



# LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

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# THE ELS EXPLANATION OF LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

Perhaps your pastor suggested to you as a confirmation student that you hold on to your Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism for your entire life as a ready reference for the basic truths taught in Holy Scripture. If you have, that is good and hopefully you make regular use of this tool for your spiritual edification. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod has now in 2023 completed a revision of its 2001 edition.

The sainted President John A. Moldstad, Jr., appointed an Explanation Review Committee (ERC) upon the urging of the ELS pastors. In 2019, he gave the direction that minimal but helpful changes were to be made, especially those portions most often memorized (e.g. the Enchiridion – the actual Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther).

Here are some of the minor changes made to the enchiridion:

**2nd Commandment** / changing "take in vain" to "misuse;"

**5th Commandment** / changing "kill" to "murder;"

**8th Commandment** / changing "bear false witness" to "give false testimony;"

**10th Commandment** / changing "manservant, maidservant, and cattle" to "workers and animals."

Additional material was put in throughout the Explanation to the Small Catechism to especially address issues pressing in upon the Church by the increasingly secular worldviews of the unbelieving world by their hollow and deceptive philosophies. For example, the sins associated with homosexuality and transgender surgeries are covered under the 6th Commandment with supporting passages, and in Chapter 14 concerning creation, transgenderism is considered in questions 133 & 134.

Paragraphs of further explanations for such topics as Angels, God's Hidden Will, Prayer, Synods and Denominations, Baptismal Sponsors, Re-Baptism, Private Confession, and Closed Communion are found throughout. The introductions and conclusions of each chapter have an apologetic flavor, preparing Christians to give answers of Scripturally based defenses to those who would dismiss the Christian faith as foolishness.

Also keep in mind that the ERC submitted its work for final approval by the ELS Doctrine Committee. So, what we now have, we commend to our membership in this newly revised edition for the faithful teaching of God's Word as reflected in Luther's Small Catechism, to the glory of our gracious Lord God, for the welfare of His Church and the destruction of all the devil's works and ways. It is our sincere intent that the Gospel of our salvation predominate in every chapter, setting sinners free from sin, death, and hell forevermore in the name of Jesus Christ, our only Savior.

The ELS Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism is available in three versions using these three Bible translations: the New King James Version, the English Standard Version, and the Evangelical Heritage Version. You may purchase at the ELS storefront on LULU (an online self-publishing site): [www.lulu.com/spotlight/elsbooks/](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/elsbooks/)

This edition of the ELS Explanation is like the others, concluding every chapter with hymn stanzas, making it a simple yet complete devotional tool for both daily and occasional use. By choosing to read a portion of each chapter and concluding with the corresponding hymn stanza and also using "Luther's Prayers for Daily Use" in the Enchiridion gives the opportunity for you to reflect upon God's Word in a personal and prayerful manner.

*Lord, help us ever to retain  
The Catechism's doctrine plain  
As Luther taught the Word of truth  
In simple style to tender youth.*

*Help us Your holy Law to learn,  
To mourn our sin and from it turn  
In faith to You and to Your Son  
And Holy Spirit, Three in One.*

*Hear us, dear Father, when we pray  
For needed help from day to day  
That as Your children we may live,  
Whom You baptized and so received.*

*Lord, when we fall or go astray,  
Absolve and lift us up, we pray;  
And through the Sacrament increase  
Our faith till we depart in peace.*

**ELH #551**



# LUTHERAN SENTINEL

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# echoes

from **ELS PULPITS**  
*past*

EXCERPTED FROM PRINT:  
"FROM EDEN TO EGYPT" 1956  
(Rev. George O. Lillegard)

## The End of the World

Genesis 7:1-24

Through 120 years, Noah built the ark which was to be his salvation from the general destruction that should overwhelm the world. Then, seven days before the end, God told Noah to go into the ark with his family and with the animals. When all had gone into the ark, "the Lord shut them in". He was the One who made the final separation between those who were to be saved and the multitudes who would be lost. It was the end of the world. Every trace of the world that had existed before the flood disappeared except for those who were saved in the ark, who were to make a new beginning in a new world, washed clean of the wickedness and godlessness.



The Deluge gives us also a kind of preview of the final judgment that is to come upon the earth, when its wickedness and godlessness again reach the stage they did in Noah's day. Our Lord Jesus Himself tells us that "as in the days Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be". St. Peter goes into detail, comparing the two periods of history: Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Peter 3:3-4).

As surely as the Deluge brought an end to the world of Noah's day, so surely shall this present world also come to an end in God's own time. The godless people of Noah's day were given many signs and warnings of the destruction that was coming, but they paid no attention to them. So in the last days, there will be a multitude of signs of the end that is coming, but few will pay any attention to them. Rather they will curse and ridicule those who try to warn them. But they forget that it is only by the mercy and patience of God that the world still stands, and that they must make use of their day of grace now while it is day or they will perish in hell. Peter says: Beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (2 Peter 3:8-10a).

Every day that we live is a new day of grace for us, a new opportunity to repent of our sins in all sincerity and to turn to our Savior for refuge. He is our Ark of salvation, our "refuge in the stormy blast". He alone can save us from "sinking in the deep and bitter flood".

