

Life Together

Volume 27, Issue 2

February 2020

Grace and peace to you,

On January 22nd I was the speaker for the second annual Kansas District Life Conference in Topeka. I began by asking how many believed we had a God-given “right to life.” Almost every person in the sanctuary rose their hand high into the air, confirming my suspicion. Then, I spent the next forty-five minutes challenging the very notion.

I knew this was dangerous. I know it’s still dangerous as I write it now. Rights are sacred for Americans, and to the pro-life movement the right to life is the most sacred of all. Rights are enshrined in our founding political documents and to question them is tantamount to treason. That is why many believe the right to life established in the Declaration of Independence is the key to outlawing abortion.

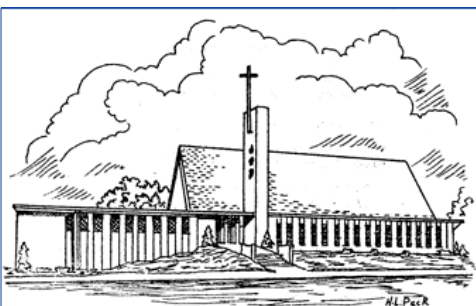
Yet I found that rights talk is not only unhelpful in the fight for the lives of the unborn but actually hurts both our campaign for life and our confession of faith. As one critic said, rights are what you argue when you have no argument left. As the Church, we should have plenty to say regarding life from the very Author of Life Himself. The fact that we can’t speak from His Word is of great concern and a great loss for the church *and* the world.

This is a conversation that I would like to begin having at St. Peter’s. As we continue to grow in God’s Word together, I pray we are able to touch on this most important topic of life. I didn’t quite get to flesh out my presentation as I would have liked, so I am hoping to finish it sometime within the coming weeks. There are several people who asked for a copy once I do. Many, pastors and laity alike, said that it led them to think differently about the topic than they had before. Perhaps that presentation can be a starting point for our conversation as well.

Ultimately, my desire is to see us grow together in our Christian witness and lead lives that forsake all else in the pursuit of pleasing God. May He give us His Spirit so that we are able to do just that. Amen.

In Christian love,

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Catechetical Corner

LESSONS FOR THE LIFE LONG LUTHERAN



The Augsburg Confession

Article IV Justification

You may have heard it said that the church stands or falls on the article of justification. They are to this of the Augsburg Confession, whether they realize it or not. Justify means “to declare righteous.” Sometimes we try an excuse something we have done through self-justification, but true justification only comes from God through His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Through the life He lived, Jesus satisfied God’s demand for obedience. He was truly without sin. He never had to justify Himself. He never transgressed God’s Law. This enabled Him to be the spotless Lamb of God who could take away the sin of the world by His own death. Only Jesus could act as the perfect substitute for the sin filled world and satisfy the wrath of God. For His sake, and His sake alone, we are justified before God.

Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. By death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight (Romans 3[:21-16] and 4[:5]).

If you recall, the Augsburg Confession was written to defend Lutherans as adherents of the true faith. If you were not Christian you had no citizenship, no legal protection. On Article I and III papalists, who defended the primacy of the Pope’s authority, had no disagreement, though there was some over original sin. (*Roman Catholicism didn’t exist until Council of Trent, 1545-1563, convened in response to the Reformation.*) Article IV, however, is where papalists began to greatly differ from the Lutherans.

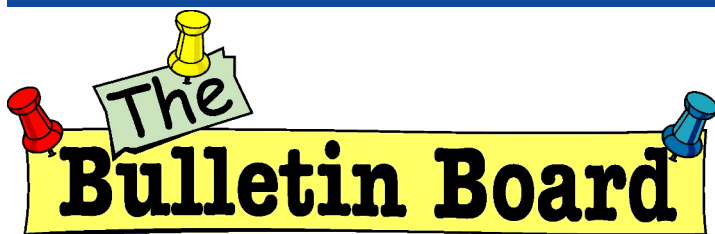
You’ve likely heard the mantra of the Reformation: salvation is “by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.” This is the heart of Article IV, yet the papalists assert that faith is only part of the picture. In the Council of Trent they assert that faith gives us the initial grace, which wipes our slate clean and lays a solid foundation, but then we are only justified as we continue to build upon that foundation with our good works.

When faith cooperates with good works, they grow and are still further justified[.]”

-Council of Trent

The Council of Trent codified their teachings into decrees and laws, called canons, establishing Roman Catholic doctrine. Canon IX of the Council of Trent declares, “If anyone says that the ungodly is justified by faith alone in such a way that he understands that nothing else is required which cooperates toward obtaining the grace of justification and that it is no way necessary for him to be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.” Canon X, XI, XII, and XXIV expand and

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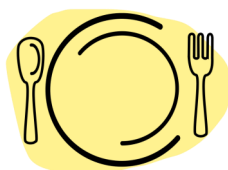
The Bulletin Board

