

The EVANGEL

Confession & The Lord's Supper





From the Editor

Welcome back! This month's edition looks at two more parts of the *Small Catechism*: Confession, as well as The Sacrament of The Altar. Note how Confession is placed right before The Sacrament of The Altar, because immediately following a confession of sin, comes God's abundant grace and assurance of forgiveness, given to us through His Word and applied to us through actual physical elements. What a gift!

As you will see in these articles, Scripture shows over and over how confession, absolution, and the Lord's Supper are all about God's gracious work to us and for us:

Rev. Dr. Cary Larson walks us through how confession is connected to the Lord's Supper. Rev. Mark Raitz works through how God responds to repentance: with His Word of absolution. Rev. Philip Hofinga and his co-writer teach the historic tradition and benefits of private confession and absolution. Then Rev. Greg Stenzel answers the catechism question, "Who receives this Sacrament worthily?" And finally, Rev. Dr. Chris Caughey answers, "How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?"

The writers of these articles show us where and how to look: in Scripture, where our gracious God outlines just where He promised to be.

Also in this edition, check out the photos and article from the biennial youth conference held this past summer. Keep these precious young people in prayer as they are now back in school and need encouragement and reminders of what they learned even more.

God's peace be with you,

Gretchen Baker

Gretchen Baker
The Editor

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The Connection Between Confession and Absolution with The Lord's Supper

By Rev. Dr. Cary G. Larson

I am determined that if I am officiating the Divine Service, I will lead the congregation in a “Brief Order of Confession and Absolution” before we receive the Lord’s Supper. This is because in Lutheran theology, the relationship between Confession (including private Confession and Absolution) and the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion, Eucharist) is deeply intertwined and foundational to understanding how Christ Jesus delivers forgiveness and salvation to believers.

For most of us, we grew up (especially if your congregation had a Scandinavian history) with a section in Luther’s Small Catechism dedicated to “Of Confession” tucked in-between “IV. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism” and “V. The Sacrament of the Altar” in the “Five Parts of the Catechism.” In other Lutheran traditions, this section on Confession was permitted to stand out on its own, thus forming the “Six Chief Parts of the Catechism,” which many of our pastors teach today. With that said, regardless of the Lutheran tradition, the role of Confession and Absolution is primarily one of preparation and assurance. While individual confession to a pastor is still the preferred option for us Lutherans, most of us enjoy the opportunity of confession collectively with other Christians in the beginning of the Divine Service.

Article XXV “Of Confession” of The Augsburg Confession explicitly states, “Confession [individual] is not to be abolished in our churches, for it is not customary to administer the body of Christ except to those who have previously been examined and absolved... Our people are taught to esteem absolution highly because it is the voice of God and is pronounced by God’s command” (AC XXV, 1, 3). This isn’t merely a psychological release, but a divine declaration; when the pastor pronounces absolution, Christ Jesus is using the pastor’s voice to declare that you are forgiven! This most holy act provides a concrete, audible, and personal assurance of God’s amazing grace and reconciliation (John 20:22–23). Before God Almighty, you are called to examine your conscience, confess your specific sins (1 Cor 11:28), and receive the comfort of God’s forgiveness. This personal encounter with divine forgiveness addresses the guilt and burden of sin directly, preparing you for further reception of grace through our Lord’s most Holy Supper.

This preparation is crucial for the worthy reception of the Lord’s Supper. We Lutherans strongly emphasize the “Real Presence” of Christ Jesus’ true body and blood “in, with, and under” the bread and wine (Matt 26:20–30; Luke 19:14–20; 1 Cor 11:23–26). Article X “Of Holy Supper” of The Augsburg Confession, clearly states in accordance with Holy Scripture, “Our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord.” (AC X, 1). This is not merely a symbolic presence, nor is it a change of the substance of the bread and wine (transubstantiation), but a miraculous co-existence. The purpose of this real presence is profound: the Lord’s Supper is truly an extraordinary meal, conveying the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, all won by Christ Jesus’ atoning sacrifice on Calvary’s cross.

The connection of these two means of grace (Confession and Absolution and the Lord’s Supper) becomes clear when considering their shared objective: the giving of God’s undeserved favor and the remission of sins as an unmerited gift. Confession and Absolution serve as a personal, specific application of the Gospel’s promise of forgiveness. It directly addresses your recognized sinfulness, offering consolation prior to you approaching the altar. This holy act permits you to approach the Lord’s Supper with a clear conscience and a receptive heart, prepared to fully embrace the blessings offered in Holy Communion by your Lord, Christ Jesus.

Equally, the Lord’s Supper reinforces and strengthens the faith that has been renewed through confession. The substantial act of receiving Christ Jesus’ body and blood in the Sacrament provides a powerful exhibition of the forgiveness declared in absolution. Together, these two means of grace, as articulated and defended in the Lutheran Confessions, form a rock-solid theological framework through which Lutherans encounter the living Christ Jesus and His grace in their lives.

The bottom-line is that through Confession and Absolution and the Lord’s Supper, you will leave the Divine Service assured of your forgiveness and the promise of life everlasting through Christ Jesus! Praise to You, O Christ! Amen!✠

The Rev. Dr. Cary G. Larson serves The AALC as Presiding Pastor.



What is Absolution?

By Rev. Mark Raitz

“Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Over the course of our lives, we have heard and continue to hear these precious words spoken at the beginning of the Divine Service. We make a general confession of our sins before God, and the pastor speaks these words of God’s grace and forgiveness to us as believers. What does this absolution statement mean? Well, absolution, is taken from the verb, to “absolve,” which means to “set or declare (someone) free,” “to pardon, to loose” – in other words: to forgive sin.

To receive absolution means that Jesus Christ has atoned for all our sins, and that God has forgiven them. God takes our sins and removes them as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103). It also means that this forgiveness, which in the Gospel is proclaimed, is an accomplished fact by Christ, and this absolution is by the pastor offered, applied, and assured to those that make confession. In Luther’s *Small Catechism*, Confession Question #330 says it this way: “When the pastor absolves us

– that is, says, ‘I forgive you all your sins’ – he speaks with Christ’s authority and on behalf. Therefore, we can firmly believe that God Himself has completely forgiven our sins.”¹

Now absolution spoken by the pastor does not mean he does the actual forgiving, for only God can forgive as Mark 2:7 says, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” In *Praying Luther’s Small Catechism*, Dr. John Pless writes: “Because it is Christ’s word, the absolution is sure and certain. . . . God alone has the power to forgive sins. This He has done by His own suffering and death for the sins of the whole world. The forgiveness accomplished at Calvary, announced at Easter, is now contained in the words spoken by the Lord’s servant: ‘Your sins are forgiven you.’”²

Without complete atonement for our sins by Christ Jesus, (“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” Eph 1:7; “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” 1 John 2:2) and without God having previously forgiven our sins (“In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” 2 Cor 5:19), there could be no forgiveness by the pastor.

We regard the absolution as if it is pronounced by God Himself and in no way doubt, but firmly believe, that our sins are forgiven before God in heaven. We can be sure of the words of absolution, because in them, the pastor proclaims God's total forgiveness, and we have Jesus' words of assurance: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them" John 20:23, and "Truly, I say to you . . . whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" Matt 18:18.

