

THE LUTHERAN HERALD



MARCH 2—APRIL 4, 2026

A PUBLICATION OF
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

The Calendar

The Lutheran Hymnal (1941): TLH; 2022 Supplement: ASBH

(Monday: M; Tuesday: T; Wednesday: W; Thursday: R; Friday: F; Saturday: S)

Please note that hymn numbers for Festival Days reflect the enumeration of drafts of ASBH supplied at the most recent synods.

March 1	Reminiscere (Lent 2)	ASBH 21
March 8	Oculi (Lent 3)	ASBH 22

MARCH 9 IS THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING QUARTER FOR
ST. IGNATIUS

March 15	Laetare (Lent 4)	ASBH 23
March 17 (T)	<i>St. Patrick, Bishop & Confessor</i>	ASBH 81
March 19 (R)	<i>St. Joseph</i>	ASBH 83
March 22	Judica (Lent 5)	ASBH 24
March 25 (W)	<i>The Annunciation</i>	ASBH 83

MARCH 27 IS THE LAST DAY OF SEMINARY BEFORE THE
HOLY WEEK/EASTER BREAK

March 29	Palmarum	ASBH 25
April 2 (R)	<i>Maundy Thursday</i>	ASBH 26
April 3 (F)	<i>Good Friday</i>	ASBH 27
April 4 (S)	<i>Holy Saturday</i>	ASBH 28

St. Ignatius Lutheran Seminary

Spring Quarter begins March 9; the Holy Week—Easter Break will begin March 28 and continue through April 12. The classes offered in the Spring Quarter are as follows:

E009—Greek Readings 3 (1 hr.)

S005—Creation and Redemption (3 hrs.)

H004—Reformation (3 hrs.)

E004—Isaiah (3 hrs.)

St. Ignatius currently has two students, Duncan Geldenhuis (Australia) and Jonathan Teo Zin Han (Singapore).

Lesson from the Book of Concord

Reminiscere Sunday

Article XIII. How Man is Justified before God, and of Good Works.

What I have hitherto and constantly taught concerning this I cannot in the least change, viz. that by faith (as St. Peter says) we acquire a new and clean heart, and God accounts, and will account us righteous and holy, for the sake of Christ, our Mediator. And although sin in the flesh has not been altogether removed and become dead, yet He will not punish or regard this.

For good works follow this faith, renewal and forgiveness of sins. And that in them which is still sinful and imperfect is not accounted as sin and defect, even for Christ's sake; but the entire man, both as to his person and his works, is and is called just and holy, from pure grace and mercy, shed upon us and displayed in Christ. Wherefore we cannot boast of our many merits and works, if they be viewed apart from grace and mercy, but as it is written, (1 Cor. 1:31): "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," viz. that he has a gracious God. For thus all is well. We say besides that if good works do not follow, faith is false and not true.

—The Smalcald Articles, Part III

The account of the demon-possessed child which we read in today's lesson builds on what we have heard in the appointed Gospel for this week. Our Lord praised the Canaanite woman for her great faith, when, by faith, she persevered in prayer on behalf of her daughter. Now, we hear the cry of this young man's father: "*Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*"

The apostles sought to intervene on behalf of the Canaanite woman, for they urged Jesus with the words, "*Send her away, for she cries out after us.*" Now, again, they sought to aid, attempting to cast out the demon, but they failed: "*And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?*" "*And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*" Prayer and fasting are among the fruit of faith which are on the minds of Christ's saints in the Lenten season. The apostles were too eager for the works which are particularly impressive to men; prayer, fasting, charity—these are not a substitute for faith, but the fruit of faith. We, too, are called to be mindful of the way in which faith is expressed which do not gather the praise of men, but are pleasing to the Lord.

Collect: O God, Who seest that of ourselves we have no strength: Keep us both outwardly and inwardly; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Outward circumstances—“*famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities*”—are occasions for each of the saints to recall “*the plague of his own heart*” and repent before the Lord. Because of the lies of our own heart, we are quick to forget what we deserve on account of our transgression. The outward afflictions provide us with an occasion to remember the Lord’s mercy toward us—for truly, we have no strength of our own upon which we can rely.

