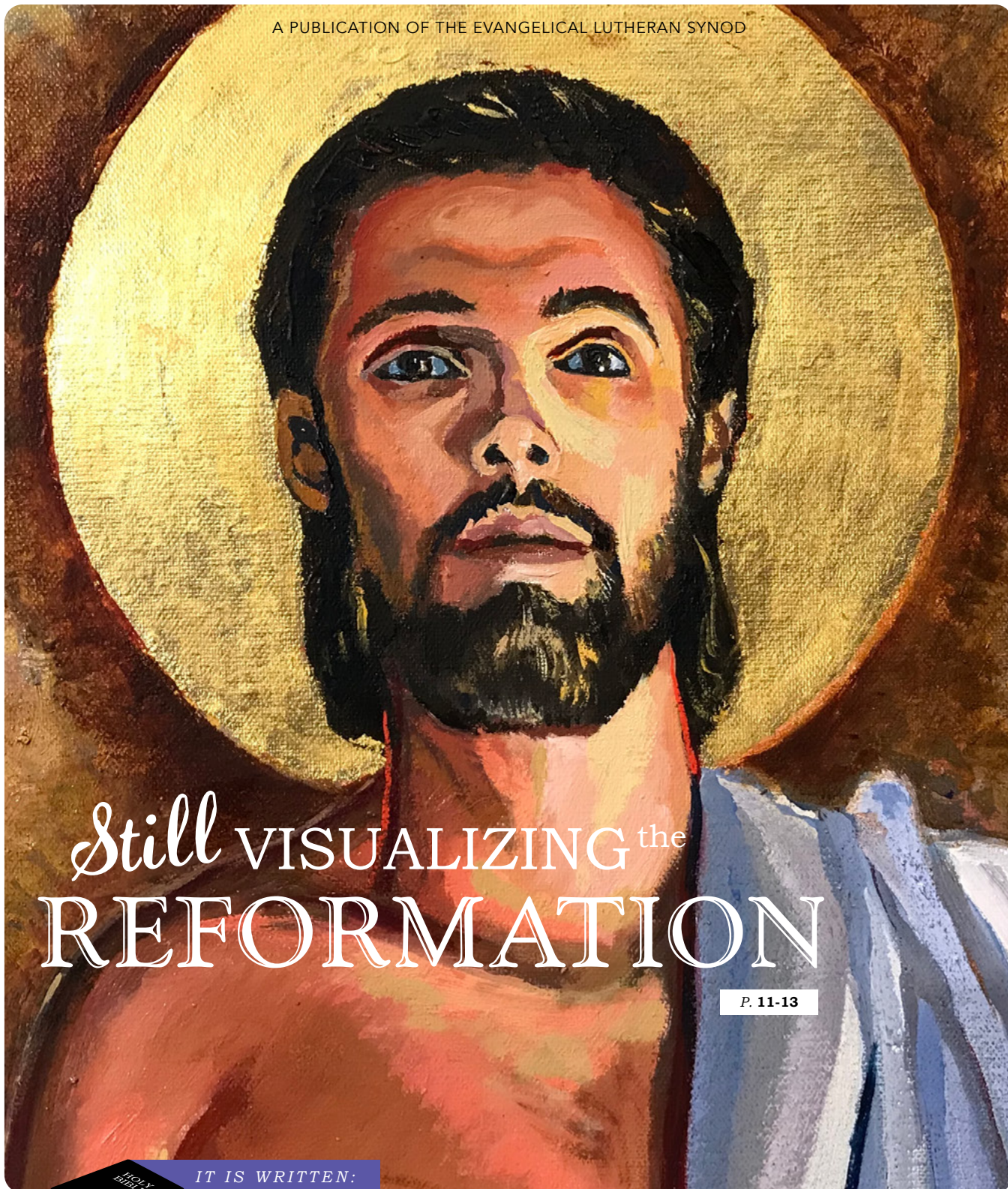


LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD



Still VISUALIZING ^{the}
REFORMATION

P. 11-13



IT IS WRITTEN:

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus." (Hebrews 12:2)

Martin #2

Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

We are concluding a year of commemorating the gifts God has passed down to us from the Lutheran Reformation. The 500th should not close without drawing attention to “the other Martin.” Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586) played a key role in preserving what we today know and confess as solid Lutheran doctrine.

Chemnitz is known mostly for serving as the chief author of the Formula of Concord (1577), but he contributed greatly in other ways. Just to cite a few:

1. His comprehensive work in 1570, *The Two Natures in Christ*, sets forth the scriptural teaching of the incarnation of our Lord and how it must be upheld for us sinners to have the free gift of salvation. Chemnitz states:

It is proper, therefore, for God to cleanse and destroy sin (Is, 43:25), but Scripture clearly attributes this action not only to the person of the incarnate Christ according to the deity, but also to His blood according to the humanity.

