

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

THE LORD'S SUPPER SERIES:

What is it?

PAGE 6

su•per•flu•ous?

PAGE 8

MORE THAN A POSSIBILITY

PAGE 10

YOUNG BRANCHES:

TWO KINGDOMS

PAGE 14



IT IS WRITTEN:

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

Had to Rise

.....

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF OUR ELS:

Body snatchers! That was Mary Magdalene’s first thought. *“They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”* (John 20:2) Her mood shifted dramatically outside the empty tomb later that Sunday as her name “Mary” was spoken tenderly by an assumed gardener.

The emotions of the tomb-visiting women and the disillusioned disciples on the first Easter must have resembled a ride on a roller coaster. A grim funeral procession instantly turned into a stage for the most joyous celebration in world history — *“He is risen!”* Yet the reactions of Jesus’ followers may leave us a little puzzled. For example, Peter and John are recorded in John chapter 20 as being at the empty tomb, where John says of himself, *“He saw and believed.”* Then comes a curious statement: *“They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead”* (John 20:9).

Had to? Was Christ’s rising absolutely necessary? Definitely yes! — both from divine and human perspectives. Here are just some of the reasons this must be so:

- Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament Scriptures. The Messiah’s resurrection from the dead had been foretold: *“You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay”* (Psalm 16:10)
- Another reason: Jesus himself said he would rise. *“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days”* (John 2:19). On several occasions, he plainly indicated he would rise from the dead on the third day (Mark 10:34).
- Death could not hold him. Jesus has the authority even over this formidable enemy. He willingly gave his life. He willingly exercised his power to come out of the tomb (John 10:18).
- Christ is fully God. This also is why he had to rise. God cannot lie. Since our holy God put forth in Scripture the one-and-only true religion, which hinges on the great events of Good Friday and Easter, this required the resurrection of our Savior’s body. *“If Christ has not been raised,”* says the apostle Paul, *“your faith is futile; you are still in your sins”* (1 Corinthians 15:17).

- The most comforting reason of all for the *necessity* of Christ’s resurrection is this: It’s God’s *guarantee*. The resurrection is his “authorizing signature” that we sinners hold for our own personal possession the requisite righteousness for heaven. Jesus’ atoning sacrifice for our sins and for the sins of the world met — even exceeded! — the criteria of justice before the throne of the Almighty Judge. We are declared forgiven! *“He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised for [on account of] our justification,”* (Romans 4:25). The payment for sin was fully transacted at Calvary, so the Easter event had to occur.

***Enjoy these compelling reasons
for a blessed Easter!***



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IN THIS ISSUE:

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

MARCH-APRIL 2016

4 Devotional Series: Part 2
The Gospel According
to Isaiah
REV. JERRY GERNANDER

6 The Lord's Supper Series: 1
"What is it?"
REV. AARON HAMILTON

8 The Lord's Supper Series: 2
"Superfluous"
REV. TONY PITTEGER

10 The Lord's Supper Series: 3
"More than a Possibility"
PROF. MARK DEGARMEUX

12 Editor's Series:
Accidentally Lutheran Lyrics
REV. KYLE MADSON

14 Young Branches
PROF. ERLING TEIGEN

16 View from the Pew:
"An Odd Sort of Relief"
MRS. CHARLY BURLESON

.....
DEPARTMENTS:

- 2** From the President
- 11** Pastor, I Have a Question
- 13** Synod Synopsis



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the *Gospel* according to ISAIAH

PART 2: ISAIAH'S DIVINE CALL (ISAIAH 6)

Pastors are human. Except for the one who said, “*I Am the Good Pastor*” (John 10:11; the word *shepherd* is the same as pastor), every pastor is a sinner.

.....

Pastors have strengths and weaknesses. They have talents and faults. Because they are sinful humans, pastors can be lazy, become discouraged or bitter, complain about people, lose their patience, be overly harsh or judging, compromise their confession in a desire for approval, and struggle with doubt or unbelief. They may be slow to say they are sorry, and too slow to forgive.

People see the frailties of their pastors. They are tempted to concentrate on the failings of the pastor, to be bored with his sermons, to fault him for the church's failure to grow, be dissatisfied with him, or act offended when the pastor overlooks something or speaks or acts wrongly. They may contribute to the culture of criticism and blame that sometimes characterizes the visible church.

But God sends the pastor. The divine call of a pastor means God has called and sent that pastor to serve these people, and it is His will for the pastor to preach and teach His Word and for the people to gladly hear and learn it.

If we were in the divine throne room and both saw and heard the Lord Himself calling and sending our pastor, wouldn't we see the situation the right way?

Isaiah 6 actually shows this!

ISAIAH 6:1-4

> (Read the entire section from your Bible, or sing ELH #40, verse 1!)

Isaiah is a visually oriented prophet. Typically Isaiah does not only hear the Word of the Lord; he sees it: “*The word [or the vision] that Isaiah saw ...*” But this time, Isaiah says, “*I saw the Lord!*”

Whom exactly did Isaiah see? In John 12:41, after quoting Isaiah 6, the author of the fourth gospel says by divine inspiration, “*These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.*” St. John is speaking about Christ. He says that Isaiah saw Christ. This is one reason the great Bible translator St. Jerome said, “It seemed to me that Isaiah uttered not a prophecy but a gospel.”

