

I was born 48 years ago in Ottawa, Canada's capital. I was baptized in the Lutheran Church a month after my birth, and was raised in her confession, being confirmed in it at the age of 14. During my teenage years, however, I was heavily influenced by outside youth movements that brought great struggle into my spiritual life. I fell into the error of believing that my faith life was more about my commitment to Christ than Christ's commitment to me. Although I remained in the Lutheran Church, these struggles left me weakened as I left home to go to University. University life continued the assault on my faith, as the truths that I had embraced from childhood were questioned and ridiculed.

The Lord alone in His great grace kept me through these difficult years. While I never abandoned God altogether, I certainly wandered from His ways. I was blessed, however, during this time to meet and marry my wife, Tammy. We returned to Ottawa after we graduated from University to look for work. From early childhood I had repeated thoughts about going to seminary to study to be a pastor. With a return to Church life in my home congregation these thoughts were revived, and I was finally convicted one day that there was no other direction for my life.

I applied and was accepted to Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario. At the seminary my mind and heart were more fully opened up to the truth of the Gospel and all that it meant for me. Here I also came to appreciate the sacramental life of the Church as the high point of God's gracious working out of salvation in my life. After four years of study and preparation I received my first call to an old country church in rural Ontario – Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church at Kurtzville.

Although I grew up in the city, I have truly enjoyed country life. My wife and I now have 4 children (2 boys and 2 girls) ranging in age from 19 to 9. We tend a large garden behind the parsonage and keep laying hens in the garage beside the house. I have also started an apiary with beehives in the back corner of the Church cemetery. I have learned how to milk a cow (although we don't have one of our own - yet!), run a chainsaw and split wood.

God has truly been good to me at Trinity, as through serving His people He has continued to open my mind and my heart to the deep riches He has given to us in His Son, Jesus Christ. As I have journeyed down the way of the cross with the faithful here, the Lord has helped me to understand the humble ways that He often chooses to spread His salvation in this world. As I have suffered alongside the Lord's children in their trials and struggles, I have come to know in a fuller way the true glories of Christ's cross.

Recently, I have been most richly blessed as these dear people have journeyed with me through my own personal struggles and trials. In March 2017 I suffered a sudden and near fatal stroke that left me with complete left side paralysis. The physical challenges, however, compared little to the challenges of the mind, which occurred when later, in early summer, I was suddenly overcome by a form of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) that often follows severe stroke. God in His mercy through the prayers of His people has restored my body and mind while working great wonders in my soul through this time of loving Fatherly discipline.

When Rev. Jacob Appel contacted me to find out if I'd be interested in joining you at Corpus Christi this summer, I smiled when he told me the topic for the conference. God always knows what we need and when we need it. I responded to him that perhaps a "good as dead man" was just the person to speak about "hope and the future". I've thoroughly enjoyed studying and pondering the topic and have personally benefited from it already. I look forward to sharing what the Lord has opened my eyes to

regarding Christian hope. I will count on your prayers that the Holy Spirit will continue to grace me with all that He wants to give to you this summer. God keep you all until we meet in Prague!