The Month At A Glance

Sun, Feb 2nd, Board of Ed @ 1:00 PM,
 Super Bowl Watch Party @ 4:30 PM
 Wed, Feb 5th, Elders Meeting @ 7:30 PM
 Thurs, Feb 6th, CARE Team Training @ 6:00 PM
 Sun, Feb 9th, Youth Group @ 11:45 PM
 Thurs, Feb 13th, CARE Team Training @ 6:00 PM
 Sun, Feb 16th, Valentines Brunch @ 9:15 AM
 Tues, Feb 18th, Circuit Meeting @ Fort Scott
 Thurs, Feb 20th, CARE Team Training @ 6:00 PM
 Sun, Feb 23th, Women's Bible Study @ 3:00 PM
 Wed, Feb 26th, Ash Wednesday Service @ 6:00 PM
 Thurs, Feb 27th, Women's Bible Study @ 6:00 PM
 Sun, Mar 1st, Board of Ed @ 1:00 PM
 Wed, Mar 4th, Elders Meeting @ 7:30 PM

Midweek Menu

Feb 5 — Chicken & Noodles
 Feb 12 — Breakfast Casserole
 Feb 19 — Taco Bar
 Feb 26 — Lenten Supper



Shepherding Our Strays — CARE Team

We are nearing the competition of our CARE Team training. In these meetings we will define “straying” members and develop a Contact and Visitation Plan. This includes when and how our team will engage members. We will also define “strayed” members and develop strategies for reengaging them in our life around Word and Sacrament ministry. This includes discovering what has been keeping them away from church and seeing what we can do to

address their need. Please pray for our team as they try to help people find their way back to the Church!

RE:VITALITY
 LUTHERAN REVITALIZATION

Catechetical Corner—Continued from Page 2

clearly anathematize anyone who asserts salvation depends on Christ alone. To be “anathema” means to be cursed, damned, outside of Christ and His salvation. This is still the official doctrine of Roman Catholicism.

At this point it’s worth noting that Roman Catholic Doctrine, not Lutheran, asserts the human will must be involved in justification for someone to be saved. Thus, anyone arguing that it takes the cooperation of human will, including making a decision or saying a prayer, follows not in the spirit of the Reformation but are actually teaching in line with the teachings of Roman Catholicism. This is why Roman Catholicism has taken and continues to take a much harder line against Lutheranism than any other denomination.

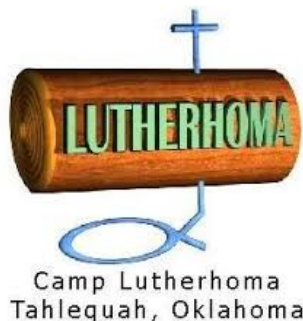
For Lutherans justification is and remains a passive gift, received through faith alone. In the Apology, meaning defense, of the Augsburg Confession, it is written, “They condemn us for teaching that ‘people obtain forgiveness of sins not because of their own merits, but freely for Christ’s sake, through faith in Christ.’” They continue on to share Scripture after Scripture in support, demonstrating that man is so full of sin that we are incapable of contributing even the smallest act toward our salvation.

If we are capable of contributing to our salvation, then we are not so utterly fallen as to need a Savior to live a perfectly obedient life in our place and then stand in our stead to satisfy God’s wrath against our sin. In other words, if we are able to come to God and cooperate on our own apart from Christ, then there is no need for Christ to begin with. That is simply not the case. When Adam partook of the fruit, we were so utterly corrupt that we were indeed incapable of even thinking of God much less cooperating with Him.

God had to do everything for our salvation: living, suffering, dying, rising for us, coming to us, creating and sustaining faith within us, enabling us to do His will, bringing us to the Day of Judgement. As Paul says, “a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. ...For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose,” (Galatians 2:15-21).

Summer Camp – Lutherhoma

We're looking forward to another Camp Lutherhoma Summer! Camp is along the Illinois River in Eastern Oklahoma, three hours from Humboldt. Pastor is again going to the Family Weekend, June 19-21st. If you'd like to take your child/grandchild let Pastor know! Early Bird is \$80 per person. It's a great way to get young ones familiar with camp for when they want to be older campers.



There are also week camps: Kinetic (Ages 7-9), Force (Ages 9-12), Energy (Ages 13-15), Dynamic (Ages 14-18), Rock & Ride (Ages 13-18). For more information, please contact Pastor Roth.

Synod Mission Priorities, '19-'22

Synod at convention adopted the following mission priorities and has already hit the ground running with Making Disciples for Life. This initiative is meant to help congregations and leaders network more effectively across Synod with one another and with experts to strengthen our witness to Christ.

1. Plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches
2. Support and expand theological education
3. Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries
4. Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness
5. Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers
6. Enhance early childhood, elementary, and secondary education and youth ministry
7. Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God's design.



Youth Group

We'll meet Sunday, February 9th for our next youth group meeting. Lunch will be Mac'N'Cheese. Youth of all ages are invited. After lunch, we will read about Silas, a companion of Paul and Peter. We'll read about a story of Paul and Silas suffering in Jail and bringing others to faith in Jesus. Then the older youth will split off for a Bible Study while younger youth will do an activity. We will join together for a closing around 1:00 PM.



Board of Education Update

Our BoE is studying "Connected for Life" from CPH. It is said youth are the future of the Church. In truth, youth are the present. This book help connect youth to life-long faith formation and the life of the Church.