The end will come, Jesus tells us, when unbelief has spread over all the world together with the knowledge of God. When the Bible and its saving Gospel truths are everywhere preached and everywhere known, while at the same time rebellious, blinded men reject its teaching and despise the Savior whom the Bible reveals to them—then shall the end come, just as in the time of Noah, when everyone knew all about God and the promised Redeemer but did not trust in Him or worship Him in spirit and in truth. For it is not the sins and vices of men that make them ripe for judgment, but their unbelief.

We should, then, guard above all against any form of unbelief, any kind of doubt concerning the truths of God's Word. We should live our days with the Judgment and the fiery end of the world always in view as St. Peter tells us: Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking

for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation (2 Peter 3:11-15).

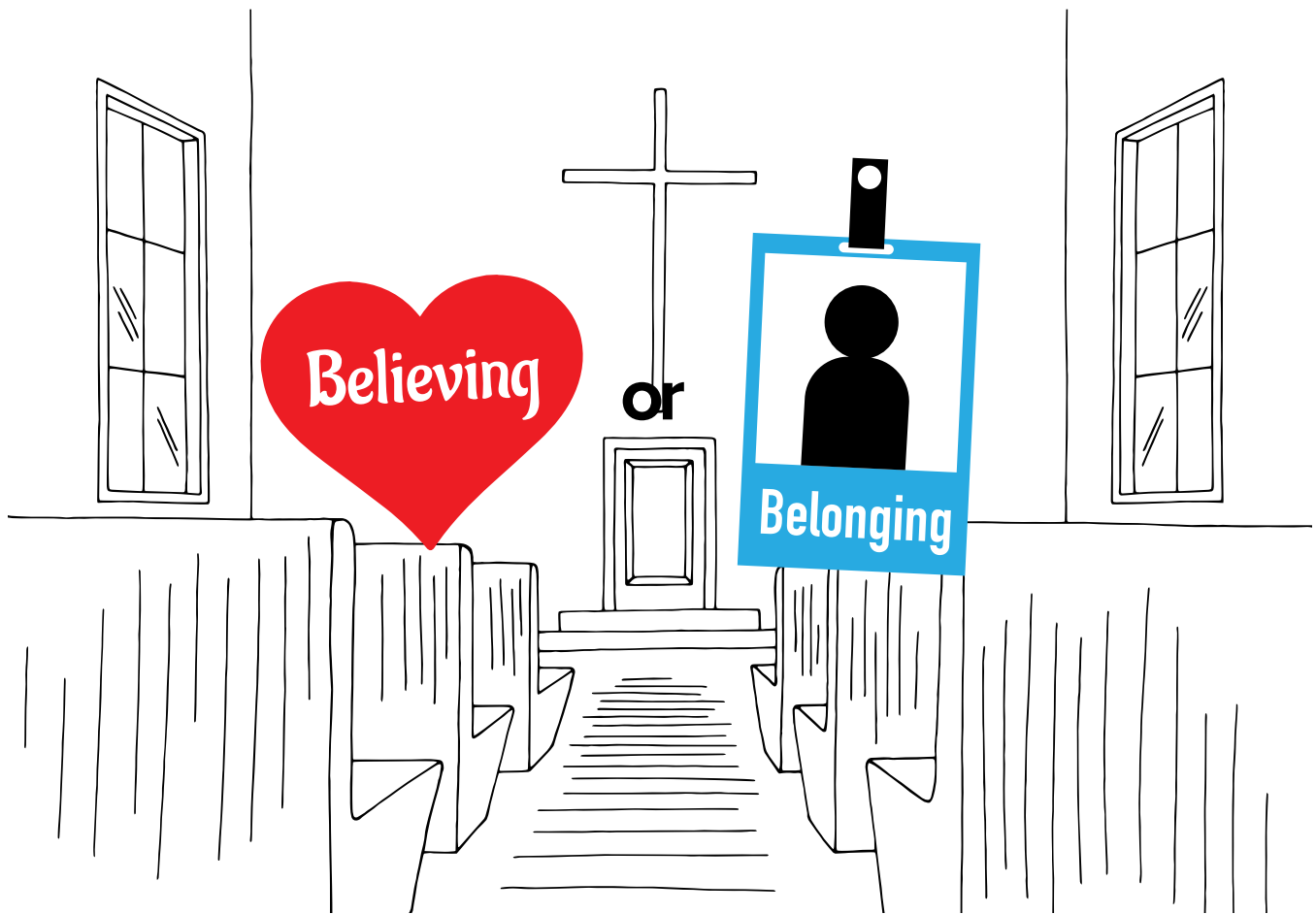
Yes, the Lord is longsuffering toward us. He has given us every opportunity to bring forth fruit meet for repentance. Let us then examine our own hearts and make sure that we can stand before the judgment seat of Christ, covered by His perfect righteousness through faith in Him as the Redeemer who died and rose again that we might live and reign with Him eternally. There is no other way for us to escape the terrors of the last day, when heaven and earth shall pass away.

May God grant us all a true faith in Him and a sincere love of the only Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, for His mercies' sake.