It is important to remember that God forgives our sins, not because of any works or worthiness in us, but because of His grace, for Christ's sake. Paul says, "For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:22-24). And again, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph 1:7).

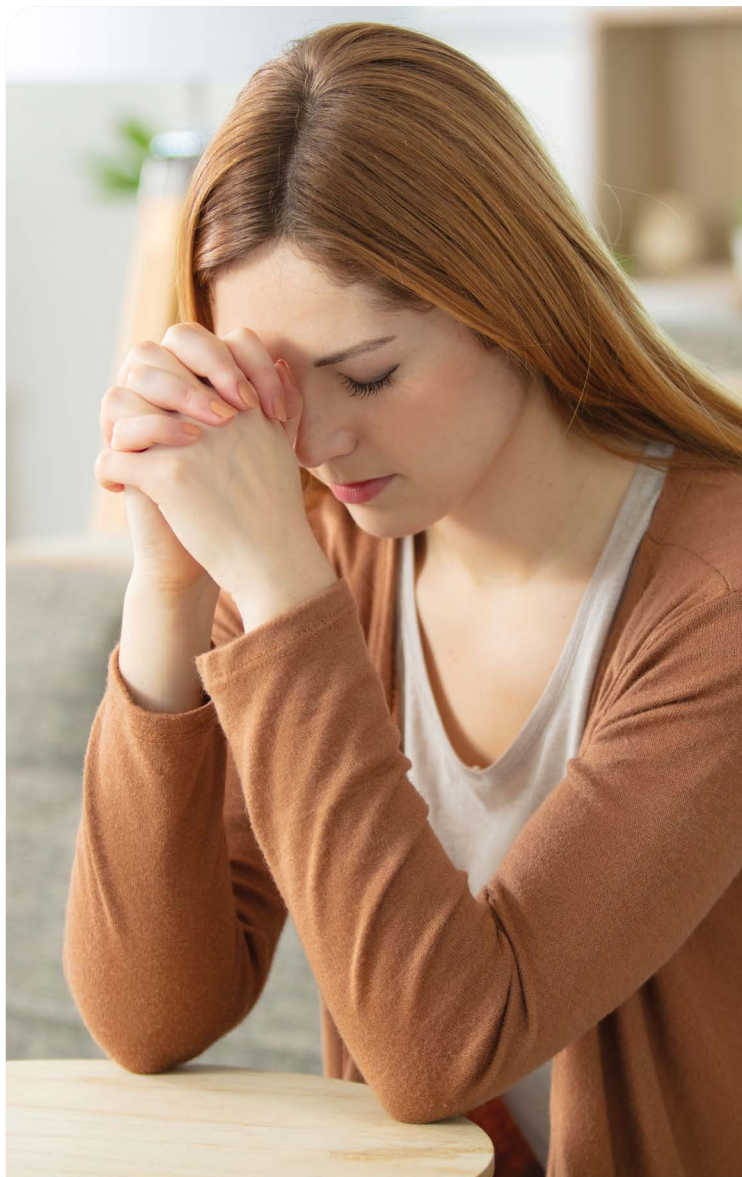
The grace of God does not include any work that we think we can do, but rests solely on the work of Jesus Christ. God did not forgive sins without full atonement having been made. Instead of demanding full payment of us, God sent Jesus to be our Substitute, who in our place fulfilled the Law and paid the penalty of our guilt. God forgives our sins completely because of Christ – of this we can have absolute confidence. In The Augsburg Confession, Article XXV states: "Our people are taught that they should highly prize the absolution as being God's voice and pronounced by God's command."³

And from the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*:

It is a declaration of the grace of God to repentant sinners. . . The communicants, having had the Word of God applied to themselves in admonition and promise, make public confession of their sins, also of their faith in the forgiveness state their willingness to amend their sinful lives, and are there upon given the assurance of the grace of God in the simple and stately words of the formula of absolution. It is immaterial whether this proclamation be termed a "Declaration of Grace" or "Absolution." In either case the forgiveness of sins declared in the Gospel is actually transmitted to all believers.⁴

So trust and believe in the sure assurance of God's forgiveness, as it is spoken by your pastor in the words of the absolution.†

The Rev. Mark Raitz serves Christ Lutheran Church, Duluth, MN.



*The grace of God does not
include any work that we think
we can do, but rests solely on
the work of Jesus Christ.*

¹ Dr. Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 310.

² John T. Pless, *Praying Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016), 107.

³ McCain, Paul Timothy (Ed.), *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 50.

⁴ Lueker, Erwin L. (Ed.), *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1954), 2.



Confession



Private Confession and Absolution

By Rev. Phillip Hofinga and Mr. Eklin Ehrman

Private confession and absolution, or what used to be called “the Sacrament of Penance,” has fallen into disuse in American Lutheranism. It may not surprise you that it is not common in our Lutheran churches, yet it may surprise you that it once was. Once upon a time, it was exercised in many of our churches as a part of announcement and examination for communion, the echoes of which are still around in some of our older congregations in the form of communion registration.

The concerns that this article wishes to address are three: 1) that the reformers never intended to do away with private confession and absolution; 2) that we have replaced it with something that Luther and the Lutheran fathers rejected – namely, *corporate* confession and corporate absolution; and 3) that the life and ministry of our churches is compromised because we have neglected private confession and absolution, and because of that with which we have replaced it.

It was never the intention of Luther or the Lutheran fathers to do away with private confession and absolution, only to reform and liberate it from the corruption that characterized the practice in the late medieval, western church.¹ Luther had great praise for the practice in its proper usage. He wrote in his sermon of March 16, 1522, at Wittenberg: “...I will allow no man to take private confession away from me and I would not give it up for all the treasures in the world, since I know what comfort and strength it has given me.”² Likewise, our confessions boast of the retention of the practice within the Reformation churches. The Augsburg Confession states not only that “[o]ur churches teach that private absolution should be retained in the churches,” but that “[t]he custom has been retained among us of not administering that sacrament to those who have not previously been examined and absolved.”³

The history of how private confession and absolution came to be supplanted by a corporate confession and absolution is longer and more complicated than can be addressed here. A survey of our hymnals over the last 100 years shows the transition, however. *The American Lutheran Hymnal* of 1930 included no corporate absolution, only a scriptural declaration of grace.⁴ *The Service Book and Hymnal* of 1958 includes what is more like a petition for

grace on behalf of the congregation.⁵ However, Concordia’s *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) has, in the order for Holy Communion, the performative absolution, “I forgive you all your sins...,” giving the impression that this is to be pronounced generally to the whole congregation.⁶

While we find no indication of a movement or intention to specifically do away with private confession and absolution, yet the reality on the ground seems to be that corporate confession and absolution has supplanted it. The performative absolution spoken over the congregation gives the appearance of mitigating the need for anything else. Private confession has ceased to be a part of our regular discipline in preparation for Holy Communion as had been the practice of our churches for centuries. Though a deep dive into the reasons for this is beyond the scope of this article, the suspicion cannot be far away that expedience is the primary factor; that communion announcement, examination and private confession and absolution became simply too time consuming for our fast-paced world.⁷

What, then, are the implications for the life and ministry of our churches? Corporate absolution allows the individual to blend in with the crowd and to nurture the false reassurance that one’s sins are no worse than the next person’s sins, which removes the focus from the body and blood of Christ given for the forgiveness of sins to a general dictum like, “well, we’re all sinners anyway.” Thus, the seriousness of sin is diminished, and by logical implication, its remedy is also diminished. A generalized, corporate absolution makes both the Law and the Gospel ambiguous; it takes the edge off the Law and the Gospel by speaking in generalities rather than speaking into the specifics of our lives. Rather than shining a light into the darkened corners of our sinfulness, thereby liberating us from darkness, it shines a light over our heads and identifies us with the crowd.