Isaiah saw the only true God, the one God in three Persons, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58). A few verses later, this God will ask, “*Whom shall I [the one God] send, And who will go for Us [Three Persons]?*”

Isaiah was being called by God Himself, by Christ who “*ascended on high and gave gifts to men... some to be apostles, some prophets, some pastors...*” (Ephesians 4:8, 11). Isaiah goes on to say that the Lord was revealed in a form that included wearing a robe.

This is a preview of the human nature of Christ. “Yet He whom heav’ns cannot contain, Chose to abide on earth with men...” (ELH #211 v. 2).

What happens when a pastor is called? The pastor who is being called, and the congregation issuing the call, stand in the presence of Christ.

ISAIAH 6:5-8

> (Read the entire section from your Bible.)

After Isaiah receives a demonstration of God’s power and majesty and sees the holy angels with their pure lips chanting holy praise, he repents. “*So I said: Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips ...*” He confesses his sinfulness — something a congregation is blessed to hear its pastor say. A pastor should lead the way in repentance.

An angel is sent to Isaiah with a burning coal from the heavenly altar, and the fire of God’s love (a sign of the Holy Spirit) cleanses Isaiah by purifying his lips. So there would be no misunderstanding, the angel “gospels” Isaiah: “*Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.*”

Even though God calls pastors who are sinners, and who sin, He also cleanses them. Pastors need to confess their sins, too. Pastors need to hear the Gospel of forgiveness too. Every pastor, like Isaiah, feels unqualified to speak to another about his sin and uncleanness, when he has so much of it! Every pastor, like Isaiah, is in danger of speaking the Gospel at people and not to them, to be in delivery mode but not in receiving mode.

It is important for a pastor to have a pastor, too. Like Isaiah, a pastor needs to be put in receiving mode, to receive forgiveness of his sins and a good conscience. This helps protect the pastor against despair and feeling isolated in the office of the ministry. It helps protect a pastor from thinking more highly of himself than he ought to think and over-spiritualizing what he is called to do. It helps him to humble himself by the Word. It is the only way a pastor can daily respond like Isaiah, “*Here am I! Send me!*”

The job of a pastor is to forgive sins. It is hard to do that when the pastor himself has a bad conscience. But God does not just teach that He calls sinners into the preaching office and forgives their sins. Here in Isaiah 6, He *shows* the preacher being cleansed and forgiven with visible means! The forgiveness of sins comes from the presence of God, from His throne room, to the preacher (and from the preacher to the people). It is a throne of grace!

ISAIAH 6:9-13

> (Read the entire section from your Bible.)

People do not always repent. People do not always listen. Sometimes they stay home from church in droves. This makes the job of a pastor difficult and sometimes discouraging.

God speaks to Isaiah about this. The time of King Uzziah was a time of prosperity and peace. Such times can lead people to ignore God. Evangelism is difficult because people who have everything take a ho-hum attitude toward their spiritual danger. Luther said, “When, because of God’s blessings, men become obstinate, it is not easy to help them.”

This “hearing-but-not-understanding” language is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 13:10-17. Even Jesus met with this response! The Holy Spirit creates faith in those who hear the Gospel, but many resist the Holy Spirit and do not believe. The voice of an anguished pastor is heard in Isaiah’s question, “*Lord, how long?*” The answer is that many will perish — even though God wants all to be saved — but a remnant “will return.”

The preacher is to keep preaching. Pastors and their people are not to evaluate by results — which often will discourage them — but keep delivering the pure teaching of the Word. Even pastors have to be told to trust the means of grace! They do what God has called them to do and trust Him for blessed results.

God promises, first to Isaiah to encourage the preacher and then through Isaiah to teach the people, that His Word “that goes forth from My mouth” through the called preacher “shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).



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NEXT ARTICLE (PART 3) IN THE SERIES:

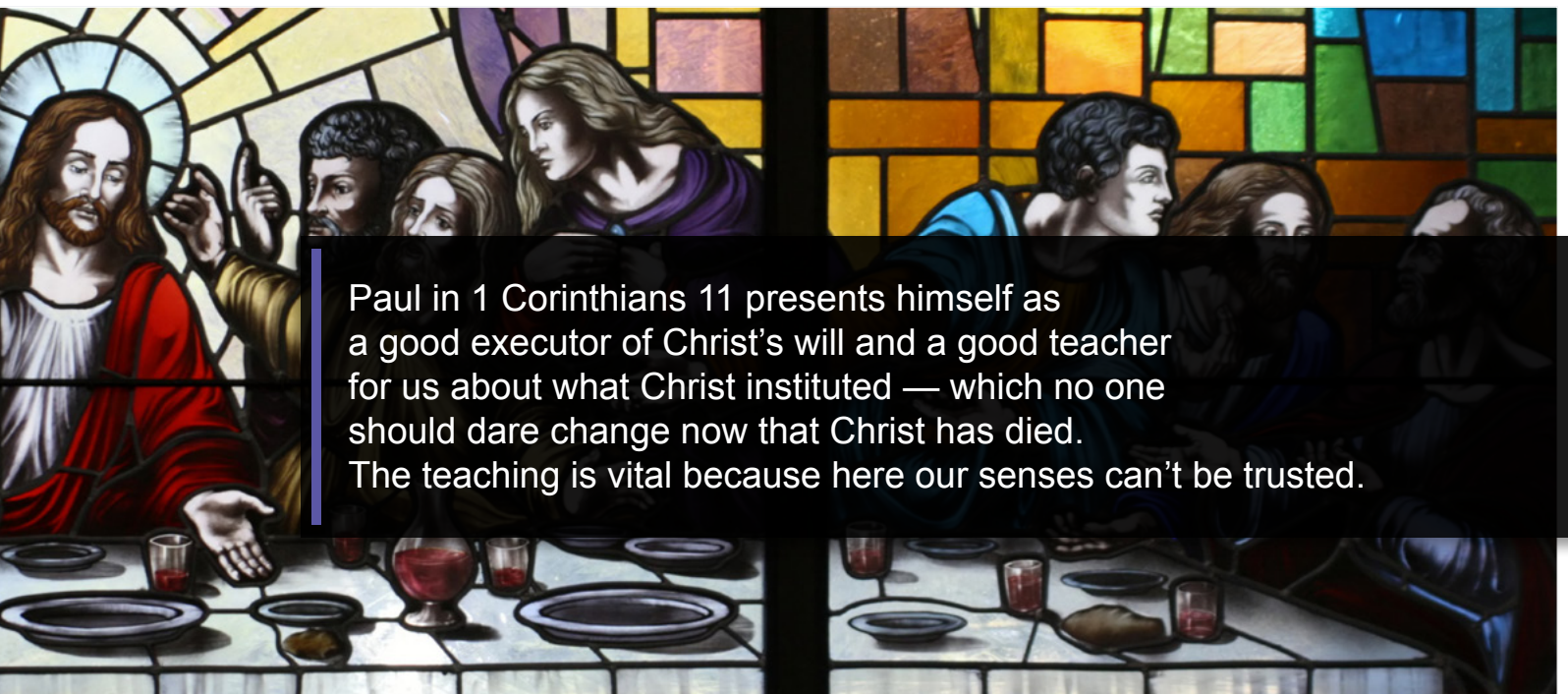
ISAIAH SEES THE CHRIST CHILD



What is it?

*“I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, **‘This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, **‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’**”*

(1 Corinthians 11:23-25)



Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 presents himself as a good executor of Christ's will and a good teacher for us about what Christ instituted — which no one should dare change now that Christ has died. The teaching is vital because here our senses can't be trusted.

Before you eat anything, it's good to ask the question, and have it answered for you: "What is this?" Maybe there's even a related question: "Who made it?" There can be more to it than merely what meets your eye. Good food prepared by an unsanitary chef can make you sick. Good food may be rendered unsafe by your condition: a peanut allergy, lactose or gluten intolerance...

As sinners, we are subject to a much more profound and pervasive frailty. In answer to it, Christ gives us His Supper and His good teaching about it. So that we might receive it for blessing, benefit, and joy rather than for judgment, Dr. Luther has us ask in the Catechism, *What is the Sacrament of the Altar?*

That takes us to the Upper Room. Christ presents Himself as a testator of a will (or, of His Last Will and Testament) in the hours before He goes to His death for you. Later, Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 presents himself as a good executor of Christ's will and a good teacher for us about what Christ instituted—which no one should dare change now that Christ has died. The teaching is vital because here our senses can't be trusted.

You see, the weakness and suffering we're about to see in Jesus are all ours. It comes upon Him because He's entered into our flesh and into His Office as our Savior. Nevertheless, He's still the Lord. He can do anything. And He means what He says.

In Holy Communion what we see and taste is common bread and grape wine. But Jesus adds His almighty Word to these common ordinary things: "*This is My body – This is the new testament in My blood*" (1 Corinthians 11)

What is this? Luther puts this so clearly in the Catechism, it can hardly be bettered: "The Sacrament of the Altar is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink."

As for who made it, this is Christ's work and all His doing. As His beneficiary, just listen to His words and see what He has done for you and what He has left to you through His death. It proves a connection between who's doing it and what it accomplishes. If we make the Lord's Supper merely a memorial, we do it and it accomplishes nothing. If we make it a mystical sacrifice to pay for sin, it's still a work of man. Thank God, that's not it.

But there's one Christ with one flesh-and-blood body of His that He gave once for all. In Him, all sins are forgiven and our full ransom is paid. Here you may only receive, and He only feeds, bestows, and forgives. That is what it is. Thanks be to God!

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su•per•flu•ous

sū'pərflūəs/

adjective:

beyond what is needed, not necessary.

“Is it superfluous if, say, a church organist takes communion at both the early and at the late service? Is that too much of a good thing?”

Answer: That depends...

