

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH – LCMS

June 2018 Newsletter

The GOOD NEWS

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THE VISIBLE WORD

I've asked in a few Bible studies recently, "Do you appreciate hearing me not only teach the faith but also expressly tell you what I am teaching against also?" The answers have been mixed. Some of you expressed that you prefer to hear Lutheran teaching of the Scriptures. More of you expressed that you prefer to hear not only what we teach but also what we teach against, again from the Scriptures. This article focuses on how the Lutheran and Reformed teaching of the visible Word (Baptism and Holy Communion) are not the same.

Examples of Reformed churches in our area include but are not limited to: Presbyterians, Anglicans, the United Church of Christ, Baptists, and Methodists. Nearly all Bible Colleges and Christian College Campus ministries are Reformed as well, such as The Salt Company at the University of Iowa and at Iowa State University, Cru (originally called Campus Crusade for Christ), InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, The Navigators, and Young Life to name a few. Reformed teaching is also prominent on Christian radio stations such as our local 98.9 FM Christian Contemporary and 105FM Religious Contemporary to name two.

In brief what are the differences:

1. The Reformed separate the work of the Holy Spirit from the Word and Sacraments, believing the Word of God to be dead and useless unless we make it applicable, relevant, and attractive to listeners.
2. The Reformed reject the Biblical truth that the preached Word and the visible Word (Baptism and Holy Communion) give us the forgiveness of sin.
3. The Reformed believe that prayer is the only means of grace, so they urge people to "makes a decision for Christ" and "ask Jesus to come into your heart." In denying that the Gospel in Word and Sacrament confers faith, they set up a system of works to merit the forgiveness of sin. For example: yielding to Jesus, praying hard enough, suffering, and leading a life of holiness.

I'm sure you have heard it said that "Lutherans and the Reformed teach the same thing about the Word, but the Reformed do not accept the sacraments." Nothing brings to light the anti-Scriptural foundation of the Reformed more than their war against the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

If we do not trust the efficacy of the Word preached and taught then we will also doubt the work of the Holy Spirit in the visible Word of Baptism and Holy Communion. Sadly, many Lutherans have had their faith in the sacraments undermined by Lutheran pastors and teachers who have sought to replace the effective Word with their own methods. I hope to show how the visible Word can be seen throughout the Scriptures as a great comfort to all who believe in Christ.

God united His promises with earthly elements in the Old Testament such as the rainbow which still reminds us of one particular promise:

And I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” 17 And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth” (Genesis 9:15–17).

God gave Abraham a promise and included a visible element with it:

“This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you” (Genesis 17:10).

The fullness of this promise with circumcision is now replaced with the Spirit and water of Holy Baptism:

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:5-8).

Those who insist that God does not need a visible sign of His promises miss the entire point of the sacraments. God was with the Israelites during the Exodus and spoke to Moses.

Nevertheless, the Israelites needed a visible sign of His presence and His promises. Even then they faltered many times because of doubt:

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people” (Exodus 13:21–22).

The Old Testament is a preparation for the complete revelation of the Gospel. We tend to view God’s time as calendar time, one event leading to another, cause and effect, like we learned in history classes. In contrast we must allow that the birth of Christ was determined by God from the beginning of time, along with all the promises associated with the Savior. Therefore, the Old Testament is truly based upon the New Testament. The Passover lamb, sacrificed for the meal, foreshadowed the Lamb who would bear the sins of the world:

“And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it” (Exodus 12:7).

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” (1 Peter 1:18-21).

God promised to care for His people during the Exodus. One of the greatest anxieties of a wandering group of people would be water. The Israelites fell into doubt and strife from their lack of water:

“Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” (Exodus 17:6-7).

“And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).

Who could have imagined that the attack of snakes against the Israelites would be the most clear summary of the Gospel message in the Bible?:

“7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live” (Nu 21:7–9).

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:14–16).

Those who are offended by the visible Word should consider the giving of the Ten commandments. God might have given His commandments and allowed them to be written down. Instead God inscribed them and had them placed in the ark of the covenant to be carried with the people. A visible Word of God. Surely God did not need to have His commandments carved in tone and carried with great reverence in a special box. And yet God willed that this be done to sustain faith:

“And Joshua said, “By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan” (Joshua 3:10–11).

How wonderful. God gives us His visible Word (Baptism and Holy Communion) that is effective to the same fullness as His spoken Word. May you be a little better equipped to retain a good conscience before the temptations of popular false teachings that would cause you to give up God’s Word, either invisible (spoken and taught) or visible (baptism and Holy Communion).