(the J.A.O. Preus translation, p. 261)

2. Another offering from his pen, *The Lord’s Supper* (1570), contains the orthodox arguments for the Real Presence of Christ’s body and blood under the bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar. On the word “is” in our Lord’s words of institution, he notes:

But if I say that the divine will does not wish that we understand the words of the Supper in their proper and natural sense, then I fear that I might be accusing the Son of God in His last will and testament of lying.

(the J.A.O. Preus translation, p. 207)

3. Finally, we mention Chemnitz’s commentary on Melancthon’s *Loci communes* (treatise on doctrine). On the topic of Justification, he demonstrates how Law and Gospel apply to each of us sinners very personally:

It is manifest that many do not persevere but fall from grace. But this is not because God does not will that believers, whom he at one time received into grace, should persevere unto the end, but it comes from the fact that many drive out the Holy Spirit and trample their faith underfoot. And looking at the traps of the devil, the evil of the flesh, and the frightful examples of those who have lapsed, we ought to disintegrate with fear and trembling for our salvation. But when we look at the will of God revealed in the Word, and at Christ the Mediator, we can and must declare: “Who shall separate us?” “No one shall snatch them out of my hand.” Therefore, as it pertains to God, the perseverance of the godly is sure; and because it has been revealed in the Word, faith must believe this.

(the J.A.O. Preus translation, p. 123)

God be praised for the faithful and dedicated service of both Martin #1 and Martin #2! What a legacy they have left under the grace of the Almighty!

REVEREND
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LUTHERAN SENTINEL

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 2017

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The Blessings and Challenges of a New Church Building?

October 2017 is a big month for Hope Lutheran Church in Farmington, Minnesota. Not only are we and our Synod celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, but in October, we at Hope are also celebrating our ten-year ministry anniversary as well as our one-year anniversary in our new building.

The Lord blessed us with a building after nine years of hard work in the Farmington community. Now that we have been in the building for a year, we are able to see a little clearer what kind of blessings we have with a new church building and, at the same time, see how the Lord tests us with challenges.

The biggest practical blessing we have received by having a new church building is enjoying an established presence in Farmington for the first time. When Hope began, we started in a school cafeteria and then moved to a storefront space in a mini-mall. Both were not very visible to the community, which posed challenges. But with a new building, built in a visible location, we are easily seen by the community and give the feeling of something that will be part of the community for a long time.

With the new building come new opportunities for the members. Not only is this an opportunity for members to use their God-given talents toward church upkeep and decorating, but we also enjoy the convenience of having everything under one roof. This means people won't need to devote time to setting up and tearing down spaces for temporary worship, but instead use their time toward furthering Hope's mission.

Perhaps the most important blessing we have received overall is a spiritual blessing. As anyone can imagine, with a brand-new building comes huge debt. We view this, though, as a blessing in that it is a new and great opportunity to trust in God and work hard knowing that He will provide. Countless times in Scripture, we have seen God do the humanly impossible with ease. Having a debt that initially looks insurmountable is a new way to trust in Him as He provides through offerings and the Synod's gracious help.

But with those blessings come some real challenges. The biggest, and perhaps most spiritually lethal, challenge is the temptation to think that "we have made it" and that some finish line has been crossed. It is a challenge at times to keep focused and realize that moving to a new church was not a graduation ceremony where we can now relax. Instead, the building sets new goals and opportunities that beg our attention. Volunteers are needed now more than before. Focusing on keeping to budgets is more important than ever.

But in the end, we have so much for which to be thankful. Our Lord is a constant provider who has been with His children, showering grace from the moment Adam and Eve fell into sin. Since then, our God of constant blessings has blessed us through the Reformation, through anniversaries, through new ministries, and continues to do His will when He blesses congregations with new buildings.

REVEREND
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A NOTE FROM THE ANNIVERSARY OFFERING COMMITTEE:

Our home missions work is an integral part of our ELS. Be sure to support the Anniversary Offering by giving generously.

Visit els.org/offering to learn more and support our students and missions online.

SEND YOUR GIFT TO:
ELS Anniversary Offering
6 Browns Ct.
Mankato, MN 56001



Q

QUESTION:

I have moved into an assisted living facility. Every week, some local Christian group conducts services. Many serve Communion, but it seems strange and different from what we do. Should I participate?

A

ANSWER:

St. Paul wrote, *For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread* (I Corinthians 10:17). In the book of Acts (2:42), we read, *They continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.* When we partake of the Holy Supper, we unite ourselves in fellowship with those with whom we commune.