*O Christ, who diedst and yet dost live,  
To me impart Thy merit;  
My pardon seal, my sins forgive,  
And cleanse me by thy Spirit.  
Beneath Thy cross I view the day  
When heav'n and earth shall pass away,  
And thus prepare to meet Thee. Amen.*



Rev. George O. Lillegard



by **REV. ED BRYANT**, Contributing Writer  
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## Your *Membership* is Counter-Cultural

In this series, we have been considering the essence of church membership. We conclude by considering how clearly counter-cultural it is to faithfully attend a Biblical, Confessional, Christ-centered church. It is one of the most radical things you can do. It is so at odds with our culture that many do not understand it when we explain it to them. But do we realize how counter-cultural it is and therefore how valuable, for we embrace Christ's gift of forgiveness, life and salvation? Christians who value this in every age risk freedom, life, and limb to gather together. They are so counter-cultural that

they risk poverty, imprisonment, exile, and death from the culture around them.

On the one hand, the church is truly culturally relevant because through the church, God speaks to us as His creatures. He speaks truth to us about human nature, how it plays out in life in families, how we are to live, our purpose in life, our relationship to God, and our destiny. These are universal concerns! But more and more, our culture rejects these truths and embraces empty myths.

1. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2023/june/nigeria-christians-killed-persecution-churches-destroyed.html> Examples of the persecution of Christians is relatively easy to find; however, major search engines return articles which try to reduce religious persecution to merely "ethnonationalist," tribal, and economic motivations.

**As we have been considering in this series, “Church membership” is when a believer, in obedience to Christ and His Word:**

1. **Regularly gathers with fellow believers**  
*(communion/community)*
2. **Receives God’s gifts through Word and Sacrament,**
3. **Is in confessional harmony with them,**
4. **Lives a repentant, Christian life,**
5. **Is served by a pastor,**
6. **Whom they recognize as a shepherd accountable for their soul.**

Let’s examine some ways in which this challenges our increasingly humanistic culture.

**1. We gather at our Lord’s command and invitation, not to please the pastor, our friends, or ourselves.** To those who despise absolutes, this is a dangerous idea. They are fine with people viewing the Christian church as one alternative among many. If attending a faithful church is my idea, a cultural holdover, good for family, uplifting, encouraging, or whatnot, then fine. But if we affirm that it is God’s command so that we come to receive His good gifts and true Word, that is dangerous to the elite of our day. Church membership is Christ-centered, not man-centered.

**2. We gather with others who confess the truth of God’s Word.** By contrast, the culture in which we live denies that there is such a thing as truth and insists that words are used to achieve power over others. Christians gather with others who share the same understanding of the world, self, human nature, society, family, creation, morality, the future, life, death, and God Himself, based on words He has spoken. To publicly uphold that God created humanity consisting of men and women, that marriage is between a man and a woman, or that one cannot change his gender is viewed by many as violent, and in some countries is unlawful.

**3. We confess in harmony with other Christians throughout the world and throughout the ages, affirming the truth of Scripture.** To current opinion-molders and elites, the idea of unchangeable truth is anathema. Modern society demands unity of message and a repetition of the same narrative, but it is not to be confused with “truth” and it is to change according to the needs of the moment.

**4. We receive the good gifts of God through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament.** Our culture knows of no such good. The mercy, forgiveness, and righteousness that God gives do not exist according to the materialist. Forgiveness of sin is violence according to those who insist the sin be approved.

**5. We lead a life of repentance, faith, and forgiveness.**

The modern culture has no place for forgiveness. One either is on board with the current narrative or is canceled.

**6. We are served by a pastor, a seelsorger, a soul-healer, who speaks words from God – words of comfort, forgiveness and, if necessary, reproof and rebuke.** The world values reporters and celebrities and says we should each have our doctor, our teacher, or our therapist. But the world has no use for pastors. The molders of opinion, the politicians, and the powerful resent anybody who presumes to speak with more authority than they. Those who make their own desires into their morality for the day seek not forgiveness, but approval and affirmation.

In the ancient world, gathering as Christian churches was counter-cultural, and they knew it. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church,

*We are always obligated to thank God for you, brothers, as is fitting, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love that each and every one of you has for one another is increasing. So we ourselves boast about you in God’s churches in regard to your patient endurance and faith in all your persecutions and in the trials that you are enduring*  
(2 Thessalonians 1:3–4, EHV).

Notice that while Christian love was a hallmark of the churches, Paul praises God for calling these people together into God’s churches. This radical departure from pagan culture made them targets for persecution and trials.

But since Christ creates the church and calls us together, He also will bring retribution upon those who target the church. Paul goes on,

*Certainly, it is right for God to repay trouble to those who trouble you, and to give relief to you, who are troubled along with us. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his powerful angels, he will exercise vengeance in flaming fire on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Such people will receive a just penalty: eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from his glorious strength”*

(2 Thessalonians 1:6–9, EHV).

So, live a life that is radical and makes a truly cosmic difference: Acknowledge how Christ has placed you in one of His churches.