Proper youth ministry connects youth to the body and blood of Jesus. In Word and Sacrament we receive Jesus as He promises to be with us always. At the altar we receive forgiveness, acceptance, community, and endurance. Our ministry must aim to give the same and direct our youth to the altar.

Formation is essential. Faith isn't built like a LEGO set, one piece in at a time. It is more like clay, being shaped through formal and informal means. If we wait until middle/high school then our youth are already being 'shaped' by something else.

Christian education requires us to understand our theology and develop an appropriate approach. The Lutheran approach understands education isn't just moral training or teaching stories. Instead, it brings them into a relationship with God. We must be very intentional with how we bring our youth through our various programs and activities. They must serve a cohesive whole, forming youth along the way, rather than as unconnected events. They should tell the story of Christ as our youth find themselves, through their education, in that very same story.

LENTEN SERIES: IN SUFFERING BE THY LOVE MY PEACE

We don't like to suffer. Suffering is considered a great evil in our world. So much time, effort, and money is spent on relieving us of the pain of suffering. There are even many in our society today that say that a life full of suffering is a life not worth living. And yet, the Christian faith calls us to suffer all for the sake of Christ.



This isn't a mere platitude. Suffering is the reality of the fallen world, but a willingness to suffer is mark of a Christian. We learn to embrace it, for it is through suffering that we are remade into the image of God. This series will teach us how to suffer by looking at the examples of the saints and give us words to pray from the psalms of lament.

The holy Christian people are externally recognized by the holy possession of the sacred cross. They must endure every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials and evil from the devil, the world, and the flesh (as the Lord's Prayer indicates) by inward sadness, timidity, fear, outward poverty, contempt, illness, and weakness, in order to become like their head, Christ. And the only reason they must suffer is that they steadfastly adhere to Christ and God's word, enduring this for the sake of Christ, Matthew 5[:11], "Blessed are you when men persecute you on my account." They must be pious, quiet, obedient, and prepared to serve the government and everybody with life and goods, doing no one any harm. No people on earth have to endure such bitter hate...

In summary, they must be called heretics, knaves, and devils, the most pernicious people on earth, to the point where those who hang, drown, murder, torture, banish, and plague them to death are rendering God a service. No one has compassion on them; they are given myrrh and gall to drink when they thirst. And all of this is done

not because they are adulterers, murderers, thieves, or rogues, but because they want to have none but Christ, and no other God. Wherever you see or hear this, you may know that the holy Christian church is there, as Christ says in Matthew 5[:11–12], "Blessed are you when men revile you and utter all kinds of evil against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven." This too is a holy possession whereby the Holy Spirit not only sanctifies his people, but also blesses them.

—Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 3rd ed., W.R. Russell and T.F. Lull, eds. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 375-376.

Lenten & Easter Schedule

Midweek meals every Wednesday @ 5:15 PM
 Feb 26—Ash Wednesday @ 6:00 PM
 Mar 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1—Services @ 12:15, 6:00 PM
 April 6—Community Service @
 April 9—Maundy Thursday @ 7:00 PM
 April 10—Good Friday @ 7:00 PM
 April 11—Easter Vigil @ 7:00 PM
 April 12—Easter Sunrise Service @ 7:00 AM
 Easter Breakfast @ 7:45 AM
 Easter Egg Hunt @ 8:15 AM
 Sunday School @ 8:30 AM
 Easter Day Service @ 9:30 AM

Ash Wednesday Offering

The District Ash Wednesday Offering supports scholarships for future church workers and education loan repayment grants for active workers. Last year, we were able to award over \$82,000 to 40 recipients. Nearly 28% of that amount—\$23,000—was raised in the Ash Wednesday Offering. On behalf of our grateful recipients, THANK YOU! If you'd like to contribute this year, you can either participate in the church's Ash Wednesday Offering or donate directly either online at kslcms.org or by sending a check to the LCMS Kansas District, 1000 SW 10 th Ave., Topeka, KS, 66604, with the designation, "Ash Wednesday Offering."

LCMS Stewardship Ministry Article



Of the three things a person is not to talk about in polite company – religion, politics, and money – the church is called, in one way or another, to talk about all three. Perhaps this is the reason why teaching about stewardship often seems to be an afterthought. It’s something that happens only out of necessity when financial constraints are already nipping at the heels.

There is a more excellent way. Stewardship shouldn’t be the kind of teaching that comes up only when there is a financial crunch. It should be part and parcel of the ongoing instruction of Christians as they live out their faith in their vocations – members of their family, their society, and their church. This teaching touches upon every facet of our lives; it stakes a claim upon our time, our presence, our prayers, and our possessions. Stewardship begins with the acknowledgment that we are stewards. A steward is a manager of someone else’s possessions. In Christian stewardship, we recognize, according to the Apostles’ Creed, that God is the owner of all things as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And in His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, He gives us what is His to manage here below.