Jesus added many blessings to the Holy Sacrament. Along with bread and wine, Jesus also gives us His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins as He says in the words of consecration. In the Small Catechism, Dr. Luther explained, “The benefit which we receive from such eating and drinking is shown us by these words: ‘Given and shed for you for the remission of sins;’ namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.”

The Holy Supper is also Holy Communion. Communion means a joining together. The community of Christ joins together to partake of this blessed meal, and when we partake of the Supper, we make a confession of our faith. We will need to know the confession of those offering the Sacrament to see whether or not their confession is true to the Holy Scripture. God would have us join together only with those who continue “steadfastly in the Apostle’s doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and in prayers.” God would have us commune only at that place in which the Sacrament is administered properly, that place where we have made our confession of faith.

The various Christian denominations may or may not let the teaching of the Gospel dominate their preaching and doctrine. Christian

denominations do not agree on what is happening in the Holy Supper. This is why the ceremony of those who are serving Communion at your facility seems strange and different. It is unlikely they are serving the Supper as instituted by the Lord, as we serve the Supper.

It is not God-pleasing to confess teachings that are false. God would have us keep our preaching, teaching and practice as pure as we are able. We join with fellow believers as one communion of believers in the unity of our faith. This is a public confession of our faith. We need to know the confession of those with whom we commune before we commune with them.

Generally speaking, we acknowledge the unity of faith by our fellowship with those churches and denominations with whom we are one in confession. In this country, we are in fellowship with the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as well as the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Worldwide, we are in fellowship with the churches of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC). We can be confident that the congregations of our fellowship teach the same things we believe and administer the Holy Sacraments as the Lord instituted them.

We will avoid communing at those altars of congregations or gatherings outside our fellowship. If you are not able to go to church, let your own pastor bring you the Holy Supper.

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APOLOGETICS

"TO DEFEND A PERSON OR THING"

THIS ISSUE

APOLOGETICS SERIES FINALE:

Confronting the Problem of Evil

The Psalmist confronts the problem of evil: *As for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked* (Psalm 73:2-3). Scripture is full of psalms and laments calling out to God: Why? How long?

God is the first cause of everything that there is. Yet God Himself is not the cause of evil. The cause of evil is the choice of His creatures. As for God, *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all* (1 John 1:5). That matches what the Psalmist says: *The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works* (Psalm 145:17).

Because of His righteousness and kindness, there's no such thing as a world without consequences. The consequences of sin are death and judgment. The consequences of righteousness are life and peace.

Because of sin, "the ground is cursed" (Genesis 3:17), and "creation waits with eager longing" (Romans 8:19). That eager longing touches us when we consider the problem of evil. It's not that there is no God. It's not that He doesn't care, or that He doesn't have the power to set things right. *He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish but all to come to repentance* (2 Peter 3:9).

His ways are better than ours, "higher than the heavens above the earth" (Isaiah 55:8-9). We want a world with consequences when conse-

quences look good. We want a world without consequences when the consequences look bad. We love it when bad consequences come to someone else and they seem to deserve it. We hate it when it comes to us.

The greatest mystery is not our problem with evil, but that God still loves the world He made, even after sin.

In the Person of His Son, God Himself came to partake of flesh and blood. His steps hallow the ground that He cursed, and He pours out His bloody sweat and tears upon it. He pours out His lifeblood on it. He suffered the greatest injustice of all, yet it was all according to God's purpose.

God's justice was satisfied by it because He was bearing our sin. Finally, He rested in the ground to give us the consequences of His righteousness. He delivers us from evil.

The consequence of His righteousness is that we are all redeemed. The consequence of His righteousness is that even when we suffer because of someone else's evil actions, God employs that evil, using it for good for us and for all who believe (Romans 8:28). He does so even if we don't yet clearly see how. The consequence of His righteousness is life with Him and His peace in a world without end, where sin and its consequences can't follow.

REVEREND
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CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586) and His Role in the Reformation

While making his way to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey, the Apostle Paul summoned the Ephesian elders to Miletus, a nearby port city. There he encouraged them to keep watch over the souls entrusted to their care: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30 KJV). The elders would defend their church not by inventing new teachings, but by preserving the Gospel they had received.

Before what proved to be his final trip to Eisleben, where he died on February 18, 1546, Martin Luther summoned the leaders of the Reformation to Wittenberg. Echoing the words of the Apostle, the Reformer warned his colleagues to stand firm in the face of false doctrine. Especially dangerous, Luther said, would be the kind that came from within: “I am not afraid of the Papists...our brethren will inflict the damage on the Gospel.” The “brethren” proved all too willing to fulfill this prophecy.