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Paul". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the text "In Christ,".

CONGREGATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

LWML FRIENDSHIP NIGHT All ladies of the congregation are invited to attend the LWML Friendship Night buffet dinner evening out held at the China Garden, 2016 Cedar Plaza Drive, (next to Fareway) on Thursday, June 21st (the first day of summer) beginning at 6 p.m. There is a sign up sheet on the easel for you to sign your name by June 17th if you can join us in Christian fellowship and celebrating together the first day of summer. We ask that you please mark the column if you would like someone to pick you up.

ELDER GROUPS I am never too busy to meet with you, pray for you, or listen to you. I am working with the elders through your elder groups as a way to better organize spiritual care for your soul. You may also contact me. God bless you all. Pastor

THE 39TH BIENNIAL LWML IOWA EAST DISTRICT CONVENTION will be held on June 15th & 16th at the Marriott Hotel in Cedar Rapids, IA. The Mt. Pleasant Zone which includes Our Savior, Muscatine; Zion, Wilton; Immanuel, Fairfield; Faith, Mt. Pleasant; Our Savior, Fort Madison; Concordia, Burlington are the hosts for this convention. Angie Banko and Karen Lyons are the co-chairman of this convention and have been working for sometime in the planning process.

There are several LWML members from Our Savior attending this convention and we would like to ask your help in providing “Gifts From The Heart” items for the ingathering. If you would like to contribute you will find a list below and a box labeled “Baby Shower” in the narthex for any items you might like to contribute. Thank you!

Baby Shower Items needed:

Disposable Diapers, Wet Wipe, Sleepers/Onesies, Baby Lotion, Baby Wash,
Baby Washclothes, Fleece Blankets, Baby Toys, and Diaper Bag

IDE DISTRICT CONVENTION - June 29-30

Delegates: Pastoral - Pastor Pautz; Lay - Phil Schliesman; Alternate Lay - Carl Egger
Our theme this year is “Life Together: Laity and Clergy”. The presenter is going to be Rev. Dr. David P, Scaer, and he will speak on the book of James with its pastor and sheep relationship. We are also expecting President Harrison to arrive on Saturday and to share his report with us.

St. Paul's Lutheran Chapel and University Center

Cordially invites you to

The Blessing Of An Organ Responsive Prayer and Hymn Festival Followed by a Cake and Punch Reception

*Sunday, June 24, 2018
2:00 P.M.*

*404 E. Jefferson Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52245*

CHURCH ARCHIVES Have you heard of the fire that destroyed LCMS Trinity Lutheran Church in Milwaukee on Tuesday, 15 May, 2018? You can view a brief video of what happened [HERE](#). Such events cause your IDE Archivist to once more approach all IDE congregations, especially those who have not yet opted to have their church records digitized, to get it done for free during the IDE Convention to be held in Cedar Rapids on June 29-30, 2018. All that is required is that your Convention delegate or pastor present the Church Records (baptism, confirmation, marriage, deaths) and Voters' Minutes to the archivist exhibitor booth on the Friday of Convention. The documents will be photographed and the records returned to your delegate at the end of the convention. Please contact your archivist to indicate that your congregations wants to take part in the free offer. The congregation will receive a CD with the digital information on it. Contact Archivist Allen Konrad as soon as possible at onamission1939@gmail.com to arrange for your congregation's records to be digitized.

LIFE

Task Force Discusses Procreation, Fertility

The 2016 LCMS Convention adopted Resolution 3-04, “To Create Task Force for Study of Issues Relating to Procreation, Fertility, and Care for Unborn.” Noting that “Christians are seeking guidance from the church, based on the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions regarding the use of contraception, in vitro fertilization (IVF), other reproductive technologies, and the use of aborted fetal tissue for medical purposes,” the resolution asked the president of the Synod to appoint a task force of individuals, “respected for their expertise in the fields of medicine, procreative science, theology, ethics and the like to study issues surrounding fertility and procreation.”

The members of the task force include the Rev. Kevin Robson, LCMS Chief Mission Officer; medical doctors Debra Grime and Donna Harrison; clinical laboratory and informatics expert Dr. Andrea Pitkus; ethicists Dr. James Bachmann, the Rev. Dr. Gilbert Meilaender and the Rev. Dr. Kevin Voss; attorney Ann Stillman, esq.; and theologians and pastors the Rev. Dr. Joel Okamoto, the Rev. Prof. John Pless and the Rev. Michael Salemink. Staff support is provided by the Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer and the Rev. Larry Vogel, Commission on Theology and Church Relations Executive Director and Associate Executive Director respectively. Lehenbauer chairs the task force.

