thought that God had forsaken them, when in fact, they had forsaken Him. The truth of the matter is this: *God never forsakes His people.* The prophet Isaiah begins the ninth chapter with the marvelous word *“Nevertheless.”* Darkness surrounds the nation of Judah, *nevertheless “upon them hath the light shined.”* Enemies of Judah surround God’s people, *nevertheless, “unto us a child is born.”* Likewise, the enemy of sin threatens to destroy us, *nevertheless* as the angel tells the shepherds *“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:1-11* The darkness of death may surround us, *nevertheless* the Light of Life, who swallows up death in victory still shines upon us. The way we celebrate Christmas this year may be different, but the message is still the same. *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”* As the hymnwriter says it so well:

*God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan’s pow’r when we were gone astray
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy!*

Thank you all for your continued support of the seminary. We pray that the Lord will richly bless you and your families with all the joys of Christmas this season.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Chuck Bylkas



Donations Received

In memory of Elmer Ylinimei

From Pastor Ernest Bylkas III & family
Hazel Yliniemi
Gene & Arlene Silkowski
Audrey Krutzig
Verna Hendrickson
Norma Nominelli

In memory of Joan Niemela

From Norma Nominelli

In memory of Ernest Bylkas Jr.

From Pastor Ernest Bylkas III & family

In memory of Peter Antioho

From Gene & Arlene Silkowski

In memory of Nancy Helmes

From Alvar Helmes

In memory of Edwin Puumala

From Luella Puumala

In memory of Kathleen Forsman

From Ernest Bylkas III & family



MATCHING FUNDS PROGRAM

Our matching fund program continues through December 31, 2020. We are seeking additional donations above and beyond normal giving that would be matched dollar for dollar within this program up to \$20,000. If you are able to contribute to this program, please earmark your contribution “matching funds” in the memo section of your check.

Your continued support of the seminary is deeply appreciated and enables us to continue to grow as a seminary and carry on the work of teaching and preparing our students for ministry. God bless you again for your generosity!

Looking ahead to the Spring semester 2021...

The following classes will be offered in the Spring semester beginning January 18: History of the Ancient Church, The Pastoral Counselor, Principles of Biblical Interpretation, and Old Testament Introduction. The Gospel of Luke will be taught on Monday nights at 7PM via Zoom.



If you are interested in taking a class, please email cilseminary@ilseminary.com or call 906-482-3337.



*~From the students and staff ~
of the Inter-Lutheran Theological Seminary*

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CHOICE DOLLARS DETAILS: Eligible clients with membership can recommend where Thrivent distributes some of its charitable grant funds. These recommendations are shared by directing Choice Dollars to enrolled nonprofit organizations, including churches.

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Eligibility is determined monthly and reevaluated on an annual basis.

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HERE'S ANOTHER WAY YOU CAN HELP THE SEMINARY

Several years ago, the Seminary board of directors established the Inter-Lutheran Seminary Endowment Fund. Funds contributed to the endowment are not used for current day to day operations. Only the annual earnings of the endowment will be used for the seminary's needs thereby ensuring the continued existence of this funding source. This is the preferred method used by many non-profit entities, especially ongoing religiously focused organizations such as seminaries.

While this is an excellent strategy, it has proven a challenge for us to actually meet the minimum funding requirements. Until now, the fund has existed but remained unfunded. By the Lord's grace we have been blessed with a large contribution to fund the Inter-Lutheran Seminary Endowment Fund. We would love to build on this generous contribution to grow our endowment into a major source of ongoing seminary support.

Although the seminary still needs the financial ongoing regular contributions of our supporters, please consider the endowment fund for your planned giving needs. The seminary has chosen the InFaith Community Endowment Fund (the renamed Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation) to administer our endowment fund. They will provide experienced legal advice to help guide you with any contribution questions done through estate planning in addition to lump sum contributions, IRAs, property and securities. For more additional information, please contact Kirk Otto, Jr. at (715) 294-4343 or Cheryl Hendrickson at (906) 482-3337.