The principal virtue for stewards is faithfulness. As St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth:

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” (1 Cor. 4:2)

“Stewards must manage that which belongs to the owner according to the owner’s wishes. That is what it means to be faithful in stewardship. That raises a question: How are Christian stewards to be faithful in their managing of what God has entrusted to them to manage? In other words, what are the specific duties of a Christian steward? This depends upon what God has revealed in His Word for each of our vocations in life as those in a family (fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children), society (governors or citizens), and the church (pastors or laity). The Table of Duties from *Luther’s Small Catechism* lays this out in helpful and orderly way. Let’s look just at what the laity (hearers as it is labeled in the catechism) owe their pastors:

“In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.” (1 Cor. 9:14)

“Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” (Gal. 6:6–7)

“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer deserves his wages.’” (1 Tim. 5:17–18)

“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.” (1 Thess. 5:12–13)

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Heb. 13:17)

We can see that the Lord commands hearers to support the work of the ministry with the gifts God endowed them – their time, their presence, their prayers, and their possessions. This is the means by which God blesses

THE S.E.A. SIDE WOODS

*Rev. Matthew, Kali, Laurel, Elenore, and Caroline Wood
Ministry in Southeast Asia—Based in Medan, Indonesia*

Pray for Indonesia

Posted January 10th, 2020

Over the past week we have been getting a couple concerned questions and prayers regarding the floods and mudslides in Indonesia. In addition on January 7th there was a 6.2 Earthquake off the coast of the Island of Sumatra. Prayers are certainly needed for those affected by the flood and mudslides in Jakarta and other places on the Island of Java. Most reports indicate that some 60 people have died. We have a close relationship with a pastor in Jakarta He, his family, and his congregation are all safe. Thanks be to God.

Prayers of thanksgiving are also appropriate after the earthquake off the coast of Sumatra. There was very minimal damage and reports indicate that there will be no risk of a tsunami. As you may remember many died of a tsunami which followed an earthquake in 2018. Additionally many will recall the devastating Christmas tsunami of 2004. Praise be to our Father in Heaven that this earthquake resulted in no injuries, deaths, or tsunamis. You can read more about the flooding and the earthquake [here](#).

In Medan we did not feel the earthquake and we



are about 800 miles from the flooding in Jakarta. So we are safe. Nevertheless, please reach out to us if you ever have any concern. We always appreciate hearing from those who are praying for us and supporting us. We are encouraged and uplifted to know that many are thinking of us any time Indonesia comes up in the news.

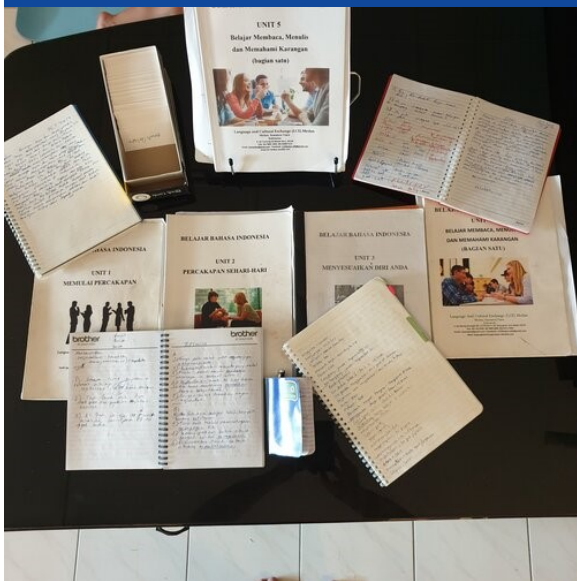
Language Update

Posted January 22th, 2020

Since our arrival here in Medan Kali and I have been working hard to learn the Indonesian language. We have been amazed at the progress so far. Like most realms of knowledge, the more we learn about Bahasa Indonesia the more we realize how much more we have to learn. Thus, we are so thankful for our language school and for this time to

be able to dedicate ourselves to learning the language. It is a tremendous amount of work and we couldn't imagine trying to learn on our own or with our time and attention divided by other things.

After Thanksgiving the structure of our language classes changed significantly. We spend far less time on grammar lessons and we have fewer new words to write down. Thankfully, we have come to a point where we can communicate effectively with our teachers. (There's still some more



learning to be done before we can effectively communicate with the average person on the street because the average person on the street does not know which words we have already learned like our teachers do.) For the last two months we have been reading longer stories and articles and giving speeches in class. It is a different kind of hard. We read through a story and we are encouraged to find the meaning of new words from context rather than from a dictionary. If we don't know the words our teacher will explain their meaning using other Indonesian words. Then we are given some example questions for our interviews. The next day we retell the story or article in Indonesian and from memory as best we can. Then we present an essay in Indonesian based on our interviews from

the previous day. There is a test to check our progress every week.

Our teachers continue to be gracious with us as we learn slowly. We have also been blessed to be able to bring Caroline to class with us. (Caroline has just started to stay home while we are at class.) We have come so far! We are a long way past learning colors, the names of food, or the days of the week. (Although sometimes our brains decide to forget a name, color, or day every now and again) There is so much more to learn, but we are beginning to feel as though our head is at least above water.



Hello friends and partners in mission!

We hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! It's hard to believe we're already in 2020 looking forward to an exciting year of Mission and Ministry in our dearly beloved country of Belize. This year we plan to continue and expand on our work in Seine Bight, welcoming a lot of long-standing partner churches and individuals from years past. We also look forward to welcoming new churches and individuals to our expanding community of short-term missionaries and branching out in our service to brand new mission sites. There's much work to do be done, and God is providing the laborers. Expect construction projects, VBS, medical home visits, dental clinics, eyeglass clinics, tutoring, and more in support of Christ Lutheran Church of Seine Bight! We have a rich history of serving in these ways and believe that God is calling us to continue. We also have some exciting new Ministries to support. Keep your eyes open in our Spring newsletter for information on our hopes to use short-term teams to support the opening of the first Lutheran school in Belize, the operations of a Christian Radio station, and the church Ministry of a local pastor who is studying hard to become the first Belizean Lutheran pastor in the country.



We hope that you are as proud as we are to be a part of the Belize Mission Society! Short-term team organizations like ours play an important role in ensuring a quality, meaningful, safe, and impactful mission trip both for the



short-term missionaries and for the host country. We get short-term missionaries connected to individuals, sites, and projects that we know well and have been working with for years. The host villagers know us and trust us as an organization, and by extension they know and trust the people we bring down, hastening the development of meaningful, cross-cultural relationships. We meet with our Lutheran missionaries on the ground in Belize on a regular basis, listen to them, learn about their needs, and work to support them with our team projects, understanding that the work they do on the ground on a week-to-week basis is going to have the greatest effect in our mutual Ministry. We make sure the projects of our short-term teams build off of the work of previous mission teams and are set to be built upon by future mission teams. We develop personal relationships with hotels, restaurants, cooks, service staff, transportation agents, etc., often times receiving discounts for our ongoing business that help to keep the cost of your trips as low as possible. All of the above and so much more is made possible by working with an established and trusted organization like the Belize Mission



Society. We also recognize that for a group like ours to operate, we depend on the partnership and support of churches and individuals like yours. We thank God for each and every one of you, and pray that our relationship continues and grows so that our mutual work in Belize can continue and grow as well.



For more info, visit www.belizemissionsociety.net.

LCMS Stewardship Ministry Article—Continued from Page 6

His people with His gifts: the ministry with the support of those whom they serve, and the hearers with the work of the ministry. St. Paul expounds upon this further in his letters to the church at Corinth. He instructs them to give regularly (1 Cor. 16:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first-fruits (1 Cor. 16:2) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23). All of this teaching is set forth squarely within the context of stations to which God calls us. This is always appropriate for the church to speak because it instructs God's people in how they are to live out their faith as His stewards under those who are created, redeemed, and sanctified by Him.



Devoted to Worship: Service of the Word Part II: Readings

We've moved through the Service of Preparation, that is, Confession and Absolution, and have entered the Service of the Word. The Service of the Word itself has its own preparation through the Entrance Hymn, Introit, Kyrie, Hymn of Praise, Salutation, and Collect of the Day. These are “ordinaries,” the parts of the service that stay the same, with the exception of the Collect of the Day. Now we begin the Service of the Word proper, with the “proprs,” those part of the Divine Service that are “proper” to the day, beginning with the readings.

The first reading is the from the Old Testament. This reminds us we still hold dear all the prophetic writings. It is concerning these, after all, that Jesus told the Jews, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,” (Jn 5:39). We still look to the Old Testament to “find Christ.” There are two main sets of readings: the one-year lectionary, which has been historically followed for nearly fifteen hundred years, and the three-year lectionary, which covers more of Scripture. In the three-year lectionary, which is what we use, the Old Testament is thematically tied to the Gospel. During the Easter season, however, the three-year lectionary takes its first reading from the Book of Acts because it is the “new” history of the Church. The first reading concludes with the proclamation, “This is the Word of the Lord.” To which the congregation responds, “Thanks be to God.”

After the first reading, the appointed Psalm is sung or spoken. The use of a psalm recalls the ancient congregational practice of singing all the psalms each week, or at the very least once a year. Choral settings of the psalms can be found, but placing these prayers on the lips of the people is ideal.

An alternate possibility for the Psalm of the Day is the Gradual. This word comes from the Latin word *gradus*, which means “step.” It may have been used

as the Word of God was brought up the steps into the chancel to be physically closer to the altar as they transitioned into the New Testament. A Gradual is usually the same for an entire season of the Church Year. It is a small selection of Scripture that continues the liturgical theme and is often sung by a choir. A choral anthem also may be used in this part of the service that reflects the theme of the service.

After the Psalm or Gradual, the congregation is ready to hear from the New Testament Church and the Epistle is read. This second lesson recalls the early Christian tradition of reading from the “memoirs of the apostles.” The Epistle often follows the biblical tradition of *lectio continua* (“continuous reading”), with modifications. For a series of Sundays, especially during the Pentecost season, the Epistle will come from the same book in order. For example, in Series A of the three-year lectionary, the book of Romans is read for seventeen weeks, skipping only a few sections. In the three-year lectionary, no attempt was made to coordinate the Epistle with the Gospel, and when they do it is simply happy circumstance.