This has profound implications for the life of our congregations, especially with respect to what we call “fellowship.” The givenness of our fallen-ness replaces redemption as the bond of fellowship. But our redemption in Christ, not our mutual guilt, is the foundation of unity. And so, St. Paul admonishes us to bear each other’s burdens: “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any

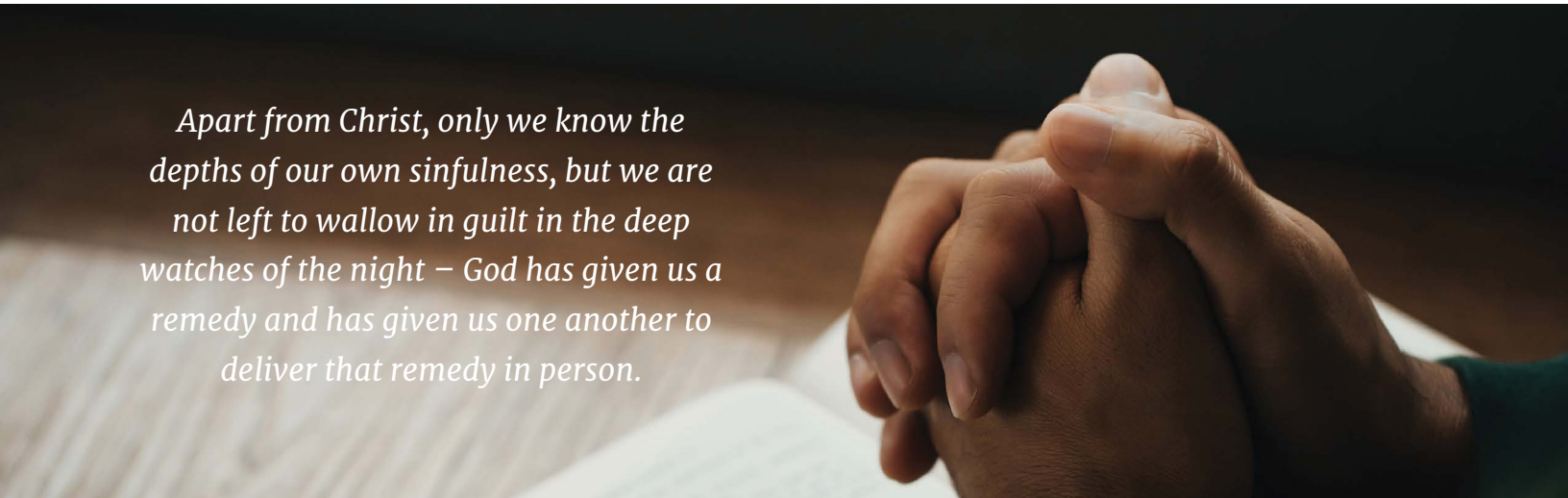
transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness...Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:1-2). The *modus operandi* of the Church is first and foremost restoration. Even the point of church discipline is ultimately that the sinner be restored, and it is in restoration of the sinner that s/he is found to be a part of the church, the fellowship of believers. But as you may have noticed, church discipline is all but non-existent in our churches today.

This, in turn, has implications for how we understand ourselves in relation to Christ and His Church. We are part of a body of believers that has been given power, authority, and the mission of reconciliation. In our weakest moments it is insufficient to simply blend in with the other sinners. Apart from Christ, only we know the depths of our own sinfulness, but we are not left to wallow in guilt in the deep watches of the night – God has given us a remedy and has given us one another to deliver that remedy in person. Dietrich Bonhoeffer rightly observed that "the Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure."⁸ By neglecting private confession and absolution, we relinquish a most important

tool for disarming Satan of his accusations against us.

There are other concerns raised by the replacement of private confession and absolution by a general, *corporate* absolution. Not least of these is whether corporate absolution can really constitute responsible pastoral care. This is a discussion for the clergy. Yet it is highly unlikely that there are any clergy in our association that are unwilling to hear private confession and grant absolution. Making this clear to our congregations and establishing office hours for this purpose would constitute an important step by the clergy in restoring this practice. But if this important ministry is to be restored in practice, laity and clergy alike must avail themselves of it, so that we, as St. Paul prays for us, "may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:18-19).†

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Apart from Christ, only we know the depths of our own sinfulness, but we are not left to wallow in guilt in the deep watches of the night – God has given us a remedy and has given us one another to deliver that remedy in person.

1 The "Sacrament of Penance," as it was called, had become distorted in ways that reflected the general obfuscation of the Gospel common to the Church of Rome at the time and had therefore become usefully lucrative to that same institution – hence the sale of indulgences that we usually recognize as one of the key catalysts for the Reformation. In the late medieval Church, the substance of the Sacrament of Penance was thought to be sincere contrition, accurate enumeration of all sins, and acts of penitence prescribed by the priest. By these works, the penitent could become worthy to receive absolution. Absolution, in turn, was its form, and was not so much the pronouncement of the Word and promise of God by the priest, but the exercise of the authority of Rome that came down from the Pope, through the Bishop to the parish priest. Luther decried this inversion as well as the compulsion that accompanied it.

2 M. Luther, "The Eighth Sermon, Malch 16, 1522, Reminiscere Sunday," in *Luther's Works*. American Edition (Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 98.

3 Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 34 & 61.

4 *American Lutheran Hymnal* (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1930), 8.

5 *Service Book and Hymnal of the Lutheran Church in America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1958), 2. Interestingly, the Order for Public Confession (p. 249), intended as a service for preparation for communion the day before the administration of the Sacrament, includes this option: "...I declare unto you who do truly repent and believe in him, the entire forgiveness of all your sins." This includes the seemingly optional instruction for the pastor to absolve each penitent individually. An additional option has the pastor say, "by the same authority, I declare to the impenitent and unbelieving..."

6 *The Lutheran Hymnal* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 16.

7 Ed. Fred Precht, *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995), 358.

8 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954) 23.



The Lord's Supper



Faith Alone Receives the Sacrament Worthily

By Rev. Greg Stenzel

Many Christians, especially those who take their sin seriously, approach the Lord's Table with hesitation. They ask themselves: "Am I truly worthy to receive this Sacrament?" Troubled consciences often equate worthiness with moral performance, emotional intensity, or the absence of lingering sin, which often leads either to despair or presumption. The better question is not, "Am I good enough?" but rather, "Do I believe the words: 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins?'"

The Lutheran Confessions teach that the Lord's Supper is not a reward for the righteous but a gift for sinners. Worthiness is not measured by spiritual achievement but by faith alone in Christ's promise. The Sacrament of the Altar is the Gospel in physical form—Christ given and received. For those burdened by sin and longing for grace, the answer is not to withdraw, but to draw near in faith.