If this were a fairy tale, young Martin Chemnitz would have been sitting at Luther’s feet at that last gathering, already anointed the “Second Martin” of the Reformation. But in reality, Chemnitz, born fifteen miles away, had come to Wittenberg in 1545 to study under Philip Melanchthon. It was years later, working in the Prussian duke’s library, that Chemnitz truly “discovered” Luther. Taking meticulous notes on Christian doctrine, spared from the violence engulfing the Lutherans in Saxony, this librarian was being groomed to be a peacemaker and preserver of Luther’s legacy.

When Chemnitz came back to Saxony, he found himself in the middle of a divided church. On one side were Melanchthon and his followers. We are indeed indebted to the author of the Augsburg Confession, but Philip Melanchthon was not a leader. He preferred peace with men over the freedom of the Gospel. The “Philippists” followed his non-leadership into compromise with Catholics and Calvinists. On the other side were the “Genuine” Lutherans, faithful to Luther, but vindictive toward Melanchthon. Their contempt for his vac-

illating led them to publish doctrinal statements so extreme they verged on the ridiculous. These divisions were an embarrassment. Reconciliation seemed impossible.

God provided a third group of men to heal these wounds. Firmly grounded in Luther’s teaching yet possessing a more harmonious spirit, they preserved the treasures of the Reformation without compromise. They surrendered nothing of the Gospel they had inherited. At the same time, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3 KJV), they also reached out to those who had wandered from the truth. The Formula of Concord, a masterpiece of confession and reconciliation, was published in 1577. We remember Martin Chemnitz as the leader of this third group, the “Concordists.” He worked tirelessly to promote the Formula throughout Europe. Our churches and ministers subscribe to the Formula today. It is the final portion of our Lutheran Confessions, the *Book of Concord*.

Martin Chemnitz labored fruitfully, publishing many important works, until his health left him unable to continue. He died on Good Friday in 1586. He exposed the false doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, which equated manmade traditions with Holy Scripture and condemned those who taught justification by faith alone. He defended the personal union of Christ and the Real Presence of the Lord’s Supper against the Calvinists. Most importantly, through the Formula of Concord, Martin Chemnitz saved the Lutherans from themselves. Even his enemies admitted, “If Martin [that is, Chemnitz] had not existed, Martin [that is, Luther] would scarcely have stood.”

REVEREND
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IMPLICATIONS OF VETERANS DAY

HONORING THOSE CALLED TO KILL ON OUR BEHALF

The father of one of the children in our parish school was U.S. Army Special Forces, “A” Team, and a new convert to Christianity. A short while after joining the church, he asked to meet with the pastor. In that meeting, he expressed concern that his professional skills were mainly directed toward killing people. The pastor, a combat veteran of the European Theater in WWII, reassured him.

Luther had a similar experience. Asa Von Kram, a professional soldier, and others were troubled in conscience and sought Luther out on the subject.¹ In July 1525, they prevailed upon Luther to publish what he had shared with them. He did so late in 1526 in a treatise, *Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved*. Although Luther had much to say on the subject, let’s look at a few highlights.

To fight and kill effectively is a good and proper vocation. ↓

Luther pointed Von Kram to the Scriptures. “As proof, I quote John the Baptist, who, except for Christ, was the greatest teacher and preacher of all. When soldiers came to him and asked what they should do, he did not condemn their office or advise them to stop doing their work; rather, according to Luke 3 [:14], he approved it by saying, ‘Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.’ Thus he praised the military profession, but at the same time he forbade its abuse.”²

If one’s skills, temperament, and abilities lead him into the vocation of warfighter,³ then while decrying the need, he is to aspire to be good at it. Luther says, “Look at the real soldiers, those who have played the game of war... They are not playing games. Their sword is tight in the sheath, but if they have to draw, it does not return bloodless to the scabbard.”⁴

The warfighter does not fight for himself, but for God and those powers God has instituted to protect the just and the weak who are threatened. ↓

Luther pointed out that the moral justification for making war has nothing to do with the individual, but comes from God, who establishes governments for the purpose of defending the weak who do right from the predators who kill and steal and oppress. Those who struggle in their conscience for killing the enemy do well to heed Luther: “For the hand that wields this sword and kills with it is not man’s hand, but God’s.”⁵

The power of life and death is misused when it is in an unjust cause. ↓

To use the power of the sword for vengeance, for exploitation, to obtain riches, to rebel against the divinely-established authority, or to enrich some at the expense of others is wrong. But this may be difficult to ascertain, so Luther approaches it from both sides. First, he says, “A second question: ‘Suppose my lord were wrong in going to war.’ I reply: If you know for sure that he is wrong, then you should fear God rather than men, Acts 4 [5:29], and you should neither fight nor serve, for you cannot have a good conscience before God.”⁶ But then he acknowledges the usual ambiguity, saying, “But if you do not know, or cannot find out, whether your lord is wrong, you ought not to weaken certain obedience for the sake of an uncertain justice; rather you should think the best of your lord, as is the way of love, for ‘love believes all things’ and ‘does not think evil,’ I Corinthians 13 [:4–7].”⁷

Moral clarity is both important and elusive. ↓

Luther started out telling Von Kram of the boldness that comes from fighting and killing with a good conscience. Moral clarity is important. It is important for the boys playing “war” in the backyard to be “killing the bad guys,” and it is a very important reason that those who kill on our behalf speak of “killing the bad guys,” especially in the War on Terrorism, where the enemy wears no uniform.