The task force met December 8–9, 2017. In its discussions, the members noted the breadth of the issues raised both directly and indirectly by Res. 3-04. Although the items raised all relate to human reproduction and tend toward a consideration of technological “advances,” there are also underlying cultural assumptions and questions that challenge the Christian. The task force agreed that it was important to try to address “foundational matters” relative to these questions and assumptions. For example, the biblical view that parents are blessed with a child as a gift of God today faces a competing view, wherein children are viewed more as a parental reproductive project and an entitlement.

Dr. Lehenbauer notes, “The Church is uniquely equipped to address the human desire to have a child, starting with infant Baptism where the baby is given identity as a child of God.” After addressing such substantive and foundational matters, the task force will discuss some of the moral and ethical questions about human procreation and the reproductive technology that is now in use. It will also seek to “identify actions leading to the production of appropriate LCMS responses to these issues ... with the CTCR and/or other appropriate LCMS entities” (Res. 3-04).

Specific topics may include: 1) infertility (IVF), 2) contraception, 3) embryo adoption and 4) genetic therapy (CRISPER/cas9), among others. Future meetings are scheduled for May and October of this year.

Submitted by Rev. Alex Post - IDE Life Coordinator, 641-753-9565

LUTHER QUOTES

Pentecost Sunday Sermon. How to rejoice in the Lord.



To rejoice in the Lord--to trust, confide, glory and have pride in the Father--this is a joy which rejects all else but the Lord, including that self-righteousness whereof Jeremiah speaks (9:23-24): "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth Me."

Sermons of Martin Luther, VI, p. 95.

Trinity Sunday Sermon. How to believe on the Holy Trinity:

8. We can, therefore, have no surer foundation for our belief in the divinity of Christ than that we enwrap and enclose our hearts in the declarations of the Scriptures. The Scriptures gradually and beautifully lead us to Christ; first revealing him to us as a man, then as the lord of all creatures. and finally as God. Thus we are successfully led to the true knowledge of God. But the philosophers and the wise men of this world would begin at the top and so they have become fools. We must begin at the bottom and gradually advance in knowledge, so that the words of Proverbs 25, 27 may not apply to us: "It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search out their own glory is grievous." 9. Our faith in these two persons, the Father and the Son, is therefore sufficiently established and confirmed by passages from the Scriptures. But of the Holy Spirit, the third person, we read in Mt 28, 19 that Christ sent forth his disciples, saying to them: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Here divinity is also ascribed to the Holy Spirit, since I may trust or believe in no one but God. And I must trust only in one who has power over death, hell, the devil and all creatures, whose authority withholds them from harming me, and who can save me. None will suffice except one in whom I may trust absolutely. Now, Christ in this passage commands that we should also believe and trust in the Holy Spirit; therefore he must be God. In the Gospel according to John, Christ speaks frequently to his disciples of the Holy Spirit, his power or existence.

JUNE 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
					1	2
3 08:00 Absolution 09:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Study 11:30 Elder Meeting Elder Eversmeyer Organist Carolyn Y. Greeter Hirschfeld	4 01:00 Sunnybrook 02:00 Homebound 05:00 Office Hours 06:00 Divine Service	5	6 09:00 Matins Service 09:30 Bible Study	7	8	9
10 08:00 Absolution 09:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Study Elder Buttke Organist Mary F. Greeter Hart	11 01:00 Sunnybrook 02:00 Homebound 05:00 Office Hours 06:00 Divine Service 07:00 Council	12	13 09:00 Matins Service 09:30 Bible Study	14	15 LWML Conventi on	16 LWML Conven tion
17 08:00 Absolution 09:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Study Elder Schliesman Organist Joel H. Greeter Ingram	18 01:00 Sunnybrook 02:00 Homebound 05:00 Office Hours 06:00 Divine Service	19	20 06:30 Men's Group 09:00 Matins Service 09:30 Women's Group	21 06:00 LWML Friendship Night at China Garden	22	23
24 08:00 Absolution 09:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Study Elder Francis Organist Susan E. Greeter Ingram	25 01:00 Sunnybrook 02:00 Homebound 05:00 Office Hours 06:00 Divine Service	26	27 09:00 Matins Service 09:30 Bible Study	28	29 IDE Conventi on	30 IDE Conven tion