In preparation for the reading of the Gospel comes the Alleluia and Verse. Combined with *alleluias*, the congregation sings a portion of John 6:68, recalling Peter’s response to Jesus, who had asked the disciples if they were going to leave Him. In the verse, we join the Old Testament believers who sang the *Hallel* (praise) Psalms (145-50) as a joyous cry of the faithful community. The great Hallelujah Psalms (113-18) were probably used during the Passover season and, therefore, by Jesus and His disciples on Maundy Thursday. The same *hallelujah*, which simply means “Praise the Lord,” continues throughout eternity (Rev 19:6). *Alleluia* (the Greek form of the Hebrew word) is the Church’s “perpetual voice...just as the memorial of Christ’s passion and victory is perpetual,” Luther reminded us. An appointed Verse of the Day may also be used. The practice of standing for the Gospel dates to at least

the fourth century and is similar in purpose to standing for the Invocation: we acknowledge our Host and His word to us. Standing also reminds us that the Word, Jesus Christ, is truly present.

During Lent, the verse from Joel 2:13 replaces the Alleluia and Verse. It recalls the Old Testament hope and our fulfilled joy, even in the solemn Lenten season. During Lent and Advent, *alleluias* are omitted to stress the penitential nature of the seasons.

Finally we reach the Gospel reading. The reading may be accompanied by a procession into the congregation, visualizing the words of St. John: The Word became flesh and dwelled among us,” (John 1:14). They also reflect Christ as He came to teach in the synagogues and in the midst of crowds. In the fifth century, Augustine already admonished his congregation, “Let us listen to the Gospel just as if the Lord himself were present.” Luther said, “For the preaching of the gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him.” As the congregation faces the reader, the worshipers model the gathering of all people from around the world to hear the Lord’s message and worship with Him.

Sometimes the Gospel procession is composed of a presiding minister, the book bearer, and two torch bearers. Led by the crucifer or the book bearer, the group moves about one third down the center aisle. The book bearer stands between the two candles and faces the presiding minister with the Bible opened to the appropriate place. A modest fanfare may be used for the procession and as the group returns to the chancel. Occasionally congregations use richly decorated Gospel book covers for these processions, which illustrate the reverence and respect for the Word.

The Gospel reading is then announced, to which the congregation responds, “Glory to You, O Lord,” as a reflection of the Old Testament expectation and understanding of the Lord’s glorious presence in the midst of His people. Then the Gospel is read. This is the central reading for any day in the Church Year and never should be omitted. After the conclusion of the Gospel Reading is announced, the congregation again bursts into a joyous response: “Praise to You, O Christ.” In contrast to the Old Testament imagery of the Lord’s glory, the congregation responds to the Gospel reading by praising Christ, who fulfills God’s promises and is the incarnate Messiah. This response emphasizes that we have heard the Good News that God comes to us in Jesus.

Orders of service place the Creed in varying places, but regardless of the order we have been normally confessing the Creed after the Gospel Reading. The Creed is a summary of and reply to the Word, affirming our trust in the Word. *Credo* is Latin for “I believe.” Three ecumenical or catholic (universal) creeds are used in our congregations: Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian. By using these Creeds regularly we show that we are not a sect but a confidently biblical and confessing movement in the greater Christian community throughout the world. Any of the creeds may be used in a variety of formats, including hymnic settings, choral settings, chants, or spoken responsively. At the end of the creed it is appropriate to make the sign of the cross, reminding us of the resurrection hope built upon Christ.

Next month we’ll take a closer look at the three creeds and when we use them as well as finish looking at the Service of the Word.

PRAYING FOR CONGREGATIONS & PASTORS: CIRCUIT 10

Peace Lutheran Church, Andover; Rev. Stephen Wipperman
 Christ Lutheran Church, Augusta; Rev. John Einem
 Grace Lutheran Church, El Dorado; Rev. John Einem
 Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita; Rev. Dr. Michael Bingenheimer, Rev. Scott Goltl
 Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wichita; Rev. Scott Snow, Rev. Daniel Myers
 St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Wichita;
 Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Wichita; Rev. Thomas Harmon, Rev. Nick Cordt
 Ascension Lutheran Church, Pratt; Rev. Daniel Chrismer
 Candidate and Emeritus: Rev. Jeffery Crane, Rev. David Ersland, Rev. John Pool,
 Rev. C Dean Von Stroh, Rev. Terry Weichman
 University Lutheran Mission Association: Rev. John Tape





St. Polycarp of Smyrna, *Pastor & Martyr*

Polycarp was born sometime around AD 69. He was a disciple of St. John, the apostle and evangelist. Eventually, Polycarp was made bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor. We have from his hand a letter he wrote to the Philippian Church. The writing portrays a man who had devoted himself to the Scriptures and who sought to build up and encourage others by the use of the Word of God. It is a veritable patchwork of quotations from the Old and New Testament! It also shows him to be a man of gentle and kind spirit, who would not presume command, but exhorted his believers from the fullness of the Gospel: “These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I take anything upon myself, but because you have invited me to do so. For neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul. He, when among you, accurately and steadfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive. And when absent from you, he wrote you a letter, which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given you” (*Epistle of Polycarp* 3).

He was a man of the Word!

The account of his martyrdom on this day [February 23] in AD 155 is a particularly beautiful treasure bequeathed us from the ancient Church. When urged to consider his advanced age and to offer the incense to the emperor, Polycarp answered: “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and Savior?” (*Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 9). The great saint was then burned at the stake, stabbed with a spear, his body mutilated. His remains were denied to his followers for burial.