Whether used against our nation’s enemies or carrying out penalties against those convicted of crimes, the power of the sword is essentially defensive. It is not to be used as an instrument of vengeance, but for the defense of the innocent and the “punishment of those who do wrong” (Romans 13:4). Luther says, “Self-defense is a proper ground for fighting and therefore all laws agree that self-defense shall go unpunished; and he who kills another in self-defense is innocent in the eyes of all men.”⁸

Luther lays out a clear principle: “At the very outset I want to say that whoever starts a war is in the wrong.”⁹ But he also acknowledges ambiguity. When facing people dressed as civilians, as in the Peasants’ Rebellion, he said, “There are so many cases and so many exceptions to any rule that it is very difficult or even impossible to decide everything accurately and equitably. This is true of all laws; they can never be formulated so certainly and so justly that cases do not arise which deserve to be made exceptions.”¹⁰

These ambiguities open the door for what some call “moral injuries.” In stopping the suicide bomber, the soldier also kills the child he was carrying. The controller who calls in an artillery strike against the fighters killing his men also kills the non-combatants behind which the enemy was hiding. Christians understand these moral dangers and seek to mitigate them. Officers protect their men from moral as well as physical danger.

1. Luther, M. (1999). *Luther's works, vol. 46: The Christian Society III*. (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 46, p. 89). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
2. *Ibid*, p. 97
3. We use the term “warfighter” to include those besides soldiers who are in our military services today.
4. *Ibid*, p. 119

The Christian warfighter relies only upon God for righteousness. ↓

Luther seems to have grasped the significance of this for individual Christians fighting in war. He advises Von Kram and his other readers, “You should not march out to war saying, ‘Now I have been forced to fight and have good cause for going to war.’” Instead, he says, “Dear Lord, you see that I have to go to war, though I would rather not. I do not trust, however, in the justice of my cause, but in your grace and mercy.”

Luther knew that a soldier’s hope of victory and of standing righteous before God didn’t depend upon his getting everything right, the rightness of his cause, or on being “on God’s side.” It all depends upon God’s mercy. So for our veterans, especially those coping with moral injuries, find hope in the mercy of Christ.

As we Christians honor our veterans, we do not do so because they are all heroes or all good people, but because those who fight and kill on our behalf are instruments in God’s hands. Through them, He works to spare and defend the weak, preserve the just, and ultimately to create such little peace as there is in this world so that the Gospel has free course to call all people to the eternal peace that we have in Christ.

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5. *Ibid*, p. 96
6. *Ibid*, p. 130
7. *Ibid*, p. 131
8. *Ibid*, p. 120
9. *Ibid*, p. 118
10. *Ibid*, p. 100

SYNODSYNOPSIS

2018 San Antonio Biblical Worldview Conference Defending Biblical Creation and Sexuality

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
(FRIDAY EVENING WORSHIP AND SOCIAL HOUR)

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, SAN ANTONIO, TX
www.worldviewSA.org

ADMISSION: \$25, LUNCH INCLUDED

The Creator, the Created World, and the Created Order

REV. JAY WEBBER

(Redeemer Lutheran Church, Scottsdale, AZ)

Sexuality Issues – A Reasonable, Compassionate, and Biblical Response to Transgenderism and Homosexuality

DR. JOSHUA MEARS

(Clinical Psychologist, Christian Therapist, Clinical Director of Christian Family Solutions in Lakeville and Mankato, MN)

Creation or Evolution – Evidence and Consequences

DR. DOYLE HOLBIRD

(Professor of Biology and Biochemistry at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN)

Apologetics – Answering Questions, Defending the Faith (focusing on challenges faced by youth and young adults)

DR. JAN LOHMEYER

(Apologetics Instructor, Lutheran High North, Houston; Adjunct Professor, Concordia University Texas)

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

The Christian understanding of creation, marriage and now gender are continually undermined and ridiculed in culture. Schools, businesses, the media, sports teams, courts, legislatures, and churches have joined the bandwagon against these biblical and confessional Lutheran teachings. What is needed is not only the truth, but the truth defended – reasonably, earnestly, and with compassion. What’s at stake is true faith in the One who is the Truth: Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world.

This unique conference is designed to equip Christians with discernment and prepare them to defend and share the saving Gospel with a desperate and lost world.