When you climb mountains, at higher altitudes you often begin to feel nauseous. Most of us would deal with that queasy stomach by not eating or drinking. This is not an option for anyone who aspires to stand on the summit of a mountain. One of my most vivid memories from climbing Mount Rainier is of my friend Jon.

Jon is a strong and healthy man and was in much better condition than I for this climb. However, as we passed 10,000 feet, the altitude began to affect him. His stomach felt queasy. He kept pushing upward, hoping that the nausea would pass, and he kept his stomach empty just to be safe.

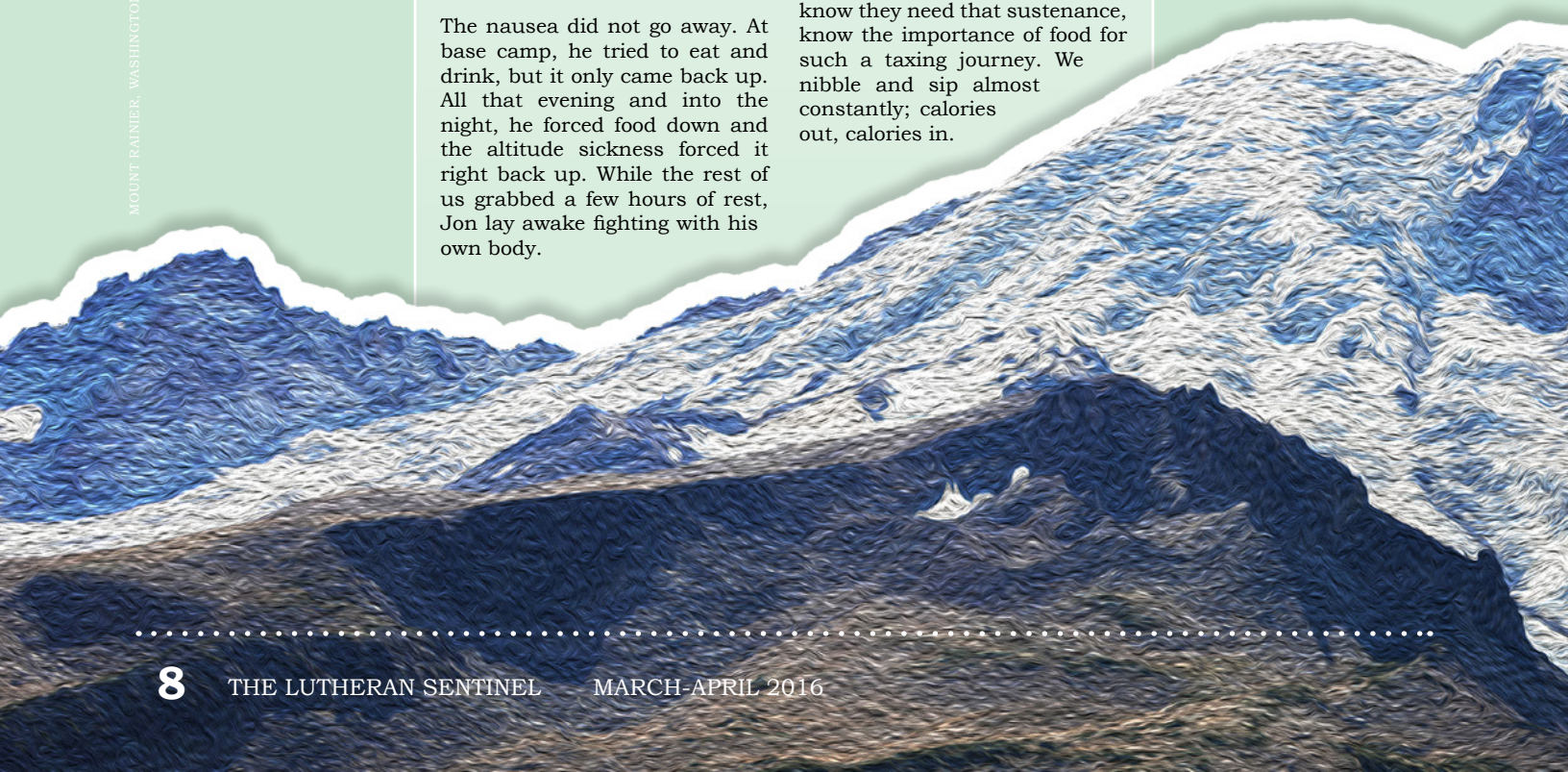
The nausea did not go away. At base camp, he tried to eat and drink, but it only came back up. All that evening and into the night, he forced food down and the altitude sickness forced it right back up. While the rest of us grabbed a few hours of rest, Jon lay awake fighting with his own body.

Just after midnight, we roped up for the seven-hour push to the top. If we could summit by 7 am we could be back down to our cars that evening. Exhausted and hungry, Jon took his spot somewhere in front of me. We crossed the Cowlitz Glacier and passed through Cathedral Gap. Through the night Jon, kept stopping to rest.