The cares and concerns of this life are often an occasion for those who will not endure to fall away. But for those who have their hope in the Lord, such circumstances are a needful reminder that the Lord richly blesses and preserves us, and in the midst of such difficulties, we have our consolation only in the Lord who has called us to, and sustained us in, our consolation in Christ Jesus.

Collect: O God, Who seest that of ourselves we have no strength: Keep us both outwardly and inwardly; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

It is always both painful and consoling to read the account of Nathan coming to David to rebuke the king's sin. The Lord, in mercy, sent the prophet to proclaim the convicting word of Law and the consoling word of Gospel. David, confronted by his iniquity, made no excuses: *"I have sinned against the Lord."* The consolation which is spoken to him is immediate and unconditional: *"The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die."* That which follows was on account of the public nature of David's transgression: *"However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."*

That which transpired after the absolution spoken to David was not something meritorious which David would endure; the grief and pain of the death of a child was not something whereby David's transgression would be paid for. Instead, the little one's death was a public declaration that the Lord did not 'wink' at any sin. David's consolation in 2 Sam. 12:23 makes it clear that he did not fear for the child's salvation. The Lord ordered all things to rebuke the impenitent and to console His saints.

Collect: O God, Who seest that of ourselves we have no strength: Keep us both outwardly and inwardly; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

On several occasions, our Lord declared: ‘My hour has not yet come.’ Now, when the Greeks come to Philip with their request, “*Sir, we wish to see Jesus,*” the Lord makes it known that His hour has come: “*The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.*”

The Christ is glorified in His death and resurrection for the sake of His Church. The arrival of the Greeks signals that the Gentiles are hearing the Gospel. The crucifixion and resurrection of the Christ—the center of all human history—is at hand. The imagination of men was tempted to believe it a tragedy or a defeat; certainly the enemies of the Christ imagined it would give them what their wicked hearts desired. But the grain of wheat was sown, and the harvest continues to the end of the age.

Collect: O God, Who seest that of ourselves we have no strength: Keep us both outwardly and inwardly; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

At the beginning of the week, we beheld the confusion of the disciples as to their inability to cast out the mute demon from the child. Now, we hear the seventy returning from their ministrations with the declaration, “*Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.*”

The Lord had sent them out to proclaim the coming of the Christ; they were to prepare the way before Him. But, in this moment of their return, their thoughts focused on one of the signs of the truthfulness of their testimony, rather than on the actual proclamation of the Word. This is the reason for the Lord’s gentle word to them: “*...Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*” They were fulfilling their vocation, but there was a danger that they would lose sight of the salvation that they had come to proclaim. That their names were written in heaven was not on account of their labors, but on account of the atonement which Christ Jesus made in the fulness of time, which by faith, was their justification before the Lord.

Collect: O God, Who seest that of ourselves we have no strength: Keep us both outwardly and inwardly; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Gamaliel was held in respect by the people, but there is a calculation to his reasoning which is in keeping with the ways of the world. Gamaliel does not seek to evaluate the apostles on the basis of their doctrine, but of their survival. He does not evaluate whether what they say is true, but whether the Lord will permit it to survive.

In the example of Gamaliel we see precisely the wrong way to deal with false teaching: Gamaliel blithely waits to see whether or not the Church would endure. But if one is even the slightest bit aware, it quickly becomes that ungodly doctrines may endure for centuries, beguiling many. Gamaliel's path is one of soft persecution—beating the apostles, rather than killing them—and waiting to see what would happen. The apostles, having their consolation in Christ, care nothing for the assaults of the persecutors: they have a faith which cares little for the toleration of the world, for they do not seek to serve the world, but Christ Jesus. And what the Pharisees did to try to shame them causes God's saints to rejoice.

Collect: O God, Who seest that of ourselves we have no strength: Keep us both outwardly and inwardly; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord Oculi Sunday

Article II.