Installation of Jeffrey Hendrix



The **Rev. Jeffrey Hendrix** was installed as the pastor at **Faith Lutheran Church** in Oregon, Wisconsin on Sunday, October 1, 2017, at an afternoon service.

Apologetics: New Testament Reliability (July-August Issue) CORRECTION

CORRECTION: In my article “Evangelism, Apologetics, and the Reliability of the New Testament,” I wrote: “None of [the epistle and gospel writings excluded from the New Testament, such as the Gospel of Thomas] originate earlier than 250 A.D.” This was not accurate. The Gospel of Thomas and several other non-canonical writings were in existence prior to 200 A.D. Their content, however, is often contrary to the clear testimony of the inspired books of the New Testament. For example, the Gospel of Thomas (which appears to have borrowed a number of sayings of Jesus found in the Gospels) is silent on the work of Christ in history (his passion, resurrection, ascension, and his imminent return), is confusing – at best – on the person of Christ, and has nothing to say about his atonement for sins. Instead, the sayings in this book lend themselves to the teachings of later, second-century Gnosticism. The dissimilarities between this book and the reliable records of the first-century apostles and eyewitnesses are clear.

REV. DAVID THOMPSON

Still VISUALIZING^{the} REFORMATION

The visual arts in the Lutheran church has had a precarious position since the Reformation. Liturgical art was banned in most Lutheran churches and the patronage of art became primarily secular. Luther never wrote much about art, but did not support the destruction of images that took place in the early days of the Reformation. Luther did work with his close friend Lucas Cranach to have his writings illustrated and his own portrait exhibited across Europe in prints and paintings. He also appeared in several Cranach altarpieces shortly after he died.

For the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the Bethany Lutheran College Art Department has asked twenty-six artists, two filmmakers and three writers to celebrate with works of paintings, prints, drawings, photography, ceramics, video, and writings.

Another title for the show could be “Lutherans Make Art!”

ELS Pastor **Luke Ulrich**, in his commentary for the catalog of the show, writes:

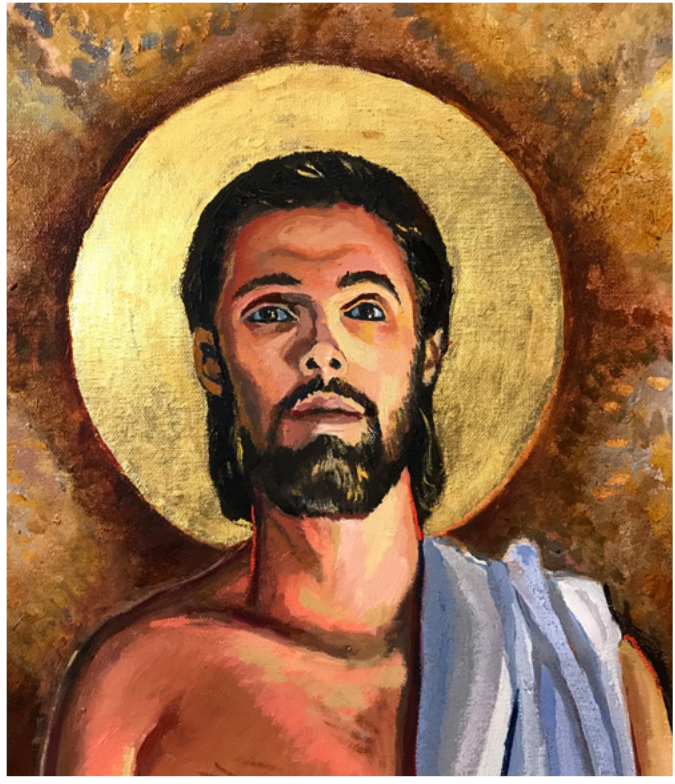
“As you look at the wide variety of work within this show, realize that everyone participating is of the same fellowship (members of the ELS and WELS). We confess the same teachings and beliefs that are drawn from Scripture and confessed in our Lutheran Confessions. We come to the table with similar world-views and yet, the work that you see varies greatly! This is designed to force the viewer to be challenged and will lead you to ask questions—important questions that are worth discussing: “What is a ‘Lutheran Artist’?” “What makes this art ‘Christian’ in nature?” “How can we as Lutherans support those among us who are artists—who by their work and influence are helping to ‘sanctify the arts and culture’?” “How might we, as Lutherans, moving forward into the next 500 years, better support the visual arts in our midst?”

It is our hope and prayer that this unique show, at the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, might inspire us to appreciate—and encourage us to better support—the visual arts within Lutheranism.