After pushing across another glacier, the rock feature called Disappointment Cleaver lived up to its name. Julie, our leader and guide, made the call. She would not let Jon continue with us. Summiting would require fuel his body didn't have. "I'm sorry," Julie said, "you don't have any food in your stomach. This climb demands too much: weather, rock and ice falls, mental focus... Without food you become a liability to yourself and the entire team."

Many people feel queasy at those altitudes. We don't feel like drinking, we see and feel no need for eating. Those who want to summit know they have to eat — know they need that sustenance, know the importance of food for such a taxing journey. We nibble and sip almost constantly; calories out, calories in.

MOUNT RAINIER, WASHINGTON STATE, U.S.A.





*“Is it **superfluous** for the organist to have communion at early and at late service?”*

That’s how the question was phrased.

...That depends on Who’s ‘doing the doing’ in this supper.

If it is a work that we do, an offering that we make to God because of sins we’ve committed, then “yes”. Yes, it may be superfluous for a Christian church organist who made an offering for her sins 90 minutes earlier to make another such offering again now (or maybe it’s not enough?).

On the other hand, if the Lord’s Supper is food prepared by God for the sinner’s guilty soul, divine sustenance for an arduous journey, righteous calories in on account of the all of the unrighteous calories burned, then “no”, it is not superfluous at all.

The high mountains can be dangerous places. Weather can change at any minute, temperatures can plummet, snow and rock can fall at any time, and one single inattentive moment can have life-changing repercussions. Survival must always be on the mind. Climbers need food and drink to be ready to face these dangers.

God’s people live in an environment even more hostile than this. Our enemy the devil is constantly prowling and seeking whom he may devour. Life can change forever with a trip to the store or a routine test result from the doctor. When we fail to watch and pray — even for a moment — we fall into temptation.

The night that He was betrayed, the Lamb of God took the bread and wine of the ancient Passover meal and offered His people sustenance for the journey, food for the soul, nourishment — His body, His blood, for the forgiveness of all our sins.

No, this food is never superfluous. It is the nourishment our Lord God knew we’d need.

*Thy holy body into death was given,
Life to win for us in heaven.
No greater love than this to Thee could bind us;
May this feast thereof remind us!
O Lord, have mercy!
Lord, Thy kindness did so constrain Thee
That Thy blood should bless and sustain me.
All our debt Thou hast paid;
Peace with God once more is made:
O Lord, have mercy!*

(ELH 327, v.2)

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BELOW: A portion of "THE CRUCIFIXION" WOODCUT by ALBRECHT DURER, 1498



MORE THAN A POSSIBILITY

“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission,” the Bible says in Hebrews 9:22. Blood played a major part in the lives of Old Testament believers. At Mount Sinai, Moses read to them the Book of the Covenant, then sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the altar and on the people and said: “This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words” (Exodus 24:8). Through this covenant (agreement, treaty, pledge), God bound Himself to His people with the promise of forgiveness through the sacrifice of the coming Messiah. Then, once a year, on the great Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the Old Testament high priest entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice for all the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:15-19).

Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, saying, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). Jesus’ words connect Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary. A woodcut by Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer (shown above) depicts angels holding chalices to gather Jesus’ very blood — the Lamb of God under the Law of God — which we receive in the Lord’s Supper.

God comes to us in realities, not in wishes or mere ideas, not in fickle emotions or mere intellectual thoughts. God comes in ways that we can see and hear, and even touch and taste: God’s spoken Word in the Garden of Eden, the sprinkled blood of the ceremonial sacrifices, the promise-drenched waters of baptism, the truths of His Word preached, proclaimed, prayed, remembered, and sung.

Our Savior’s body and blood in the Lord’s Supper bring us real and true forgiveness, not just as a symbol or remembrance, but with genuine comfort and strengthening of our faith that He forgives us and promises us eternal life. Lutheran Theologian Herman Sasse wrote:

“Both the Gospel that is preached and the Gospel that occurs in the Sacrament contain one and the same gift, though in different forms: the forgiveness of sins. This is not some doctrine about the possibility of a forgiveness of sins, not an illustration of such a possibility, but the actual forgiveness itself, this unfathomable miracle of God’s mercy that blots out our guilt and gives us everything that comes with forgiveness: Life and salvation, redemption of the whole person, both soul and body.” (We Confess the Sacraments, p. 26)

This is true because of Jesus’ words and promise — Take, eat, drink, for the remission of sins. In this way, the promise of Isaiah 52:15 is fulfilled: “So shall He sprinkle many nations”, a promise which leads into the vivid description of Jesus’ suffering and death in Isaiah 53. We look forward to the final fulfillment described in Revelation 7:14: “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” as we sing in the hymn *Behold A Host, Arrayed in White*. And St. John summarizes it all in a simple phrase: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).



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QUESTION:

We proclaim God the Father and Jesus to be co-equal and yet in John 14:28, Jesus says the Father is greater than Himself. Please explain 'co-equal' in light of this passage.

ANSWER:

We confess in the Athanasian Creed, "And in this Trinity none is before or after other; none is greater or less than another" and "For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood."