Also they [the Lutheran pastors] teach, that since the Fall of Adam, all men begotten according to nature, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through baptism and the Holy Ghost.

They condemn the Pelagians and others, who deny that the vice of origin is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ's merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason. —The Augsburg Confession

Article II.

Of Original Sin.

The second article, Of Original Sin, the adversaries [the Roman Catholic theologians] approve, but in such a way, that they, nevertheless, censure the definition of Original Sin, which we incidentally gave. Here at the very threshold, his Imperial Majesty will discover that the writers of the Confutation [the Romanist response to the Augsburg Confession] were deficient not only in judgment, but also in candor. For whereas we, with a simple mind, desired, in passing, to recount those things which Original Sin embraces, these men, by framing an invidious interpretation, artfully distort a proposition that has in it nothing which of itself is wrong. Thus they say: "To be without the fear of God, to be without faith, is actual guilt"; and therefore they deny that it is original guilt.

—The Apology of the Augsburg Confession

(The *Augsburg Confession* was written in 1530, the *Roman Confutation* responded to the Confession in 1530, and then the *Lutheran Apology* (Defense) was written in 1531.)

“Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song, on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.”

We do well to look carefully at these words. David not only had to deal with his enemies, he also had to deal with harm from his own people, namely Saul. Likewise as Christians, we are sometimes hurt by our fellow Christians. While they (usually) are not out to kill us as was Saul with David, there are times we may feel “the sorrows of Sheol” surrounding us as a result of their actions.

So what can one do under these circumstances? The obvious first thing to do is pray as did David, “In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry entered His ears.” The Lord our God listens to our every prayer. We may think that we need to be formal in addressing our prayers to God, but there are times when our prayer is short and sweet, “Lord, help me.” And yes, such a prayer is sweet to the ears of our Lord, for He never stops loving us! He listens to us because we are His precious children. When we are baptized into Christ, He sees in us only the goodness of His only-begotten Son.

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty to be our defense against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

It is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” How is one to “be holy in all your conduct”? We can find these words from St. Peter very troubling because we know we aren’t holy in our conduct. We are creatures created by God and, as St. Paul wrote to the saints in Rome, “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” So how are we to be holy as St. Peter admonishes us to be, all the while knowing God’s wrath?

The problem we have is that our sinful nature is quick to focus on God’s Law, which leads us to despair of our status before God. We know that we are not holy. We can so easily find ourselves stewing over our sins that we forget where to turn. But God’s love for us doesn’t allow us to just stew over our sins. The Holy Ghost directs us to Christ and His forgiveness of sins. Jesus purchased you “not with gold and silver but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death” (Luther’s Small Catechism). Through the faith God gives in Holy Baptism, we are united with Jesus and His death on the Cross. Through faith, Jesus’ payment for the sins of the world is counted to us.

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty to be our defense against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria is the Latin phrase meaning “glory to God alone.” Many famous composers, such as Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel, used this phrase to signify that their various compositions were produced for the sake of praising God. God would have our lives lived to His glory alone. But when we take a serious look at our lives, we see a problem: sin. As Paul wrote in Romans 7:19, “For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.” Our lives are riddled with sin. Even the greatest of our good works are still stained with sin.

How can we bring glory to His name when the very good works we are commanded by God to perform are permeated with sin? Today’s reading clearly answers our dilemma. “Now Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’” The most glorious act of the Christian toward God is not good works. The most glorious act of the Christian toward God is quite simply confessing your sins, and believing your sins are forgiven. Good works will follow, sin-stained though they are. While our sinful flesh is obsessing over what we do for God, the Holy Ghost makes us able to do what is necessary for our salvation, namely, confess our sins and receive God’s forgiveness.

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty to be our defense against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Many have heard the phrase “speaking truth to power.” It is a phrase especially applied in the realm of politics. But often the “truth” that is spoken falls into the nebulous, but rather popular, category known as “*my* truth.” “My truth” is nothing more than a recategorizing and amplifying of one’s own opinion.