- **Soli Deo Gloria**

A FEW IMAGES OF ENTRANTS INTO THE EXHIBITION ARE ON THE NEXT PAGE SPREAD





WILLIAM BUKOWSKI

detail: *Portrait of Christ from Resurrection*
oil on linen
41" X 71"



ERIK SOULE

Lutheran Still Life
oil on linen
36" X 24"

PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION

WRITERS:

Paul Burmeister, Luke Ulrich, and Tim Schmeling

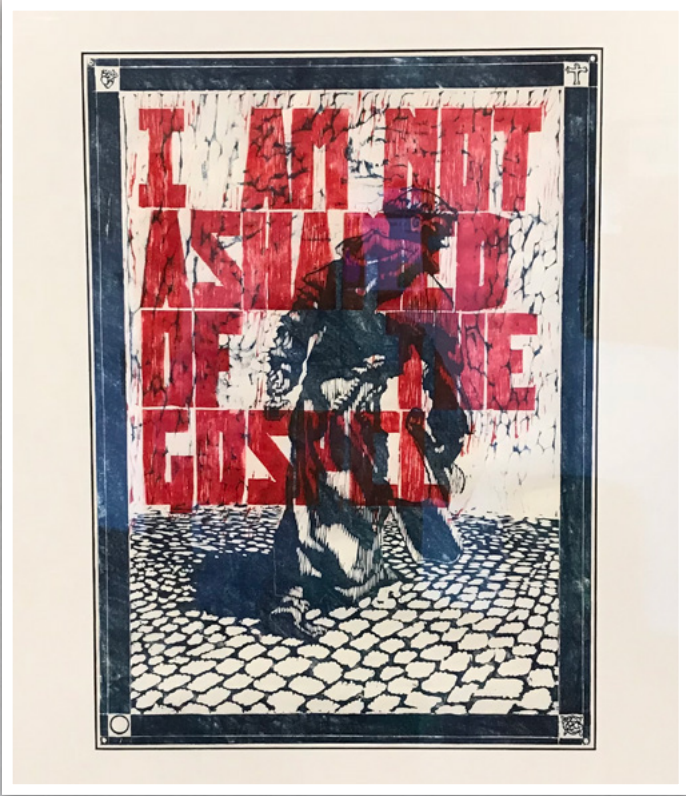
ARTISTS:

Nathan Beilke, Anna Biedenbender, Jeff Bukowski, William Bukowski, Paul Burmeister, Charis Charmichael Braun, Annette Hartzel, Lance Hartzel, Jesse Cordes, Kristin Gjerdset, Jason Jaspersen, Chad Lindemann, Karyn Lukasek, Ben Lundsten, Jim Matson, Jonathan Mayer, Don Moldstad, Eric Ouren, Andrew Overn, Kurt Shrader, Erik Soule, Joseph Steinbach, Paul Trapp, Alicia Ulm, Melissa Vandermause, Anne Wendland, Malia Wiley, and Denice Woller

Some of the artists are faculty members at:

Bethany Lutheran College,
Martin Luther College,
Wisconsin Lutheran College

The other artists are alumni from these colleges.



JASON JASPERSON
Not Ashamed
woodblock print



KARYN LUKASEK
Portrait of a Hymnwriter
torn paper collage
8" X 10"



JONATHAN MAYER
But For us Fights the Valiant One
oil on canvas
36" X 48"

CATECHISM *in* C O N T E X T

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

I love buffalo chicken wings. After a busy week or when celebrating a special occasion, my go-to food when we're out is buffalo chicken wings. Those times we go out to eat feel special, and I look forward to eating some wings. But if we went out for supper every day, I would probably get sick of buffalo wings (although it may take a while). Going out to eat would become less special.

OUT OF CONTEXT

The final part of the Catechism is the Sacrament of the Altar, the Lord's Supper. What do buffalo wings have to do with the Lord's Supper? Well, nothing. Or at least, they shouldn't. But, taking the Lord's Supper out of context, many believe receiving the Lord's Supper is just like eating buffalo wings. They think that, just like going out to eat buffalo wings every day would make them less special, receiving the Lord's Supper too often would likewise make it less special. So, in order to retain the specialness of the Sacrament, many would rather celebrate it less. This belief comes from taking both Jesus' instructions to "Do this in remem-

brance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24) and Paul's command about being worthy, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28) out of context.

When Jesus tells us to "Do this in remembrance" of Him, He's not telling us to conjure up a memory of Him, as we would by looking at a photograph of our baby sister and remembering how much cuter she was when she was younger. This would make the Lord's Supper merely a symbolical meal of remembrance, rather than a meal where He personally gives us His body and blood. Jesus is calling us to eat and drink and *remember* what purpose His body and blood serve: namely, that they are "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins."

Similarly, both the Bible and our Catechism do teach us to receive the Sacrament worthily, but being worthy has nothing to do with how we *feel*, as if we could somehow emotionally prepare our bodies and minds for the Sacrament by taking it less. Being worthy, rather, has to do with what we *believe*, as our Catechism states, "Bodily preparation [is] indeed a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins'" (SC V).