# Obeying God Rather Than Man:

## Martin Luther's On Temporal Authority (1523)

by **REV. ADAM BRASICH**, Contributing Writer  
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**OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN**, Lakeland, FL

*“We must obey God rather than man”* (Acts 5:29). With these words, Peter and his fellow apostles boldly proclaimed their allegiance to the Jewish Council in Jerusalem. Earlier, that same council forbade them to preach the Gospel. However, they refused and, subsequently, were arrested. Freed from prison by an angel, the apostles immediately went to the Temple, preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. The Jewish Council, of course, was irritated. The high priest asked them why they disobeyed the Council’s command. “We must obey God rather than man,” Peter replied. If human commands conflict with God’s demands, then Christians must follow God. Then, on top of that, Peter preached Christ’s message of repentance and forgiveness to the Council!

In 1522-1523, Martin Luther found himself in a similar situation. In September 1522, Luther published his German translation of the New Testament. While many Germans welcomed and celebrated the ability to read God’s Word in their own language, not everyone was pleased. George, the duke of Saxony, was among them. He opposed this new translation, not only because it had not been authorized by the Roman Catholic Church, but also because it contained numerous notes which were critical of the Pope. Therefore, he used his political power to prohibit any further copies from being sold and to confiscate those which had already been purchased. Duke George understood the power of this German New Testament to spread the Reformation, and so he sought to snuff it out.



Just as the Jewish Council's prohibition against preaching the Gospel provided Peter with the opportunity to confess his obedience to Christ, Duke George's attack on the German New Testament caused Luther to reflect on the different, God-given responsibilities of the church and the state. Unsurprisingly, Luther refused to stand down. Instead, he responded in January 1523 by writing *On Temporal Authority*.

In this treatise, Luther began by recognizing that Christians owe obedience and respect to secular government, or "the kingdom of the world," because their authority ultimately comes from God. The Apostle Paul taught, *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God* (Romans 13:1). God ordained government to maintain order in society and to punish evildoers.

If every person in all of the world were perfect Christians with no sinful nature, then people would not need government. Luther wrote, "If all the world were composed of real Christians, that is, true believers, there would be no need for benefits from prince, king, lord, sword, or law. They would serve no purpose, since Christians have in their heart the Holy Spirit, who both teaches and makes them to do injustice to no one, to love everyone, and to suffer injustice and even death willingly and cheerfully at the hands of anyone." But that's not the world we live in. Not everyone is Christian. On top of that, not every Christian acts as a Christian. Believers are saints and sinners at the same time. Even if we lived in a nation governed directly by the Church based solely on God's Word, sin and chaos would remain.

Therefore, Luther writes, secular governments are necessary and God-ordained. They are neither inherently sinful nor evil. Therefore, Christians should not hesitate to serve within the state. It is not wrong to be a soldier, a policeman, a politician, or a government employee. On the contrary, it is honorable for a Christian to serve others in that way. Such service is a way for Christians to love their neighbors because they are ensuring the safety and peace of their community. The kingdom of the world is not God's kingdom, but it is His servant. Therefore, Christians should feel free to serve and love God by serving and loving their neighbor through "the kingdom of the world."

In this treatise, Luther paints a very positive picture of the government. It is necessary. God ordained it for our good. However, it is not perfect. Its powers are limited. God did not give governments power over the soul. Jesus said, "*Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell*" (Matthew 10:28). Only God has authority over a soul – not the government.

Governments cannot interfere with the work of the Christian Church to proclaim the Gospel message. They cannot, by decree or legislation, force people to believe false doctrines or to act contrary to God's Word. Therefore, considering the context of Luther's treatise, Duke George had no right to ban the sale of Luther's writings. He overstepped the bounds of his authority.

Faith is not something that can be created, judged, or coerced by the state. Only God creates faith through His Word (Romans 10:17). Only God judges whether or not faith is true (Luke 16:15). No matter what pressure the state applies, it cannot cause someone to truly believe the true Gospel or a false gospel. Faith, ultimately, is a personal, secret thing.

Therefore, based on the Bible, Luther draws sharp distinctions between the roles of the church and the state. Christians are to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). They respect the different powers given to the church and the state. In other words, they respect God's order. The psalmist wrote, "The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man" (Psalm 115:16). The Apostle Peter wrote, *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good* (1 Peter 2:13-14).

Interestingly, the same apostle whom God used to command his fellow Christians to be subject to the government also declared, "We must obey God rather than man." In these two verses is found the Christian's approach to government. It's an approach preached and lived by Martin Luther in his reaction to Duke George's book ban. Christians respect government as something which God created for their good. When functioning properly, governments preserve order, protect society, and govern justly. Even when governments are imperfect (which they inevitably are), Christians continue to owe them their respect and obedience. We not only continue to pay our taxes and fulfil our civic responsibilities, but we also regularly pray for those whom God has placed in authority over us. However, when governments overstep their bounds and require something which violates God's Word, then Christians have a responsibility to obey God's Word rather than man's – and possibly face the consequences.