Faith and Worthiness

Luther teaches us in his catechism, "He is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.' But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared."¹

This is the heart of what we believe, teach, and confess regarding the Lord's Supper: it is received worthily by faith alone. Faith clings to the promise of Christ and takes Him at His word. The

Supper is not a test of devotion or a badge of spiritual superiority; it is a means of grace. Faith, even if weak or troubled, is the only fitting preparation.

The Sacrament is not dependent on our personal holiness. In fact, we ought to be careful not to measure our worthiness by inner feeling or external behavior. The Supper is for those who recognize their need, not for those who think they have no need.

Faith does not make the Sacrament real—Christ's words do that. But faith is what receives its benefits. As our teenagers learn in confirmation class: "...whoever believes the words has what they declare and bring."² To come to the Supper without faith is like holding out one's hands and then refusing to grasp the treasure placed in them.

Christ's Institution

At the center of the Lord's Supper is not our action but Christ's. What makes this meal what it is? The answer lies in the words of institution: "Take, eat; this is My body... Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood... given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:26–28).

These words are not symbolic or ceremonial. They are performative words—in other words, they do what they say. Christ's promise makes the Sacrament what it is. As the Formula

of Concord teaches, “In the administration of the Holy Supper the words of institution of Christ are to be publicly spoken or sung before the congregation distinctly and clearly, and should in no way be omitted... This is for the sake of the command of Christ: ‘Do this,’ which includes the recitation of the words of institution.”³

The power and efficacy of the Supper are grounded in Christ’s institution, not in the worthiness of the minister or the fervor of the recipient. One who followed Luther puts it this way: “The power and benefit of the Supper do not rest on the dignity or worthiness of the one receiving it, but on the promise and truth of Christ.”⁴

The Formula of Concord further teaches: “Jesus Christ’s true and almighty words, which He spoke at the first institution, were effective not only at the first Supper. They endure, are valid, operate, and are still effective.”⁵ Even when our faith is weak or our conscience is burdened, the Sacrament is not diminished. The reality of what we receive does not change with our feelings. Rather, it is grounded in the objective Word and promise of Jesus Christ. Years ago, I heard someone say that what matters most is not the strength of our grasp, but the truth of what is given.

Application to the Baptized

Even baptized believers who trust in Christ’s promise can struggle with their sense of unworthiness. The devil, our own flesh, and the world often conspire to make us feel too sinful, too weak, too broken to approach the Lord’s Table. But the very purpose of the Sacrament is to bring comfort and strength to sinners who know their need.

We go to the Sacrament because we are poor, miserable people, to use Luther’s language. We go because we are unworthy; “this is true unless we are talking about someone who desires no grace and absolution, nor intends to change.”⁶

The truly unworthy Christian is not the one who struggles with sin and weakness, but the one who refuses to repent. As Christ says, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Matt 9:12).

Repentance acknowledges our sin and our need; faith believes Christ’s words and receives His gifts. Even a weak or doubting faith—so long as it clings to Christ’s promise—is enough.

This treasure is opened and placed at everyone’s door. But it is necessary that you hold it and confidently view it as the words tell you.

To those burdened by guilt, Christ says, “Come.” To those who fear they are not ready, He says, “Take and eat... this is for you.” And to all who trust His Word, He gives Himself fully and freely.

Role of the Church

The Church has the joyful task of stewarding the Lord’s Supper in such a way that it directs all eyes to Christ. The role of the Church is not to set up barriers, but to faithfully administer Christ’s gift according to His Word.

This means that the Church proclaims the Gospel clearly, teaches the meaning of the Sacrament, and invites the penitent to come in faith. In doing so, the Church upholds the integrity of the Sacrament and brings comfort to Christ’s people.

Faithful pastoral care helps the baptized prepare—not by heaping on guilt, but by pointing to Christ. Instruction in the faith, opportunities for confession and absolution, and clear preaching of Christ crucified all serve to make the Sacrament a source of joy rather than anxiety.

The Church does not own the Supper; she receives it from the Lord and offers it in His name. The task is to make clear that this is a table of grace: not a prize for the perfect, but a gift for the penitent.

Faith alone receives the Sacrament worthily because faith alone takes Christ at His Word. We do not earn a place at the Table; we are invited by grace. The Supper is Christ’s gift to His Church—a gift of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

No Baptized Christian should stay away out of fear that they are not good enough. That is precisely why Christ instituted this meal: to strengthen the weak, to assure the penitent, and to comfort the conscience. What Christ gives, He gives freely, and faith receives it with joy.

Come, then, not because you are worthy, but because Christ is. †

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1 Martin Luther, *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 29.

2 Ibid.

3 McCain, Paul Timothy (Ed.), *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 574.

4 Martin Chemnitz, J.A.O. Preus, trans., *The Lord’s Supper* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 209.

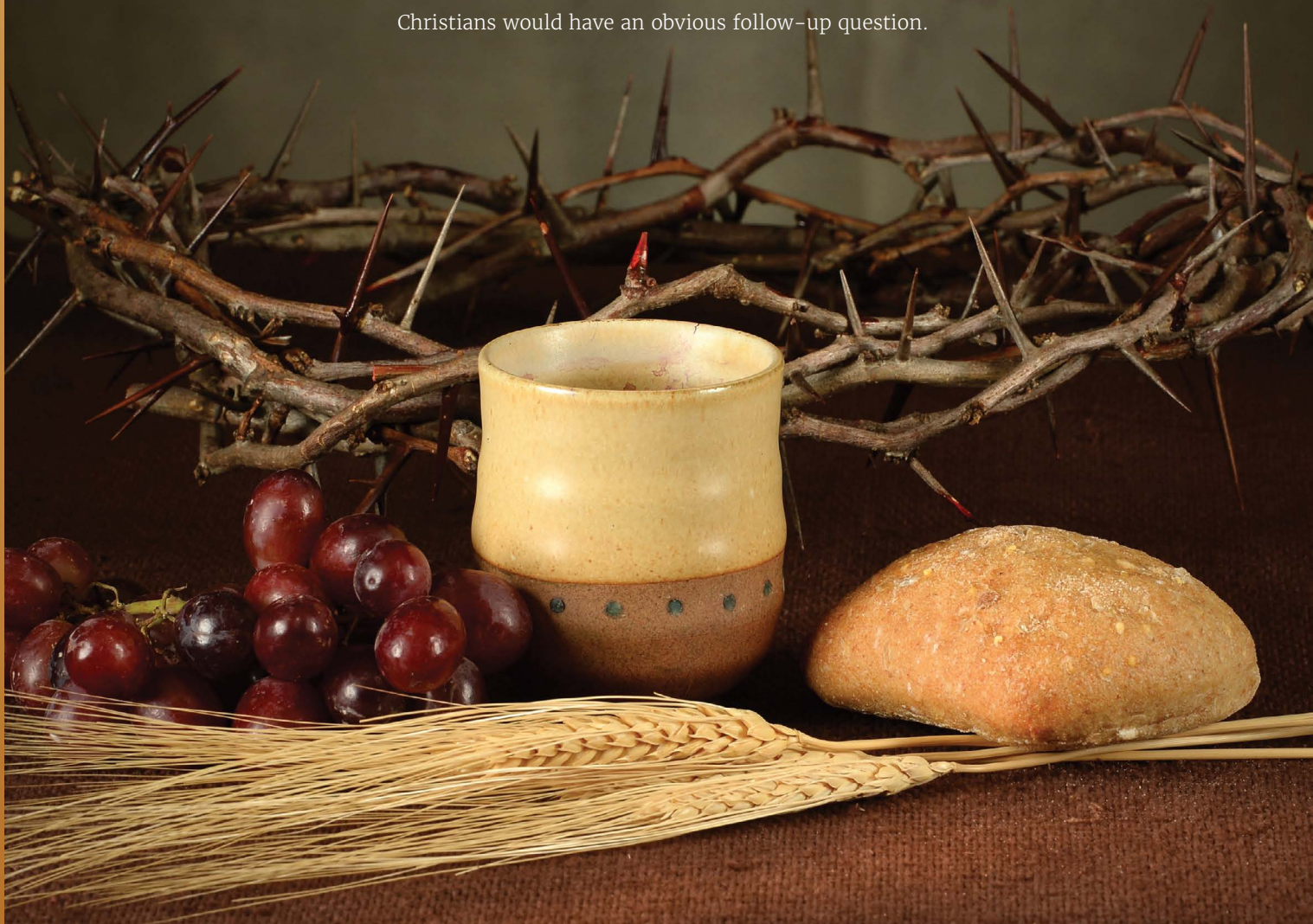
5 McCain, P. T., 574.

