

Out of my distress I called on the LORD;

The LORD answered me and set me in a broad place.

With the LORD on my side I do not fear.

What can mortals do to me?

The LORD is on my side to help me;

I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in mortals.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

—Ps. 118.5-9 (NRSV)



www.christianity.org.uk

If God Himself be for me,

I may a host defy;

For when I pray, before me

My foes, confounded, fly.

If Christ, my head and master,

Befriend me from above,

What foe or what disaster

Can drive me from His love?

—*If God Himself Be for Me*,
stz. 1
Lutheran Service Book #724

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Ist Gott für uns, wer kann wider uns sein? (Lutherbibel 1984)

If God is for us, who can be against us? (personal translation)

—Rom. 8.31

Although life with God entirely depends upon things “outside of us” (“*extranous*” in Latin)—specifically, the person and saving work of Christ Jesus in His suffering and death on our behalf, don’t think for one second that this means that one must look at the things of God “from the outside in.” Quite the contrary! The Christian—the one who dwells “in Christ,” “in the Spirit” by baptism—looks at the things of God (and of the world, for that matter) “from the inside out,” that is, with the perspective of Christ, with the mind of Christ.

This means that the Christian views this world with a “baptismal lens.” It sees this world as one big mess that God in Christ is putting to death in every chaotic scenario, in every cause of grief. It sees in every instance of corruption in this world a God-made niche where hope brims. It basks in the glow of anticipation with every groan that rattles the ears—itsself a sign that redemption is close at hand.

All of which means that, even as the Christian laments such bondage to decay, even as the Christian her/himself inescapably participates in its suffering, s/he never lives in despair but ever in hope. The Christian never cowers but carries on in complete confidence, knowing that the things around her/him are truly fulfilling their calling, truly made right, truly glorified.

Why? Because that’s how Jesus, the one who, by His Resurrection, holds the power over death itself, sees things, and that’s how he, who holds the power over our death, brings us to see things. And if He is for us (and He is), there isn’t anything—from God or from this world—that stands against us.

Afflictions . . . are themselves signs to which God has added promises.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession,
XIII: The Number and Use of the Sacraments
(Kolb/Wengert, 221.17)





Let Us Pray . . .

- For an abundance of Christian confidence in struggle and adversity
- For the advance of the Gospel and Christian truth throughout the world
- For truthful and courageous world leaders
- For genuine global justice and consequential global calm
- For God's continued blessing in the Lukaskirche negotiations and planning in evangelization
- For an increase in health



Nikolaikirche, Leipzig, Germany

Meine gegenwärtige Beschäftigung

Upon returning from my latest Russian tour in January, I've been "hunkering down," so to speak, in an attempt to finalize various action plans for *Lukaskirche* prior to our "opening day" on Easter Monday. I'm happy to say that I've finalized my *Lukaskirche* multi-year plan, and will submit it to our congregational elders at their next meeting. Currently, I'm working to finalize various protocols for musical events and hospitality, as well as for advertising in Leipzig, in Saxony, and even throughout Germany.

Concurrently, I've 1) presided once over Holy Communion, 2) preached once, and 3) have assisted with the upcoming *Sängerfest* for the SELK's Eastern District, which, I'm proud to say, is also happening in *Lukaskirche*. I've also 4) participated in further discussions concerning the Wittenberg Project Chapel, in which I lend my insight where pertinent, and 5) engaged in inquires for additional concerts in *Lukaskirche*, even in this current year! God is giving opportunities, and I get to see what's in store!

Elizabeth's Ecke

I am working hard on prepping as much as possible before I go on maternity leave sometime when Baby shows up in April. This means trying to write some things ahead, especially devotions. Once again, my supervisor, Rick Steenbock, and I are working on a new *Season in Song* series...for Easter! I will need to have them all ready to go, with accompanying devotions, since they will run on the 7 Wednesdays following the 7 Sundays of Easter. Some of the hymns that have been chosen include "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands" and "I Know that My Redeemer Lives". So keep an eye open for those! I also had an article published in *The Reporter Online* concerning an arson fire in a sister church in England. You can read more about it [here](#). Please keep the congregation of St. Timothy's, Sunderland, in your prayers.

We are in the midst of enjoying having Thomas with us during Winter School break. Matthias is overjoyed to have big brother at home. Thomas already built him a huge train formation, and they spend hours on it each day. Baby's 32 week ultrasound looked good, and the little one is still not too big. Thomas was able to come along and see it, so that was really exciting for him.

May God in Christ through the Spirit bless you now and forever.

Christopher & Elizabeth

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