The controversy between Duke George and Martin Luther which occurred 500 years ago reminds Christians today that God's Word always comes first. In our confirmation vows, we pledged to follow God's Word unto death. We pray for faithfulness whenever we sing Luther's great hymn, "Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word" (ELH 589). Therefore, may God the Holy Spirit further imprint upon our souls the fact that "God's Word is our great heritage" (ELH 583).

# Tell Me Something Good!



by **REV. KYLE MADSON**, Editor  
**THE LUTHERAN SENTINEL**

**NORSELAND LUTHERAN**, St. Peter, Minn.  
**NORWEGIAN GROVE LUTHERAN**, Gaylord, Minn.

The NBC affiliate in Dallas-Fort Worth used to run a segment on their morning and evening news called “*Tell Me Something Good.*” While the title itself is quite pleasant to us, it ends up being a bit self-incriminating to the broadcasts in general. It all but announces that the rest of the broadcast is bad news, but now (in the last 120 seconds), it’s high time for something... anything good!

One of the Bible lessons historically appointed for observing Reformation stands written in Revelation chapter 14. This book is often misconstrued and warped, especially by our human propensity to speculate rather than simply be taught. And while the literary form (called *apocalyptic*) of the Revelation can be mysterious, its general theme is not. The Revelation is the Lord’s prophecy to His Church (immediately to seven churches and then beyond that to us). And it’s about the Church—precisely—and it is about the Lamb (Jesus), who

is the Church’s head and her future. It is about the Lamb and the Church in the Last Days, which began with Jesus’ ascension and continue even now until He returns.

And so, with the Lamb (Jesus) at the center of the throne and with our existence clearly before us (we are members of the Church, after all), we hear the words from Revelation 14:

*Then, (writes St. John) I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”*  
(Rev. 14:6-7)

Tell them something good... In this Reformation-appointed reading, the Lord shows an angel to St. John – a messenger from heaven. That messenger has a singular task – tell the people of the fallen (Bad News) world something good.

## How About a Piece of Gum?

.....

Something good for a world full of “bad.” That’s got a nice ring to it, especially since you and I are residents of and contributors to this bad news world. But like the news station’s little segment, that “nice ring” comes with an incriminating undertone, a little bit like when someone says, “How about a piece of gum?” The nice gesture comes with an implication we’d prefer not to encounter—I *have bad breath*.

The world in which we live and to which we contribute has “bad breath” if you will. There is a bitter truth behind God commissioning a messenger with “Gospel” (Good News) to earth. And that truth is the “bad breath” of sin, of death, of dying. Sin, as God’s Word speaks of it, is not a bit of bad news. It’s the worst of all bad news. It’s not distant bad, like news of a city states away that has a rising murder rate. This “bad breath” —Sin—it’s very personal bad news. The Devil and our own flesh would have us believe that sin is a foreign/distant stench outside of us which, if contacted too much, could have leave some stink on us, too.

God’s Word tells a very different story, however. Jesus Himself gets to the core of it when He calls sin’s bad news an “inside problem”:

*For it is from WITHIN that evil thoughts come... sexual sins – inside problem; stealing – inside problem; murder/hatred – inside problem; gossip – inside problem.*  
(Mark 7:21-23)

The “Bad News” is like a news broadcast that has gone closed-circuit—it’s only airing on your television or streaming to my laptop and no one else’s! The personal nature of this “Bad News” of sin can be pondered this way: if the fill in the blank reads “\_\_\_\_\_ is the worst sinner I know” and your answer or mine isn’t unquestionably our own name, then we are plugging our ears and hardening our hearts to the very personal verdict of God’s law.

Sin is so personal and devastating that the sinner has no way of “claiming of the kingdom by force” (John 8). The bad news of sin is so bad that Good News cannot be obtained by a Pharisee’s fastidious fasting, by a Roman Catholic’s praying enough “hail Mary’s,” not by Luther’s becoming an excellent monk or our being much less of a gossip than our gossip-y neighbor.

To properly celebrate what the Reformation was and is to the Church is first of all to recognize the very personal and utterly devastating nature of this bad news of sin. To observe the Reformation is to own the words we frequently use in the public confession: “Poor, miserable sinner.” Our “wallet” of righteousness is bankrupt without a single bill or even a coin

that carries value with God. Our conscience is thoroughly miserable, overwhelmed by the weight of the bad news—my sin.

“Please, Lord,” we groan in all of our misery, “Tell me something good!”

## Good News for Bad Breath

.....

As taught by Jesus Himself, “all the Prophets and the Law” were driving to this emphatically good news for a bad breath world. And Jesus’ relative, John, he would get to put his finger right on it.

*Behold! The Lamb of God  
who takes away the sin of the world!*  
(John 1:29)

When we look around, we conclude that we are, in fact, in the “world” of which John speaks. And when our Word-taught conscience nods in agreement with God’s law recognizing that sin is a very personal, very devastating problem, then rejoice! Rejoice because this Gospel is for sinners—for you and me. His coming into the flesh and under the law, His suffering and dying on the cross, His rising to life from the dead according to promise—this is all Good News for poor, miserable sinners.

And this Gospel—Jesus’ person and His suffering and dying in sinner’s stead—this good news has still more to give. It is everlasting Gospel. It isn’t subject to an expiration date. Jesus is the Good News—the Gospel—for all time!