On Christmas, God became a human baby. The Christ has two natures: divine and human. Jesus also humbled Himself, as Paul taught: *Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross* (Philippians 2:6-8). The Catechism explains Jesus' humiliation: "Jesus humbled Himself by appearing in great lowliness, not always and fully using the divine attributes communicated to His human nature and becoming obedient to the point of death" (Question 141, page 109).

The incarnation and humiliation explain remarkable things concerning God in the person of Jesus the Christ. The God-man who is eternal became flesh in Mary's womb and that flesh became visible at His birth. He who rules all things placed Himself in His mother's care. He who instituted the eternal Law put Himself under that law in order to obey it as a Man on

behalf of all sinful human beings. He who cannot die is the sacrificial Lamb of God who gave His life to take away the sins of the world. Jesus is the God-man.

God knows all things (omniscient). Jesus is God. He knows all. During His humiliation, between His conception and His burial, Jesus was equal to the Father, but set aside the use of His divine abilities. He temporarily set aside the use of His omniscience. The Gospel for the first Sunday after the Epiphany shows the omniscient God learning. He who knows all things according to His divinity also said, *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father"* (Mark 13:32).

So we come to Jesus' discourse to His disciples on the night of His betrayal. As the only begotten of the Father, Jesus is equal to the Father as each person in the Holy Trinity is equal. As the Son of Mary, Jesus can say, *"You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I"* (John 14:28).

He went away for a little while to the cross. Because the Lamb who died is God, His sacrifice is sufficient to propitiate, or cover, the sins of all people. Because the Lamb of God is human, blood was shed for the sins of all people. Each one of us can know and believe that we are forgiven for His sake. Jesus is equal to the Father and the Father is greater than Jesus.

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Accidentally LUTHERAN LYRICS

WHEN A POPULAR ARTIST OR SONGWRITER, PROBABLY BY PURE ACCIDENT, GIVES EXPRESSION TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN KEEPING WITH LUTHERAN CONFESSION.

SONG: ROLL AWAY YOUR STONE
ARTIST: MUMFORD & SONS
YEAR: 2009

•
 • *“It seems that all my bridges have been burned.*
 • *But you say, that’s exactly how this grace thing works’*
 • *It’s not the long walk home that will change this heart,*
 • *But **the welcome I receive** with every start.”*
 •

THE WELCOME I RECEIVE:

During the time of year called *Lent*, the Church fixes its gaze on Jesus’ Passion — His suffering. It’s a difficult gaze for us in many ways. Jesus becomes the fulfillment of His own words: the One despised and rejected by his own — full of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). We listen as Jesus becomes the Innocent Lamb who goes quietly to slaughter (Isaiah 53:7). And our natural sense of fairness and equity winces as it comes to grips with the truth that what Jesus suffers, He suffers on our account.

We look at Jesus’ passion and our sense of justice can’t help but conclude, “All my bridges have been burned. I can’t expect anything good from Jesus. He just took every wicked thought I’ve ever had, every slanderous word I’ve ever spoken, every vile deed I’ve ever done and bled out for me! No bridges left there,” says fairness. But the Gospel speaks contrary to what’s “fair”. The Innocent One suffering the wrath of God for the guilty — “that’s exactly how this grace-thing works.”

This grace-thing is a real injustice. To have our eyes fixed to the Innocent Lamb dying for the guilty sheep is to have this sensation of injustice powerfully affected. It’s sort of like a “long walk home” through one’s own sin-filled life... while an innocent bystander pays the deadly tab. The guilty sensation one feels is very real. What it is not, is heart-changing. Guilt, while a real emotion, does not affect a new status of heart with God. Judas is the open-and-

shut book on that matter.

We are guilty. What Jesus endured, we deserved. This seems to us a burned bridge. A long walk with sad face and a guilt-ridden conscience,

though it is an honest emotion, doesn’t repair the breach between our hearts and God. But the breach is repaired none-the-less. It is repaired by God’s *welcome*.

The empty tomb is God the Father’s gracious welcome. “Welcome, sinner, to My family,” says God your Father. “The price paid on the cross is complete. Sin’s penalty, the sinner’s guilty tab — these are gone! Your status with Me is right. Welcome home!”

This wonderful *welcome* is attached to baptism. And that means baptism changes things. That’s right. While the moisture from your baptism has evaporated, the Easter welcome attached to it certainly has not. Baptism takes what Jesus did for the world and makes it for you. Baptism’s “for you” quality welcomes you into a newness of life. Baptism’s “for you” changes things because it places you in Jesus. This wonderful change means every day you wake up still baptized — still welcomed by the Father to live in the righteous record of His Son. The change is glorious. “It is finished” and “He lives”. Welcome Home!

THE EMPTY TOMB IS GOD THE FATHER’S GRACIOUS WELCOME. “WELCOME, SINNER, TO MY FAMILY”, SAYS GOD YOUR FATHER. “THE PRICE PAID ON THE CROSS IS COMPLETE. SINS’ PENALTY, THE SINNER’S GUILTY TAB — THESE ARE GONE! YOUR STATUS WITH ME IS RIGHT. WELCOME HOME!”