6 Ibid., 438.

Christ's Body and Blood

By Rev. Dr. Chris Caughey

“How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?” Well, the answer is simple. But I think the context of Luther’s question helps us to understand the answer even better. That’s because the questions and answers in the *Small Catechism* build on each other. Luther seems to have been reasoning that once he gave an answer to the first question, new Christians would have an obvious follow-up question.



Our sins really are, actually and truly, forgiven when we eat Jesus' body with the bread and drink His blood with the wine.



So it is helpful to observe that the answer to the *previous* question—“What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?” —is that our sins really are, actually and truly, forgiven when we eat Jesus' body with the bread and drink His blood with the wine. Jesus' real human body and His real human blood save us and give us eternal life as we eat and drink them in the Holy Sacrament.

So, what is the answer to our question about how bodily eating and drinking can do such great things? Simply put, bodily eating and drinking can do such great things because—and only because—God's Word gives exactly what He says, and does exactly what He says. Without God's Word, the Sacrament of the Altar is simply bread and wine and a man in funny clothes.

But let's remember that a word can refer to more than one thing in the real world. In our daily lives, we usually use the word “word” to refer to a combination of letters that are written with ink on paper (or with pixels on a screen), or spoken. And it is absolutely true that God's written Word—which tells us that Jesus' body was given for you and that His blood was *shed for you for the remission of your sins*—God's written Word tells us that Jesus' body and blood, in, with, and under the bread and the wine give us forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. And the question that confronts each person who reads those words in the Bible is: Do I believe those words?

If you *do* believe those words— “given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins” —then you have exactly what those words say: forgiveness of your sins. If you do not believe those words, you still eat Jesus' body with the bread, and you still drink Jesus' blood with the wine, but you do not have the forgiveness of your sins.

How can that be? How can you eat Jesus' body and drink His blood, but not have the forgiveness of your sins? The answer has to do with another real-world thing that the word “word” refers to. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This is an unusual use of the word “Word,” but it is an important use. In John 1:1, the word “Word” refers to Jesus and not to a combination of letters. Jesus is the Word of God in a way that is more basic, more primary, and more fundamental than the written word of God that we call the Bible.

So the Word of God verbally and audibly spoke the words that make the sacrament what it is, and Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote down the words of God for us to have with us always in our Bibles.

The Word of God (Jesus) said the words, “Take eat; this is My body,” and “Drink of it, all of you, for this is My blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:26–28). So the Word of God (Jesus) makes the bread to be His body, and He makes the wine to be His blood. That means that everyone who eats the consecrated bread and drinks the consecrated wine, really does receive Jesus' true body and blood. But only those who *believe* the Word of God receive the forgiveness of their sins, eternal life, and salvation. Those who eat and drink the true body and blood of Jesus *without* believing the Word of God, eat and drink judgment on themselves because they have eaten and drunk unworthily (1 Cor 11:27–30).

You see, everyone has a relationship with Jesus. He is either your Savior, or He is your Judge. In the same way, everyone who eats the consecrated bread and drinks the consecrated wine, really does receive Jesus' true body and blood. But Jesus' body and blood saves the person who believes what Jesus says about the bread/body and the wine/blood, while the same bread/body and wine/blood condemn the person who does not believe.

So bodily eating and drinking really *does* do great things! When you eat the body and drink the blood of Jesus, not only are your sins forgiven—not only do you have eternal life—and not only do you have salvation—but Jesus unites Himself to you in a special way. In the Sacrament of the Altar, you are taking the body and blood of Jesus into your own body. That means He is working His own life into your life. Thanks be to God!

Bodily eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ gives you forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation because the incarnate Word of God says it does. If you believe that, and if you *need* forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation, then the Sacrament of the Altar should be the high point of the week for you. †

The Rev. Dr. Chris Caughey is an instructor at ALTS and serves the congregation of St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, Augusta, KY.

AALC Youth Conference Held

By Bethany Hironaka

A highlight for many at the youth conference is a hike to Bible Point at sunrise. Submitted photo.

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel..." (Phil 1:27).

Incoming 8th graders to outgoing 12th graders gathered together in Estes Park, CO, at the YMCA of the Rockies for The AALC National Youth Conference from July 14-18. While enjoying God's beautiful creation in the Rockies, our theme for the week was "Resilient" based on Philippians 1:27.

"Swen and Dean" Swenson led our kids each day through songs, dances, silly stories, and more. Our Youth Commission and Planning Team members hosted minute-to-win-it games that sparked friendly but fierce competition, earning them Oreos, Gatorade, and high fives (the best prize of them all, if you ask me). We were blessed to have Rev. Gabe Kasper be our speaker again, who brought home the message of what it means to have resilient faith in Jesus. Our worship team members included Brad Longstreth, Bethany Hironaka, Scott Strosahl, Logan Hegna, and Mark Wiita.

Workshops were held Tuesday through Thursday on the following topics:

- "Here I Am... Lord?" – Rev. Dr. Cary Larson
- "Ask the Pastor with Pastor Joe" and "From Water to Witness: Living Out Our Baptismal Identity and Calling" – Rev. Joe Dapelo
- "Christian Dating in a World of Talking Stages and Situationships" – Bethany Hironaka
- "Jesus at the Heart. Live His Love. Lead His Way" – Swen Swenson
- "Missions" – Danielle Miner
- "Sexuality in the Digital Age" and "Keeping Your Faith After You Graduate" – Rev. Gabe Kasper
- "How AI is Changing Us and Our Future" – Ryan Christ
- "From the Outside (How Does Jesus Actually Save Us?)" – Rev. Antonio Romano
- "Soul & Song: Two Brothers' Journey in Faith" – Swen and Dean
- "Life Hurts" – Pastor Dean Swenson
- "How to Study the Bible" – Rev. Len Brokenshire
- "Explore the True History of Creation" and "Jesus' Life, Death, and Resurrection" – Brad Longstreth
- "A Light Created on Purpose" – Kris Johnson
- "Real Talk: Faith and Identity as a Teen" – Kate Houser (youth) and Bethany Hironaka
- "The Weapon of the Word" – Brady Andersen



During our morning sessions, youth were able to have “Hang Time with God,” personal guided devotion time to examine Scripture and dive into the topic of the day. Our mission outreach this year, organized by Kris Johnson, was to assist the YMCA facilities with laundry and picking up trash around campus. After each nightly session, individual youth groups met for small group devotions and to reflect on the experiences and learnings of the day.