The Early Church was heartened by the faithful and bold witness this old man gave to his Savior in life and in death. The witnesses of his execution wrote triumphantly, “Now, the blessed Polycarp suffered martyrdom on the second day of the month Xanthicus just begun, the seventh day before the Kalends of March, on the great Sabbath, at the eighth hour. He was taken by Herod, Philip the Trallian being high priest, Statius Quadratus being procounsul, but Jesus Christ being King forever, to whom be glory, honor, majesty, and an everlasting throne, from generation to generation. Amen” (*Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 21). They knew that none of the circumstances of their lives were out of the control of Him who governs all things for their good.



Polycarp Burnt.

*O God, the maker of heaven and earth,
You gave boldness to confess Jesus
Christ as King and Savior and
steadfastness to die for the faith to Your
venerable servant, the holy and gentle
Polycarp. Grant us grace to follow his
example in sharing the cup of Christ's
suffering so that we may also share in
His glorious resurrection; through Jesus
Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives
and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.*

*These saints of old received God's commendation;
The lived as pilgrim-heirs of His salvation.
Trough faith they conquered flame and sword and gallows,
God's name to hallow.
The call to us, "Your timid footsteps lengthen;
Throw off sin's weight, your halting weakness strengthen.
We keep the faith, we shed our blood, were martyred;
Our lives we bartered."
LSB 667:2-3*

From *Celebrating the Saints* by William Weedon



Hymn of Lent — Hymn Study

LSB 427 In the Cross of Christ I Glory (audio)

Text and tune: Public domain



1 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, Tow'r - ing
2 When the woes of life o'er - take me, Hopes de -
3 When the sun of bliss is beam - ing Light and
4 Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure By the



o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of sa - cred
ceive, and fears an - noy, Nev - er shall the cross for -
love up - on my way, From the cross the ra - diancance
cross are sanc - ti - fied; Peace is there that knows no



sto - ry Gath - ers round its head sub - lime.
sake me; Lo, it glows with peace and joy.
stream - ing Adds more lus - ter to the day.
mea - sure, Joys that through all time a - bide.

crucified to me, and I to the world.” This confession is clear in Stanza 1. The cross is indeed “sublime,” noble, majestic, impressive, and awe-inspiring. Even the gates of hell itself cannot prevail against the Church that confesses Jesus as Christ, the Son of the living God.

The theology of the cross is confessed clearly and concisely in stanza 2. The cross represents the promise of Christ never to leave or forsake believers and to be with us always. The cross, because of Christ’s sacrificial, substitutionary, and atoning death, provides hope, peace, and joy, especially when woes overwhelm, hopes deceive, and fears annoy.

Jesus is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome, and the Son of the Father of lights, the source of every good and perfect gift. Stanza 3 uses the language of light to describe the bliss of the love of God in Christ. There is a beauty in an ugly cross because of what Christ won there—all that is delivered where the cross is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution: forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Stanza 4 further applies the biblical theology of the cross, that good and bad alike, bane (that is, affliction) and blessing, pain and pleasure, are made holy in Christ because of the cross. It is precisely because of trouble in this life that we are driven to God for all refuge and peace “that knows no measure,” for “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). When we receive blessings to support us in this life, both physical and spiritual, it is appropriate to offer thanks and praise to the Lord.

The author intended that stanza 1 be repeated as stanza 5 as a satisfying conclusion to the hymn, a confession of a reverent awe for the eternal blessings of one day, a truly *Good Friday*.



Text Background Originally titled “The Cross of Christ,” the text by John Bowring (1792-1872) first appeared in his 1825 collection. The title, as it came to be, is etched into his tombstone. This seems at odds with his formal Unitarianism (which rejects Trinitarian theology, saying there are not three divine persons but one), yet Unitarians in his time were more tolerant of Orthodox Christian faith.

Text Commentary The hymn is based on Gal 6:14, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been

Other days of the Church Year This Month:

2—The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord; 5—Jacob (Israel), *Patriarch*; 10—Silas, *Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul*; 13—Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos; 14—Valentine, *Martyr*; 15—Philemon and Onesimus; 16—Philipp Melanchthon (birth), *Confessor*; 18—Martin Luther, *Doctor and Confessor*; 23—Polycarp of Smyrna, *Pastor and Martyr*; 24—St. Matthias, *Apostle*

Connect with the story of Christ through the lives of the saints by learning more about them!



Readings and Prayers for This Month's Sundays

The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord (2/2)*

1 Sam 1:21-28; Ps 84; Heb 2:14-18; Lk 2:22-32

Almighty and ever-living God, as Your only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance of our flesh, grant that we may be presented to You with pure and clean hearts; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany (2/2)

Micah 6:1-8; Ps 15; 1 Cor 1:18-31; Mt 5:1-12

Almighty God, You know we live in the midst of so many dangers that in our frailty we cannot stand upright. Grant strength and protection to support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany (2/9)

Is 58:3-9a; Ps 112:1-9; 1 Cor 2; Mt 5:13-20

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany (2/16)

Deut 30:15-20; Ps 119:1-8; 1 Cor 3:1-9; Mt 5:21-37

O Lord, graciously hear the prayers of Your people that we who justly suffer the consequence of our sin may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness to the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

