



# Inter-Lutheran Theological Seminary

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Dear Friends,

*“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. <sup>19</sup> And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. <sup>20</sup> And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. <sup>21</sup> And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. <sup>22</sup> And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”* **Matthew 4:17-22**

The season of Epiphany is all about the manifestation of Jesus Christ, not just to the people of Israel, but to all people. In this passage from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus makes Himself known to His disciples, with the intent that they, in turn will make Him known. At Jesus' bidding, Peter, Andrew, James and John leave their nets to follow Him. Why would these men do such a thing? What would compel them to forsake their way of life, and become disciples of someone they barely knew?

Later on, Jesus makes it clear to His disciples that following Him would not be easy. *“...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”* **Matthew 16:24-25** Jesus tells us that merely sacrificing part of our lives for the sake of the Gospel is not enough. Christ says that we must yield everything. As the German theologian and pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it, *“When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.”*

Because we are weak according to the flesh, we cannot respond to such a call by our own strength. Sin causes us to believe that the price of following Jesus is too great; that we must cling to our life in this world at all costs. But once again God intervenes, calling us to repentance; turning us away from the world and bringing us back to the Cross. As we consider how Christ shed His blood to give us life and salvation, our meager sacrifice is insignificant.

It is indeed God's wonderful grace that makes discipleship possible. Bonhoeffer says it well *“Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: “ye were bought at a price,” and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.”*

May God grant us grace to yield our lives, so that we might discover the true life we have in Christ Jesus. May Christ continue to make Himself known to us, so that we too might make Him known.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Chuck Bylka



*Donations Received...*



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## **Seminary Service Schedule 7 p.m.**

### **February**

9<sup>th</sup> – Charles Jousma @ Seminary  
16<sup>th</sup> – Josh Bergstedt @ Range ALC  
23<sup>rd</sup> – Nick Kandoll @ Laurium ALC

### **March**

2<sup>nd</sup> – Josh Bergstedt @ Seminary  
9<sup>th</sup> – Charles Jousma @ Zion Lutheran  
16<sup>th</sup> – Nick Kandoll @ Laurium ALC  
23<sup>rd</sup> – Charles Jousma @ Range ALC  
30<sup>th</sup> – Josh Bergstedt @ Seminary

### **April**

6<sup>th</sup> – Charles Jousma @ Laurium  
13<sup>th</sup> – Nick Kandoll @ Seminary  
20<sup>th</sup> – No Service - Easter  
27<sup>th</sup> – Josh Bergstedt @ Range ALC

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