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INSTALLATION

SAUDE & JERICO LUTHERAN CHURCHES



The **Rev. Peter Faugstad** was installed as pastor at Saude & Jerico Evangelical Lutheran Churches on February 21st. The following pastors participated in the installation service: Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux (organist), the Rev. Robert Harting (liturgist), the Rev. Daniel Faugstad (lector), the Rev. Thomas Rank (preacher), and the Rev. Wayne Halvorson (rite of installation). A delicious meal was prepared and served by the members of both congregations.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

BETHANY LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Pursuant to the guidelines of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod for calling a professor to the seminary (cf. Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary II.A.2), the Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, herewith issues to the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod a call for nominations to a professorship.

The nominees must be ordained clergymen of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or of its fellowship.

Nominees are to be qualified primarily to teach Old Testament, which requires expertise in the Hebrew language. They shall have a secondary qualification in Symbolics (Confessions of the church) and Church History. In addition to this, they will serve as the supervisor of the Senior Research Project program.

Nominations are to reach the undersigned by June 1, 2016.

BOARD OF REGENTS' SECRETARY
PAUL CHAMBERLIN
 90 FAIRVIEW AVE
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LESSONS FOR WHICH WE GIVE THANKS

MOTHER'S DAY THANK OFFERING / ELS World Needs Fund

The lesson of God's love in Christ is a lesson for which we can still be thankful. Thankful that God would have such love for us, even though as sinners we do not deserve it. Thankful that God would choose to reveal His love to us through His holy Word.

As we approach another Mother's Day, we can be thankful that God gave us good moms (and dads) who wanted us to know His love in our lives, and provided us with good examples to imitate when it came to learning to be faithful Christians.

Once again, we have an opportunity to express our thankfulness together for all the lessons God taught us through our moms: the Mother's Day Offering for the ELS World Needs Fund. Give thanks to God for His great love for you with an offering of generous love that will help people in need here at home and around the world. You may use the special Mother's Day envelopes provided by the ELS through your congregation or you may send your gift directly to the Synod:

ELS World Needs Fund
 Evangelical Lutheran Synod
 6 Browns Court
 Mankato, MN 56001

Moms, you have given us reason to be thankful for so many things over the course of our lives: the lessons you taught, the things you've done, the love you've shown. Thank God for all of it and thank God for you. Happy Mother's Day!

REVEREND
ERICH J. HOEFT
 HOLTEN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
 HOLTEN, MI
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TWO KINGDOMS

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” This means that the government will not regulate or prefer any religion, nor prohibit citizens from exercising their religious beliefs. This came to be called “the separation of church and state,” a phrase used by Thomas Jefferson.

➤ **SOME BIBLE PASSAGES TO STUDY:**

- Matthew 22:21
- John 17:11, 16
- John 18:36
- Romans 13:1
- 1 Peter 2:13
- Acts 5:29

Jesus teaches a principle that **seems** similar, but is **not** the same. When Jesus says, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Matthew 22:21), He makes it clear that the Christian lives in two very different realms at the same time. “Caesar” stands for human government, ruled by law and reason. “What is God’s” refers to Christ’s kingdom, the spiritual kingdom where Christians live by grace, faith, and God’s Word.

Martin Luther wrote much about this teaching of the two kingdoms. He observed on the one hand that God created the world and that he is the author of government. God has placed his Christians in this kingdom of the world, which we call “the kingdom of the left or of the sword.” God rules it through law and reason. Christians are commanded to obey the government and those in authority because they have been given their positions by God.

God’s other kingdom is spiritual. It is governed by Christ — by love, grace, faith, and all through His Word. It is not an outward organization, but the spiritual union of all Christians with one another through Christ.

According to Jesus, Christians have a duty to both of these kingdoms, though if commanded to do evil, they are “to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

On the **left** is the power with which God rules over the world with the sword — the power of government (“the kingdom of the left”). The government makes laws and it reasons with people. It promises them reward for their work and threatens punishment for doing evil. Christians live alongside unbelievers in this world and both are equally subject to government and law; neither is better than any other in the eyes of men. But this hand only rules the worldly kingdom.

In your blest body let me be / E'en as the branch is in the tree / Thy life my life supplying.
P. NICCOLAI



GOD'S two GOVERNMENTS & KINGDOMS

REGIMENTE

REICHE

REGIMENT

refers to governance or power. The governance of the left hand is the *potestas gladii* (power of the sword - law).

THE TWO REGIMENTS

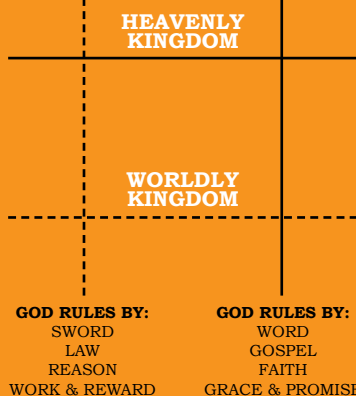
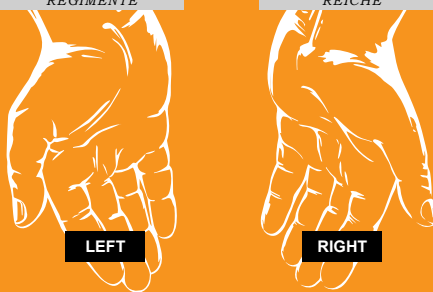
The powers are exercised by God. But the power of the left is only used to govern the worldly kingdom, and the power of the right is only used in the heavenly kingdom or spiritual realm.