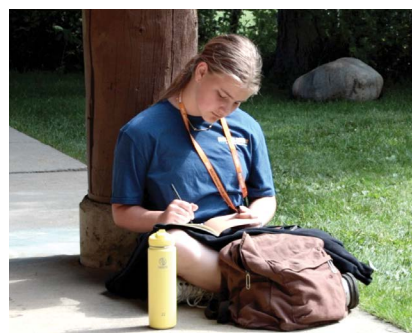
There were many other activities offered each day, including “Sven and Dean’s Variety Hour” talent show, sunrise hike to Bible Point, mini golf, basketball, sand volleyball, flag football, arts and crafts, somewhat successful crowd surfing, and so much more.

One of the most moving parts of this whole week is our service of Holy Communion on Thursday night. After we partake of the body and blood of our Lord, youth are given the opportunity to be individually prayed for by sponsors. What’s even more moving to see is youth praying for other youth, holding each other, lifting praise with tears streaming down their faces.

There is no denying the Holy Spirit’s presence throughout this week as our youth are free of distractions from home life, school obligations, work, or otherwise. Through our program presenters, worship team, and workshops, we learned that clinging to who we are in Christ is key to us surviving the challenges life brings.

Many people have given their time, talents, and treasures to make this week happen for these incredible children of God. Thank you to our Youth Commission and Planning Team members for their leadership, dedication, and love of Christ as they have been working diligently on this conference year after year. Our Commission and Planning Team members are: Rev. Len Brokenshire, Mark Wiita, Bethany Hironaka, Kris Johnson, Brad Longstreth, Scott Strosahl, and Rachel Shewmaker. Thank you to Rev. Joe Dapelo for assisting in organizing workshops this year.

It’s almost indescribable to accurately put into words the blessing it is to witness the amount of growth that can happen in a span of five days in the lives of these kids. Some of our returning students were beyond excited, while our newcomers were a little apprehensive about all that there is to come. Some came seeking to feel that mountaintop high again, while others probably wished they were back at home. Over the course of our week, I watched youth turn to one another, and their sponsors, for comfort, encouragement, advice, and prayer. I heard them powerfully and loudly praising God, almost a foretaste of what’s to come when God calls us all home someday. They picked up trash with joy and did laundry with servants’



Top: The annual group photo on the grounds of the YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, CO. Above: Students had daily devotions, activities, and workshops throughout the week. Submitted photos.

continued on page 14



Scenes from The AALC National Youth Conference: attendees were refreshed by fellowship with other believers, special speakers and workshops, presenters including Swen and Dean, music, a service project of helping the YMCA with laundry, and a communion service held the final evening. Submitted photos.

continued from page 13

hearts. They worshipped with Swen and Dean, were captivated by Pastor Gabe's messages, and sat in silence with God during times of devotion.

More importantly – and, for some, perhaps for the first time – it all finally clicked that they don't have to live this life alone. They don't have to go through challenges alone. They can cling to the cross where Jesus died and be made strong in the One who fights for them daily. They learned nothing can separate them from the love of God and who they are can be found in Him, and who He has called them to be. Burdens were lifted, joy was restored, friendships were made and others were strengthened, the road to healing was forged, the Gospel was preached, God was glorified, the Body and Blood were received, the waters of Baptism were poured out, and Christ was proclaimed! Thank you, Jesus, for all of Your great gifts!

At Jesus' transfiguration, Peter is absolutely ready, able, and willing to pitch a tent and remain with our Lord. Can you blame him? Who wouldn't? Many of our kids experience the same feeling as Peter did 2,000 years ago. They want to remain on their mountaintop high where there are no distractions, responsibilities, or the pressures they feel from home. They crave to feel God's presence as strongly as they did while we were all together.

As we know, Jesus told Peter he couldn't stay on the mountain. Jesus and His disciples had to journey down the mountain so He could die and rise from the grave. The disciples had to witness

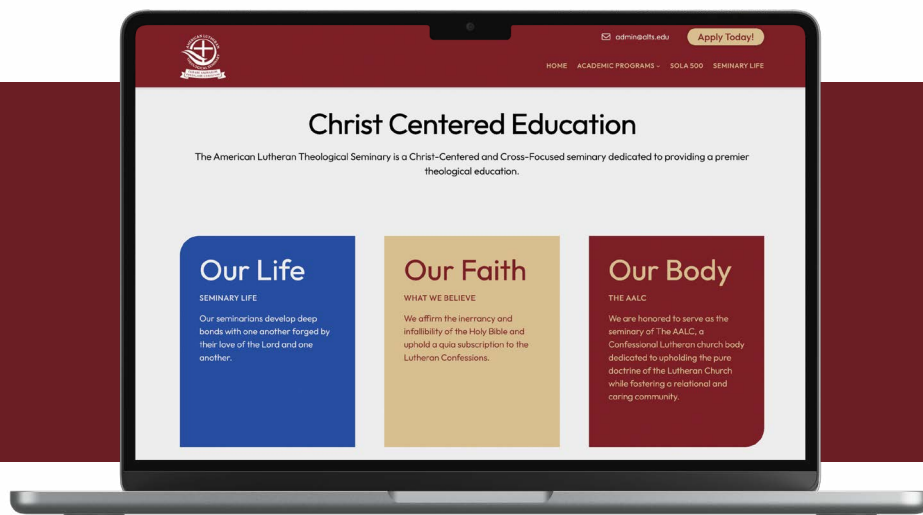
the last moments of Jesus' ministry, watch the Word be fulfilled, proclaim Christ throughout the nations, and begin the Church.

Our kids have come back home to their everyday lives. School, sports, extracurriculars, part-time jobs, mental health struggles, family hardships, and the busyness they constantly experience. I urge you to not only keep them in your prayers, but build them up as the people God has called them to be. Remind them of their purpose, identity, and where their true hope is found. Encourage them to boldly pursue the calling and plans God has for them at home, away from the mountain.

In a world that seeks to bring them down, it is our responsibility as the Church to come alongside the youth so they continue to have resilient faith in the God that loves them so much that He sent His Son to die for them. What a beautiful, yet important, responsibility we have been given.

On behalf of the Commission, Planning Team, and youth, thank you all for your support financially and in prayer. Creating a wonderful week is a responsibility we do not take lightly, and it is an honor to be a part of such a monumental week full of faith, love, and unity. We look forward to what God has in store for the Youth Conference in 2027! †

Bethany Hironaka serves on the Commission for Youth Activities and is a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Elk Grove, CA.



ALTS Website Redesign & Digital Outreach

By John Austin

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Over the past few years, the American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) has been blessed with remarkable growth. Our overall student body has grown by roughly four to five times since 2019 and expanded to include students from across the world. God is doing marvelous things in our church body and seminary. It has truly been an answer to all our prayers. Even with this unprecedented growth, we are able to maintain the affordability and accessibility to our programs to ensure we are able to serve anyone who is seeking quality theological education and formation. ALTS is the premier Confessional Lutheran seminary accessible to the world!