The Transfiguration of Our Lord (2/23)

Ex 24:8-18; Ps 2:6-12; 2 Pt 1:16-21; Mt 17:1-9

O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

St. Matthias, Apostle (2/24)*

Is 66:1-2; Ps 134; Acts 1:15-26; Mt 11:25-30

Almighty God, You chose Your servant Matthias to be numbered among the Twelve. Grant that Your Church, ever preserved from false teachers, may be taught and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Ash Wednesday (2/26)

Joel 2:12-19; Ps 51:1-13; 2 Cor 5:20b-6:10; Mt 6:1-6, 16-21

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

First Sunday in Lent (3/1)

Gen 3:1-21; Ps 32:1-7; Rm 5:12-19; Mt 4:1-11

O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Feburary 2020

Elder: Darrell Krone
Usher: Lonnie Cash
Communion Preparation:

CALENDAR MONTH FEBRUARY
CALENDAR YEAR 2020
1ST DAY OF WEEK SUNDAY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30 7:30a Men's Bible study 9:00a Mission of Love	31	1 6a-1p Groundhog feed
2 8:15a Communion 9:30a Sunday School 10:30a Communion 1:00p Board of Ed	3	4 6:00p Dialogue & Doctrine	5 5:30p Midweek dinner 6:00p Chapel 6:30p Midweek 6:30p Choir Practice 7:30p Elder's Meeting	6 7:30a Men's Bible study 9:00a Mission of Love 6:00p Care Team Training	7	8
9 8:15a Communion 9:30a Sunday school 10:30a Communion 11:45a Youth Group	10	11 6:00p Dialogue & Doctrine	12 5:30p Midweek dinner 6:00p Chapel 6:30p Midweek 6:30p Choir Practice	13 7:30a Men's Bible study 9:00a Mission of Love 6:30p LWML meeting	14 VALENTINE'S DAY	15 DEADLINE FOR CALENDAR & NEWSLETTER
16 8:15a Communion 9:15a Valentines Brunch 10:30a Communion	17 PRESIDENT'S DAY	18 Pastor gone to Circuit meeting 6:00p Dialogue & Doctrine	19 5:30p Midweek dinner 6:00p Chapel 6:30p Midweek 6:30p Choir Practice	20 7:30a Men's Bible study 9:00a Mission of Love 6:00p Care Team Training	21	22
23 8:15a Communion 9:30a Sunday school 10:30a Communion 3:00p Women's Bible Study	24	25 6:00p Dialogue & Doctrine	26 ASH WEDNESDAY 12:15p Service 5:30p Midweek dinner 6:00p Service 6:30p Midweek	27 7:30a Men's Bible study 9:00a Mission of Love 7:00p Women's Bible Study	28	29



Birthdays in February

01 Elizabeth Leroy
 04 Brenda Cash
 04 Breah Jones
 06 Steve Bulk
 10 Sam Hull
 12 Ron Clements*
 12 Hadley Galloway
 13 Betty Stoll*
 13 Sue Scantlin
 14 Israel Stevenson
 15 DeAnn Hauser
 17 Josie Rather
 20 Robb Hauser
 24 Sylvia Schomaker
 25 Janet Storck

**Special Birthday
 (age 80 & older)*



Happy Anniversary in February

5 Ronald & Glodine Clements –
 66 Yrs. *
 25 Charles & Joan Downey –
 64 Yrs.*

**Special Anniversary
 (50 yrs. or more)*



SERVICE to the LORD in MARCH

ELDER

Ken Lumley

USHER

Henry Eggers

GREETERS

01 Lonnie & Brenda Cash; Bill
 & Linda Cavins
 08 Don & Dodie Copley; Dale &
 Judy Daniels
 15 Scott & Heather Daniels;
 Ernie & Wanda Davidson
 22 Bob & Renee Debler; Henry
 & Sandy Eggers
 29 Doris Fugitt; Audrey
 Galloway



01 Sophia Schomaker
 03 Lizzy Krone
 06 Bret Hauser
 06 Robb Hauser
 06 Todd Hauser
 07 Mari Hill
 08 Jacob Avery
 11 Brenda Cash
 13 Vada Aikins
 13 Don Copley
 14 James Brown
 14 Mary Brown
 14 Marie Roth
 22 Glodine Clements
 22 Norma Moore
 27 Sue Scantlin
 28 Bailey Daniels

MARCH COMMUNION PREPARATION

8:15 & 10:30 Hildinger's

There are three things that
 are too amazing for
 me, four that I do not
 understand:
¹⁹ the way of an eagle in the
 sky, the way of a snake on a
 rock, the way of a ship on
 the high seas, and the way of
 a man with a young woman.
 Proverbs 30:18-19



SERVICE to the LORD in FEBRUARY

ELDER

Darrell Krone

USHER

Lonnie Cash

GREETERS

02 Jean Ranabargar; Frank &
 Janice Schomaker
 09 Wayne Smith: Leon & Janet
 Storck
 16 Doris Wilhite; Bob & Glenna
 Wulf
 23 Melvin Baker: Keith & Gloria
 Beeman

COMMUNION PREPARATION

8:15 & 10:30 Lott's