The Christian is an instrument of both powers, in their proper realms.

To say that the Christian lives in the worldly kingdom as a Christian is not to say that he does not hold the powers of the left, nor that he turns the gospel into a governing power in the worldly kingdom.



LUTHER... lived in both of the horizontal kingdoms: in the visible earthly kingdom as a citizen of Wittenberg and in the invisible heavenly Kingdom as a Christian in the company of all the saints and angels. Furthermore, Luther was an instrument of



REICHE

refers to a kingdom or state. The governance of the right hand is the *potestas clavii* (power or office of the keys —gospel).

THE TWO KINGDOMS

The Heavenly Kingdom is both in heaven and on earth - the church militant and the church triumphant.

The worldly kingdom includes both believers and unbelievers. The Christian lives here as a Christian, but the powers of the heavenly kingdom are not used to govern the worldly kingdom.



God's left hand as a professor, father, and civil judge, and an instrument of God's right hand as priest and preacher. Luther's doctrine of *Anfechtung* meant he was in daily struggle with Satan...

DIAGRAM BASED ON A DESCRIPTION SUGGESTED BY KENNETH HAGEN, GOD AND CAESAR REVISITED.

The **right** hand governs the heavenly kingdom, which includes the Christians living in the world. Here God rules by His Word — the word of the Gospel, where Christians live by grace, faith, and promise. The Christians, Jesus says, are “in the world, but not of the world.”

We can say it this way: everything that the Christian is — a redeemed saint who lives according to God's promise and grace — the Christian carries along into life in the world. The Christian judge lives by the law, reason, and work in applying the law to people and institutions, and sometimes that means being harsh. But the judge is still a Christian, whose faith shows itself in love of the neighbor. The Christian in business lives in a world of work and reward, of law and reason, but lives honestly, truthfully, and practices Christian virtues. The Christian police officer uses the law and force in protecting life and property, but he behaves as a Christian who is faithful, honest, and peace-loving. The Christian teacher gives grades, rewards faithfulness and punishes laziness, and makes rules. But the Christian teacher is patient and loving towards the students. Likewise the Christian soldier and all others in their occupations.

Christians live in the kingdom of the world because God has put them there. And he has placed them in many vocations or positions: father or

mother, employer or employee, teacher or student. Christians enjoy these positions God has placed them in and uses them to serve others. Unbelievers may be drawn to Christ by the work and words of Christians, but whether they are or not is God's work.

The kingdom of the sword and law is not permanent. When the world passes away, it will pass away. But it is necessary so long as God permits this world to stand. While in the world, Christians live according to their earthly callings, but they live as God has called them to be, honestly, faithfully, morally, and lovingly of all others. The spiritual kingdom, however, endures forever, where the children of God live forever with their Heavenly King.

PROFESSOR EMERITUS
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VIEW FROM THE PEW

AN ODD SORT OF RELIEF

Your universe gets pretty small when you are the center of it. When my spiritual fate depends on my decision, my faith, my mission, my witness, my interpretation, etc., it should only be expected that one would get a little big-headed. My "religion" was simply Christianity with all of the bits that offend almighty me drilled out. The trouble is that the whole thing loses containment once almighty me gets done poking holes in the bucket and no amount of good intentions or crying, "Dear Liza!" will fix the mess I made. So what's a little master of the universe to do with a holey bucket? Fill it up again, of course!

So — I tried more than twenty churches' worth of that. I became the very thing that I despised — the church shopper. But there were only two churches left on the local shopping list left un-shopped. One had a nonsensical name for every service and study group on the schedule; the second was Bethany Lutheran (Port Orchard, Wash.)... and I had my misgivings about Lutherans.

I could say that going to Bethany broke the bucket, but that might be taking the analogy too far. They didn't waste any time. There was the Invocation then, — BAM! Sin smashed what was left of my universe to bits. It took time to get used to the pastor forgiving me of my sins, but it was an odd sort of relief to be a sinner.

It was Law and Gospel that made my bucket whole again. Downplaying sin had drained grace of its power. I heard grace like I had never heard it before. It wasn't the "make-a-decision-then-get-to-work!" message that I had heard at every other church. It was real Jesus-for-you grace.

Becoming Lutheran was one of the most wonderful things that has ever happened to me, but it was also painful:

- The fear of being deceived again.
- The fear for family and friends still stuck in that holey-bucket rat-race, family that now think that I'm the one who's lost in a quasi-Catholic cult.
- The frustration at the huge amount of time and energy that I wasted carrying around a holey bucket.

My world is much smaller now, barely a drop in the bucket. But I know who carries that bucket, and He drills no holes. He just fills it up with Jesus.

MEMBER
MRS. CHARLY BURLESON
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
PORT ORCHARD, WA