Peter answered Jesus, saying, “Jesus, you’re the Christ. The Savior God promised.” And when Jesus affirms Peter’s word, He sets this good-news word as the bedrock for the Church. Jesus says, “*You’re right Peter, and this good news of who I am and what I do will be the good news always. Not even the gates of hell stand a chance against it!*” The Good News of Jesus for poor, miserable sinners is that good! Eternally good!

Tell Me Something Good! If the Reformation were merely about a great period in history or if it were about a great scholar and theologian from the 16th Century, then the “goodness” of the good news has come and gone or, at best, it visits for a brief few hours every year. But the Lutheran churches’ rightful observance of the Reformation is about the person and work of Jesus—the Christ who *is with His Church always, to the very end of the age* (Matthew 28:20). When we celebrate the Reformation, we simply rejoice that the **Jesus who was good news in the flesh is and always will be the good news—the life and salvation of the sinner.** Tell me something good, indeed!



# SYNOD MEMORIALS: GIVEN BETWEEN

07/01/22 - 06/30/23

<b>Arthur Meinhardt</b> Heritage Ladies Connection	Apple Valley, MN	<b>Ken Greene</b> Heritage Ladies Connection	Apple Valley, MN
<b>Ashley Rumsay</b> Ever Ready Circle	Holton, MI	<b>Lois Fratzke</b> Rev. Gaylin and Rebecca Schmeling	Mankato, MN
<b>Barbe Schneider</b> Bryan Johnson	Midland, MI	<b>Lois Petersen</b> Eugene and Rita Fredenberg	Cottage Grove, WI
<b>Bernice Skogen</b> Our Savior's Ladies Aid	Princeton, MN	<b>Margaret Madson</b> Silas and Mary Born	Mankato, MN
<b>Betty Vinton</b> Rev. Daniel and Lisa Basel	Mankato, MN	<b>Mildred Gullixson</b> Margaret Gullixson	Mankato, MN
<b>Bradley Oachs</b> Heritage Ladies Connection	Apple Valley, MN	<b>Norman &amp; Amanda Madson</b> River Heights Lutheran Church	East Grand Forks, MN
<b>Bruce W Boerner</b> Silas and Mary Born	Mankato, MN	<b>Otto &amp; Alda Uher</b> Alan Uher	New Ulm, MN
<b>Dennis Natvig</b> John and Sandra Smith	Shawano, WI	<b>Duane Garbers</b> Silas and Mary Born Peggy J Harstad Brenda Garbers	Mankato, MN Mankato, MN Mankato, MN
<b>Donald C Fosburgh</b> Silas and Mary Born	Mankato, MN	<b>Rev Carl Wosje</b> John and Sandra Smith	Shawano, WI
<b>Donovan Dahlby</b> First Shell Rock Lutheran Church	Northwood, IA	<b>Rev David Lillegard</b> Rev. Daniel and Lisa Basel Phillip and Cynthia Honsey Ione Lillegard	Mankato, MN Lakeside, OH Sebastian, FL
<b>Duane E. Pederson</b> Our Savior's Ladies Aid	Princeton, MN	<b>Rev ECF Stubenvoll Jr.</b> Rev. Daniel and Julie Faugstad	Redwood Falls, MN
<b>Erna Zahn</b> Silas and Mary Born	Mankato, MN	<b>Rev Harry Bartels</b> David and Nikki Sparley	Tigard, OR
<b>Gayle Grossman</b> James and Tami Sparby	Grygla, MN	<b>Rev James Olsen</b> Matthew Banbury Ross and Elizabeth Hermanson Rev. Daniel and Lisa Basel Ernie and Marge Lillo Peder and Gloria Dressel Rebecca Turner Rev. Erling Teigen Marie Aaberg Nancy L Jones Willis and Rachel Anthony Thomas & Paula Maglio David and Elisabeth Nitardy Rev. Glenn and Elizabeth Obenberger John and Naomi Shep Sisters of St. Joseph Silas and Mary Born Rev. Daniel and Julie Faugstad Neal Hansen Ever Ready Circle	Lake Mills, WI Wells, MN Mankato, MN Eagle Lake, MN Rochester, MN Fayetteville, GA Mankato, MN Rochester, MN Iowa City, IA St. Peter, MN Madison, WI Fort Atkinson, WI Mankato, MN Stoughton, WI Brighton, MA Mankato, MN Redwood Falls, MN Holton, MI Holton, MI
<b>Gene Rodewald</b> Silas and Mary Born	Mankato, MN		
<b>Harmon Anderson</b> Laufey G Anderson	Johnstown, CO		
<b>Jerome Hoeft</b> Ever Ready Circle	Holton, MI		
<b>Jim Bavier</b> Our Savior's Ladies Aid	Redwood Falls, MN		
<b>John Harstad</b> Peggy J Harstad	Mankato, MN		
<b>John Shep</b> Rev. and Mrs. Louis H. Bier	Walpole, MA		
<b>Karen Groth</b> Heritage Ladies Connection	Apple Valley, MN		