With this opportunity provided to us by our Lord, it is vital we mobilize our efforts online to reach even more students across the globe. So, the seminary set forth to begin the development of a revamped website (developed by Aaron Overly-Graham and Remy Sheppard) and social media materials (produced by myself, John Austin) to share who we are with even more people.

For our website, we sought to make it even more welcoming with a clear and simple presentation of everything a prospective student would need to know: degree program information, cost, seminary culture, formation, and more. This website is often the very first introduction to our seminary so it needed to be authentic, welcoming, and approachable. It has a modern design which better reflects the seminary as it is today and ensures a more accessible layout to better discover who we are. It is to shine a light on our institution in a darkening world to show that we are ready and able to care for them should they seek to join our seminary. You can see this website now at www.alts.edu.

Alongside this website, we have been producing videos and other digital materials of our faculty, staff, and students so visitors may get to know us in an even more personal way. They are to engage the visitor by introducing them to the individuals which make up ALTS and provide a venue to communicate more deeply how we view the preparation and formation of future pastors, church workers, and theologians. The first wave of videos focuses on our professors so visitors can begin getting to know the professors they will see in class before even applying to our seminary. Moreover, this media allows us to share from our in-person gatherings such as the lectures from the Gospel of John Summer Study we had this past June. The second wave of videos will focus on testimonials from our student body. All of these videos now and in the future are accessible on ALTS' YouTube channel which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@theamericanlutherantheolog548>. Some of the videos will also be shown on our website where applicable.

For both our website and social media materials, this is just the beginning of what we have planned. This is a lifelong endeavor for the seminary as we seek to provide theological education to anyone who needs it.

In the meantime, please keep praying for our seminary and for the Lord to keep sending us new students to form. Furthermore, if you have any questions regarding ALTS and are interested in learning more please do contact us, and we will be happy to serve you in any way we can. Thank you for your support and know we are praying for you always. God's blessings upon you.✚

John Austin is a seminarian at American Lutheran Theological Seminary and works as a software engineer.



Church News



Left to Right: Rev. Dr. Jordan Cooper provides an update on the seminary to the group gathered for the Eastern Region's conference. St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Charleston, WV, was the host. The assembly gathered for the business meetings and special presentations. Submitted photos.

Eastern Region Gathers in West Virginia

The Eastern Region of The AALC met at St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Charleston, WV, for its July 2025 gathering. Over twenty pastors, laypersons, and seminarians convened to worship, elect regional representatives to The AALC's various commissions and committees, receive reports from the Presiding Pastor and ALTS, be edified by presentations from Drs. Cooper and Caughey, and enjoy times of rest and fellowship. An enormous word of gratitude is extended to the members of St. Timothy for their gracious hospitality, delicious food, and participation in the worship services throughout the gathering.

We were blessed to hear sermons from Rev. Dr. Cary Larson and Revs. Joe Christina and Nigel Brown (who also did the bulk of planning the worship). Additionally, Dr. Cooper's and Dr. Caughey's presentations on the Holy Trinity and Biblical Theology

were as usual enlightening and helpful as we strive to remain faithful to Holy Scripture and sound Christian doctrine in word and deed. Sometimes it's easy to forget the value and importance of meeting together with brothers and sisters in the faith of Jesus so that we might be refreshed and strengthened to carry on in our own vocations throughout the year.

All those elected were installed by Presiding Pastor Rev. Dr. Cary Larson during the closing Divine Service. Our prayers continue to be with them—and everyone throughout The AALC who were elected to various positions—that in their service they seek to honor and glorify God and make decisions that will facilitate The AALC to continue to faithfully share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the local communities, the country, and the world.†

"The Good Samaritan"

The Sunday School children of Faith Lutheran Church of Watseka, IL put on a skit called "The Good Samaritan." This is one of several times they have blessed the congregation with their talents. Another Sunday, they sang "The B-I-B-L-E" and "This Little Light of Mine." On Palm Sunday, they marched around the congregation waving the palms. Then they marched again, carrying wooden crosses and singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "I'm in the Lord's Army." They love singing and performing for the members and the Lord! A hearty applause was their reward.† Submitted photo.





Rev. Orlando Hash Celebrates Anniversary

This year Rev. Orlando Hash celebrates 65 years since his ordination. In January of 1953, after hearing a foreign missionary speak at Waldorf College in Forest City, IA, Orlando returned to the house where he was living and prayed two or three hours about God's will for his future. He felt God calling him into the ministry. After graduating from Waldorf College and Luther College in Decorah, IA, Orlando attended Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul. He was ordained into the ministry to serve as a missionary in Japan in 1960.



Rev. Orlando Hash celebrated the 65th anniversary of his ordination into the ministry. Submitted photo.

Rev. Hash and his wife, Herdis, and children, Paul and Elaine, moved to Tokyo in August of 1960 for language study before moving to Toyohashi in 1962 to serve the Lutheran church in Tahara. They also started a church in their house in 1963 and supervised the building of a church building.

Three more children, Melva, Kim, and Joel, were born into their family during this time. Rev. Hash continued to serve churches in Okazaki, Nagoya, and Tokoname. He also supervised the bookkeeping for the American Lutheran Church mission in Japan, since he had majored in business at Luther College. This required traveling to Tokyo frequently, which took over three hours each direction.

The Hash family returned to the United States in 1979. They moved to Minot, ND, where four ALC churches were wanting to start a new congregation in the town of Burlington, 8 miles northwest of Minot. The congregations asked Rev. Hash to start the worship service in Burlington in August 1979. Within a few months, this call to Peace Lutheran in Burlington became a two-point parish with Saron Lutheran Church southwest of Minot.

After the initial year, the two churches called another pastor, so Rev. Hash accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church in Columbus, ND, which was comprised of five rural churches in the Columbus area.

In 1985, he accepted the call to serve Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in Williston, ND, along with Rev. Elwood Rieke. In December of 1988, Our Redeemer's joined The American Association of Lutheran Churches.

In 1992, Rev. Hash was called to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Sidney, MT, where he served until he retired in June of 1995.

In retirement, Rev. Hash served as an interim pastor at Faith Lutheran Church (AALC) in Columbus, ND, before moving to Minnesota with Herdis in 1999.