Luther identified the reason for our difficulty in feeling prepared to come: "We look more upon ourselves than upon Christ's Word and lips" (LC V, 63). The instruction to receive the Sacrament worthily,

after all, isn't the first explanation of the Sacrament in our Catechism. It's actually the last. So before we focus on ourselves and our worthiness in the Sacrament, we need to understand what the Sacrament actually is. So what is it?

IN CONTEXT

"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 drink" (SC V). The Lord's Supper isn't a normal meal. It's a heavenly meal where Christians actually receive Christ's true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, and along with that forgiveness, life and salvation.

It can't be any less special, because the power isn't in our emotion or our memory or even in our eating or drinking. Rather, the power is in the words: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." The power is that the body and blood of Christ have been given by Jesus' word and command to take our sins away. No matter how you feel about it, it's significance never changes. "As often" as you eat the bread and drink the wine, you are receiving Christ's body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins.

Knowing that we would stay away from the Sacrament because of our feeling of unworthiness, Christ commands us to "receive it often." But the command isn't the only reason we receive it. More importantly, we have His promise to forgive our sins and to exchange our unworthiness with His worthiness. Luther again comments, "Here He offers to us the entire treasure that He has brought for us from heaven" (LC V, 66).

Celebrating the Lord's Supper on a special occasion like Maundy Thursday, Christmas, or Easter is good. Celebrating the Lord's Supper when you've had a difficult week and especially feel the weight of your sin and guilt is also good. In fact, that's exactly why God gives it to us. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," He says in Matthew 11:28.

We sin every day. We need forgiveness every day. We need forgiveness whether we feel it or not. In fact, if we doubt our forgiveness, and feel that we *don't* deserve it, perhaps that's when we actually need it the most.

Finally, of course, we do need to be pre-

pared. So how can you be prepared? A final section of the Catechism that we won't have time to cover in this series is titled "Christian Questions & Answers." It really comes down to three questions: 1. Do you know you're a sinner? 2. Do you trust that Jesus paid for your sin by His death? 3. Do you trust that His body and His blood are in the bread and wine to give that forgiveness to you personally? If you answer, "Yes," to all the above, then you are worthy, and Christ Himself encourages you to receive His Supper often.

In fulfilling the Lord's command to "Do this in remembrance of Him," unlike a photo reminding us of a past event, the Lord's Supper "reminds" us of our future, a future we already possess while not yet fully enjoying its benefits: That day when we will join all the saints in heaven and partake fully in the feast of heaven.

The Lord's Supper is the culmination and high point of the Catechism. In being baptized for the remission of sins, hearing God's Word, and growing to believe what the Lord has taught us, we prepare ourselves for the Sacrament. In receiving the gifts of Christ in the Sacrament, we will more easily receive "with pleasure and seriousness, and so use" (LC V, 85) the rest of the Catechism all our lives.

REVEREND
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In Your blest body let me be / E'en as the branch is to the tree / Thy life my life supplying
P. NICOLAI

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

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REFORMATION VOCAB

Saint | s̄ant |

What makes a “saint?” Rome says:

1. Two verifiable postmortem (after death) miracles and
2. One of the following:
 - Evidence of having led an exemplary life ... worthy of imitation,
 - having died a heroic death (martyrdom),
 - having undergone a major conversion of heart where a previous immoral life is abandoned and replaced by one of outstanding holiness.
(<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/>)

Sidewalk survey says: “the mother who patiently birthed, nourished, and nurtured nine children” or “the 85 year-old woman whose never smoked a cigarette, never tasted alcohol and has prayed 3 times a day since she was 12 years old.” You could no doubt come up with many other examples, too.

The first avenue is formal. The second is more subjective. Both, however, lean on the virtuous life (and afterlife) of the person. But the Scriptural use of “saint” takes a wholly different route.

- *To all who are in Rome, **beloved** of God, **called** to be saints...* (Romans 1:7)

- *To **those who are sanctified** in Christ Jesus, **called** to be saints...* (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- *To all the saints **in Christ Jesus** who are in Philippi...* (Philippians 1:1)

Saint is a passive – a *gifted* – status, born out of the love of God (Romans 1) as the person is **called** and **sanctified** in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1). This means the patient, baptized mother of nine and the penitent and absolved mother who had an abortion are both properly called “*saint*.”

The “exemplary, worthy-of-imitation life” of this man or that woman never a saint has made. But the selfless living and the sacrificial dying of The Man, Christ Jesus, gifted by the Gospel to the sinner and received by faith... THAT is saint status for our living and our dying!

*To all you who are in Christ Jesus, beloved of God, called to be **saints**...*

REVEREND

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