**Rev John Moldstad Sr.**

Silas and Mary Born  
 Kenneth and Carol Mellon  
 John and Sandra Smith  
 Paul and Lois Fick  
 Bob and Carolyn Bernard  
 Bethany Lutheran College  
 Dan and Linda Browning  
 Rev. Daniel and Julie Faugstad

Mankato, MN  
 Mankato, MN  
 Shawano, WI  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 Mankato, MN  
 Mankato, MN  
 Minnetonka, MN  
 Redwood Falls, MN

**Rev Richard MacKain**

Jean MacKain

Milwaukee, WI

**Richard Jones**

JoAnn Maske

Menomonee Falls, WI

**Rolan Brasch**

Ever Ready Circle

Holton, MI

**Ruth Conger**

Link and Karina Gross

Port Washington, WI

**Sandy Winter**

Bethany Ladies

Luverne, MN

**Virgil Teigland**

Heritage Ladies Connection

Apple Valley, MN

**Whitney Ulrich**

Silas and Mary Born

Mankato, MN

## SEMINARY MEMORIALS: GIVEN BETWEEN 07/01/22 - 06/30/23

**Rev David Lillegard**

Mr. and Mrs. Olaf Haaland  
 Rev. Gregory J. Haugen  
 Rev. and Mrs. John Smith

Frost, MN  
 Neenah, WI  
 Shawano, WI

**Barbe Schneider**

Rev. & Mrs. Craig Ferkenstad

Mankato, MN

**Elaine Halse**

Ms. Shirley Hanson

Decorah, IA

**Esmeralda Rodas**

Mrs. Martha Doepel

Oklahoma City, OK

**Esther E. Faugstad**

Martha Statlander

Thornton, IA

**Glenn Frederick**

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brown

Mason City, IA

**Glenn Lussky**

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Swenumson

New Hampton, IA

**Harold Fratzke**

Raymond and Nancy Pederson

Cottonwood, MN

**Ima Jean Raffield Evans**

Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Rose

Panama City Beach, FL

**Jody Lightbody Pals**

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brown

Mason City, IA

**Louis Marzinske**

Matt Banbury

Lake Mills, WI

**Marjorie Otto**

Miss Lois Otto

Mankato, MN

**Rev Carl Wosje**

Rev. & Mrs. Theodore Gullixson

Mankato, MN

**Rev Richard Lauersdorf**

Matt Banbury

Lake Mills, WI

**Rev ECF Stubenvoll Jr.**

Rev. and Mrs. John Smith

Shawano, WI

**Rev James Olsen**

Mr. and Mrs. David Tweit  
 Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Frederick  
 Rev. Gregory J. Haugen  
 Rev. and Mrs. John Smith  
 Mr. & Mrs. Howard Swenson

Gibbon, MN  
 Clear Lake, IA  
 Neenah, WI  
 Shawano, WI  
 Saint Peter, MN

**Rev John Dukleth**

Naomi Dukleth

Luverne, MN

**Rev John Moldstad, Sr.**

Martha Statlander  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Rose  
 Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Schmidt  
 Bud and Judy Krause  
 Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Lillo  
 Rev. Jonathan Werre  
 Dr. & Mrs. Carlin Wiemers

Thornton, IA  
 Panama City Beach, FL  
 West Bend, WI  
 Winona, MN  
 Eagle Lake, MN  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 Mankato, MN

**Rev Norman Madson**

Paul and Helen Levorson

Oakfield, WI

**Ronald Snyder**

Ms. Shirley Hanson

Decorah, IA

**Whit Ulrich**

Mr. and Mrs. Ross Hermanson

Wells, MN

## Question ...

*What is the difference between a pure desire to study angels and demons and understanding the occult, and a sinful obsession with these things?*

## Answer:

As the church celebrates the festival of St. Michael and All Angels on September 29th, it's not unusual for the topic of angels and demons and the supernatural to come up in a Bible study or a worship service. Nor is it odd or strange for a believer to have some interest in these things. After all, the Bible has many things to teach us about these subjects. Yet we recognize how easily an interest in the subject of angels and demons or in recognizing occult practices can, in time, take over a person's life. So where is the line between innocent curiosity and sinful obsession? In the end, perhaps we had best examine our own individual motives and reasons for wanting to know about these things.

When we consider the supernatural part of God's creation, including angels and demons, all that we human beings can truly know is what God has revealed to us in Scripture. The rest remains hidden to us. In Deuteronomy 29:29, Moses told the Israelites, "The hidden things belong to the Lord our God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever." A total and complete knowledge of angels, demons, or of everything happening in the present and the future—all of it properly belongs to God and not to us. So, any desire to possess such knowledge is to want for ourselves what God rightfully owns. These desires are sinful, setting ourselves and our desires for the hidden things of God above our relationship with Him.

On the other hand, such a study can be valuable if it teaches us to look to Christ as the source of our strength and to rely on His victory over death and the devil in all things. So, when we pursue a study of such things, it's worth asking some questions beforehand. Why do I want to study this? Am I learning about these things so that I can better appreciate the love and care God has shown us in His invisible creation? Or am I merely studying these things in order to satisfy my curiosity? Do I want to know about demonology and the occult in order to better be able to "mark and avoid" that which is false? Or am I attempting to know "the hidden things" of God?