Rev. Hash also served on the board for World Mission Prayer League. He volunteered as a bookkeeper for Eastern European Mission Network (currently Spiritual Orphans Network.) He is a member of Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Paul, MN, where, at 95, he still reads Scripture and helps out where he can. His wife of 62 years, Herdis, entered the Church Triumphant in March of 2019.✝

September 2025 PRAYER BOOKMARK

1. Western Region TAALC
2. Christ the Ray of Hope Lutheran Church, Albuquerque, NM
3. Rev. Joseph Dapelo
4. For churches to teach the Lutheran Confessions
5. Christian Education Directors
6. For Call Committees
7. Rev. Darrel Deuel
8. To give our worries to God
9. Elim Lutheran Church, Brush Prairie, WA
10. Commission for Commissioned Church Workers
11. Rev. Rich Eddy
12. Sunday School Teachers
13. Commission for Women
14. Rev. Dr. James Hoefer
15. To study the Sacrament of the Altar
16. Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Bremerton, WA
17. For the Spirit to lead us to repentance
18. Rev. Roger Twito
19. For all learning what it means to be a Lutheran
20. Rev. Dr. Richard Shields
21. Nominating Committee
22. National Mediation Board
23. Rev. Michael Holsten
24. To believe the Lord's Supper gives us life
25. For Biennial Convention preparations
26. To believe the Lord's Supper forgives our sins
27. Rev Gary Koutsopoulos
28. For prospective Seminary Students
29. Local Community
30. Those elected to leadership positions



October 2025

PRAYER BOOKMARK

1. Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church, Frazier Park, CA
2. Military Chaplains
3. Rev. Tim Cartwright
4. To receive absolution in faith
5. Rev. John Morley
6. Outreach Ministries
7. Rev. Poul Erik Norgaard
8. To confess our sins of commission and omission
9. Sonland Lutheran Church, Casa Grande, AZ
10. For all to believe in infallibility & inerrancy of Scripture
11. Commission for Pensions
12. Rev. Steve Klawonn
13. St Luke the Evangelist Lutheran Church, Jurupa Valley, CA
14. Rev. Jerry Storrs
15. For pastors considering a call
16. Publications Commission
17. St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Elk Grove, CA
18. For all to believe in Sola Scriptura/ Scripture Alone
19. Rev. Scott Yount
20. Julie Luther, Accountant
21. Pastors Conference
22. Rev. Jon Holst, ALTS Administrator
23. Protection for our military
24. Rev. Iestyn ap Hywel Jones
25. That the Office of the Keys be taught
26. Sunday School Kids
27. To receive the Lord's Supper in faith
28. Rev. Jon Christenson
29. To trust God's Word rather than our feelings
30. That we know the chief articles of our faith
31. Rev. Kent Sperry

Greater Heartland Region Conference Held



The assembly gathered had the privilege to hear special presentations from Rev. Antonio Romano (top), Rev. Matthew Fenn (left), and Rev. Dave Spotts (right). Submitted photos.

The Greater Heartland Region of The AALC held their biennial conference on June 12-13, 2025, Hosted by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Evansdale, IA. Conference theme was: "Jesus... the light of life" from John 8:12.

Around 36 clergy and delegates from 12 churches were in attendance from churches across the region in Iowa, Kansas, South Dakota, and Colorado.

Besides the business conducted, conference attendees were blessed to hear an update on ALTS (Seminary). Of note: 4 of the 9 students in the new Doctor of Ministry program are from the Greater Heartland Region. Presiding Pastor Rev. Dr. Cary Larson shared updates and future goals for the association. He encouraged churches to renew their focus on evangelism and world missions.

Special conference sessions focusing on the theme verse of John 8:12 were presented by Rev. Jamie Strickler (Otis, CO), Rev. Antonio Romano (Ames, IA), Rev. Dave Spotts (Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry), and Rev. Michael Badenhop (Waterloo, IA). †

WITTENBERG DOOR TURNS TEN!

By Martha Spotts

What does every ten-year-old want to eat on his birthday? Cake and ice cream, of course! And that's what was served at Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry's tenth birthday party, along with fried chicken and all the fixings. Twenty-one people from six nations gathered at the Spotts home in April 2025 to celebrate the big event and give thanks to God.

When Wittenberg Door began in 2015, we couldn't have anticipated the ways the Lord would lead the ministry during those years. We envisioned Bible studies in dorms and eating lots of pizza with undergraduates, but God had other ideas. While undergraduates do figure in to our outreach, the bulk of Wittenberg Door's ministry has been to graduate students and visiting scholars from abroad, many of whom bring their families with them. Rev. Dave Spotts began by offering his services as an English language coach through the office that oversees international students. His very first contact was with a visiting scholar from South Korea. Since then, he has coached many more visitors from South Korea, as well as Haiti, China, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Brazil, and Turkey. These coaching sessions have often opened the door to questions about Jesus and what it means to follow Him.

Every August, people from all over the globe arrive in Columbia to study at the University of Missouri, and they all have something in common: they need a ride from the airport to their apartments or hotels! By volunteering to pick students up, we are able to greet people who are feeling lost, exhausted, and a little bit bewildered with a friendly smile and offer of help. Sometimes, these initial meetings blossom into on-going friendships and subsequent opportunities to share the gospel.

Over the past ten years, Pastor Spotts has spent a lot of time simply hanging out on campus, making himself visible and available to students, staff, and faculty. Maybe you've seen pictures of his "Free Listens and Prayers" sign on social media. He has fielded many questions from students and others who are skeptical of or puzzled by Christian truth claims. He has been asked to pray for students facing family difficulties, relationship struggles, personal challenges, and, of course, tough examinations. Students have sought advice and counsel. Since they know they are talking to a pastor, they are in effect issuing an invitation for Pastor Spotts to share truth and wisdom from God's Word. They open the door, and he walks through it!

Pastor Spotts also spends time each week leading Bible studies for groups and for individuals. Attendees include Christians and non-

Christians alike. Often, they meet on campus in public spaces; sometimes, they meet in places adjacent to campus, such as restaurants. Occasionally, a Bible study happens on Zoom. Whatever the medium, God's Word is being taught and the gospel proclaimed.

One of Wittenberg Door's longstanding traditions is the biweekly Friday night dinner at the Spotts' home. International students receive the opportunity to visit an American home, eat American food, and practice their English with Americans. The food and fellowship is followed by a discussion centered around a biblical topic: What is sin? What is grace? What is the purpose of life? Who is Jesus?

Much of Pastor Spotts' ministry with undergraduates is with a fraternity. Eight years ago, he managed to get himself invited to eat dinner and attend the chapter meeting at the fraternity house every Monday. Over time, he has developed good relationships with many of the young men there, and three years ago, they asked him to lead a weekly Bible study.

These are some of the highlights of the past ten years of Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry. We are thankful to the Lord, the fountain and source of all goodness, for His faithful leading and provision. We are thankful for you, too—for your prayers and financial support! Without you, Wittenberg Door wouldn't be here to share the love of God with people from all corners of the globe—people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to hear that Jesus loves them and died so they may live.

As we reflect on the past ten years and look to the future, our goal is to have the financial means to pay a full-time chaplain so the work of Wittenberg Door may expand even farther. It would allow the chaplain to be fully and effectively focused on campus ministry without the distraction of meeting his financial obligations through other means.

Just as parents marvel at the growth of their children and wonder where the years have gone, we marvel and wonder at what God has done through Wittenberg Door over the past decade, and we look forward to what He will do over the next. Won't you join us? †



Scenes from the 10-year anniversary celebration held to honor the years of Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry serving college students in Columbia, MO. Submitted photos.

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UPCOMING EDITIONS...

Please be in prayer for these upcoming editions:

Nov/Dec: Table of Duties (*deadline Sept. 1*)

Themes for 2026: Six Church Seasons and High Feast Days

Jan/Feb: Epiphany (*deadline Nov. 1*)

Mar/Apr: Lent (*deadline Jan. 1*)

May/June: Easter (*deadline March 1*)

Jul/Aug: Pentecost (*deadline May 1*)

Sept/Oct: High Feast Days in the Church (*deadline July 1*)

Nov/Dec: Advent & Christmas (*deadline Sept. 1*)

Church News:

The Evangel welcomes submissions of what's happening in your congregation. To submit content, **email the editor** Gretchen Baker: theevangel@taalc.org

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