If we think we're becoming obsessed with these topics, it's good to appreciate with all due seriousness God's views of idolatry and witchcraft. In Galatians 5:19-21, sorcery is included with idolatry and sexual immorality as sins which, if they are continually practiced, will prevent a person from inheriting the kingdom of God. When the apostle Paul brought the good news of Jesus to Ephesus, "a large number of those who had practiced magic arts collected their books and burned them in front of everyone" (Acts 19:19, EHV). They understood that faithfulness to Christ meant leaving the world of the occult behind.

Sometimes our obsession with these topics arises as a result of thinking that the best way to defend against the world of the occult is to have more knowledge about the occult. Yet the late Siegbert Becker, who wrote extensively on this topic, tells us that the best weapon against the occult is not having more knowledge of it or even merely knowing that becoming involved with it is sinful. "[T]he best weapon... is the Gospel of God's redeeming love in Christ who has come to destroy all the works of the devil." It is Christ whose sacrifice for sins has earned God's forgiveness for our obsessions. And knowing and trusting in the mystery of God's love for sinners in Jesus is the only thing that ultimately curbs our sinful curiosity, which forgets that the hidden things belong to God alone, but what He has revealed to us in Christ belongs to us and our children forever.



*Do you have a question for Pastor Van Kampen?*

- > Send them via email:  
[pvankampen@holycrossmadison.org](mailto:pvankampen@holycrossmadison.org)
- > Send them via "snail mail":  
Pastor Piet Van Kampen  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church  
734 Holy Cross Way,  
Madison, WI 53704





**Pictured from left to right:** (back) Caleb Strutz, Graham Parsons, Skyler Hepler, Arthur Langhorst (front) Adam Hoeft, Peter Estrem, Noah Schleusener, Caleb VonDeylen  
**Vicars not pictured:** Joel Hansen, Matthew Lehne

## 2023-24 Academic Year Begins for Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

**Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary** began the new academic year on August 21, 2023 with an opening service at Good Shepherd Chapel. For the opening service, President Hartwig preached on 2 Corinthians 5:18–21, explaining that through His work of reconciliation, Jesus has healed the relationship between God and man. Jesus faced God’s anger over our sins in our place. The Father is fully satisfied by the life and death of Jesus. We are forgiven. God loves us. We are reconciled to God. The heart of pastoral work is bringing this message of reconciliation to others. This is at the same time simple work and complex. It is simple because pastors are only telling others of what they have experienced themselves—reconciliation with God through Jesus. It is complex because people have different experiences and life is hard. It can be difficult to know just the right thing to say to the individual. God promises to use pastors to be His ambassadors and will bless their efforts in His stead.

The teaching staff for the seminary this semester is as follows: **Timothy Hartwig**, **Brian Klebig**, **Nicholas Proksch**, and **Timothy Schmeling**. Professor Timothy Hartwig is teaching courses in homiletics; Professor Brian Klebig is teaching communication; Professor Nicholas Proksch is teaching in the areas of New Testament, evangelism, homiletics, and hermeneutics; and Professor Timothy Schmeling is teaching church history, symbolics, and homiletics.

The seminary enrollment this year numbers ten. There are two vicars, three seniors, two middlers, and three juniors. The vicars are **Joel Hansen** at *Bloomington Living Hope Lutheran Parish (WELS)* in Bloomington, Minnesota, and **Matthew Lehne** at *Jerico, Saude, and Redeemer Lutheran Churches* in New Hampton and Lawler, Iowa.

### 2022 Bjarne W. Teigen Reformation Lectures

October 26–27, 2023

“Lutheran Ethics”

#### Lutheran Bioethics

**Dr. Scott Stiegemeier**,  
 Concordia University Irvine,  
 Irvine, CA

#### Lutheran Social Ethics

**Dr. Angus Menuge**,  
 Concordia University Wisconsin,  
 Mequon, WI

#### Lutheran Ecoethics

**Dr. Doyle Holbird**,  
 Bethany Lutheran College  
 Mankato, MN

Bethany Lutheran College | S. C. Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center | Mankato, Minnesota | October 26, 10:30 a.m.



2023 Biblical Worldview Conference – Chicago

**For Such a Time as This**

**Discernment, Boldness, & Compassion**

(LGBTQ+ ideology, pronouns, parenting, schools, gospel outreach)

**Saturday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>**

St. Timothy Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELS), Lombard, IL



**Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller: “The Theology of Pronouns”**

**Dr. Jennifer Kom: “Gender Solid Parenting”**

**Mr. Joshua Nelson: “Confronting Modern Heresies in Schools and Elsewhere”**

**Rev. John Bombaro: “Christian Witness & Your LGBTQ Friends and Family”**

- 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, CST.
- Cost in person: \$25. Box lunch: \$15. Livestream: \$10. Family discounts available (call 630-627-2435).
- Registration, payment, additional info: [www.WorldviewChicago.org](http://www.WorldviewChicago.org) (or call 630-627-2435).