But then there is *the* Truth, Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Sometimes when His word is preached, people respond with their version of the truth, which is not the truth, but rather their opinion. No matter what God’s Word rightly has to say about any particular political issue, they think “my truth” shall prevail over God’s Word.

From the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians we learn that it was Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy who were writing to the Christians in Thessalonica. These three had been mistreated in Philippi. The account in Acts 16 tells of a girl “possessed with a spirit of divination” whose “truth” made a great deal of money for her handlers. After she had repeatedly hounded Paul, Paul cast out the demon, and with that the cash register quit ringing for her handlers. As a result, the handlers brought charges against Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, who were beaten and then imprisoned. The handlers thought their “truth” had prevailed. Then God intervened. There was an earthquake, the jail doors were opened, the shackles released, and Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were set free. The true Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only Truth that sets us free.

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty to be our defense against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Today's reading sounds so like it could be in the Table of Duties found in Luther's Small Catechism. But it is not. What is found in the Table of Duties pertains "To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers." However, today's reading pertains to deacons. While the role of deacons was first established to serve the congregation by way of distributing food to the poor and caring for the needy (Acts 6:1-6), deacons served in the Ministry of preaching and administering the sacraments, the duties of ordained clergy (Acts 8:5, 12, 35-40). Deacons often serve as assistants to bishops. If you go back to the earlier verses in 1 Timothy 3 you will find similar qualifications for bishops, and fittingly so. The Office of the Holy Ministry carries with it a great responsibility, while at the same time it offers the holder of the same the great joy of bringing the forgiveness of sins to God's people.

In our diocese, bishops, pastors, and deacons all serve in the Office of the Holy Ministry, with each serving in the respective roles to the end of serving God's people with His Word and blessed Sacraments. The call by God is to hold fast to "the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience"; that is, to hold fast to pure doctrine, and teach the same to God's people.

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty to be our defense against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Yesterday we heard about the role of the Ministry. It is to serve God's people with His Word and Sacraments. God's Word serves as the foundation of sound doctrine, which in turn serves as the guide to the Christian's daily life. Paul demonstrates this to Titus in the admonishments to older men and young men, to older women and young women, and to bondservants. For Titus to serve faithfully as a Minister of God's Church, he must always put God's Word before the people to serve as their guide throughout life.

As God's people live out their lives, what will always follow is the ongoing problem of sin. Servants in the Holy Ministry are called by God to be His voice to the people, calling them to repentance. As we read earlier this week, sometimes being God's bondservant can bring with it great trouble. For the faithful Minister, he may find that he must suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. But be that as it may, sound doctrine must never be relinquished, regardless of the circumstances facing the servant. Nor must sound doctrine be relinquished in the lives of God's people. As faithful pastors bring to us sound doctrine, God leads us to see our need for Christ and His forgiveness of sins.

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty to be our defense against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord

Laetare Sunday

The Fourth Petition.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Here we are mindful of the poor breadbasket, namely, of our body and the necessities of the temporal life. It is a brief and simple word, but it is also very broad and comprehensive. For if you speak of, and pray for, daily bread, you pray for everything that is necessary in order to have and enjoy the same, and also against everything which interferes with it. Therefore you must enlarge your thoughts and extend them afar, not only to the oven or the flour-barrel, but to the distant field and the entire land, which bears and brings to us daily bread and every sort of sustenance. For if God did not cause it to grow, and bless and preserve it in the field, we could never take bread from the oven or have any to set upon the table.

To speak briefly, this petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in the world. For on that account alone do we need daily bread. But to our life it is not only necessary that our body have food and covering and other necessities, but also that we live in peace and quiet with those among whom we live and have our intercourse in daily business and conversation and in every manner possible; in short, whatever pertains to the interests of family, of neighbors and of government. For where these things do not prosper as they ought, the necessities of life also must fail, and life cannot be maintained. There is, besides, the greatest need to pray for temporal authority and government, as that by which, most of all, God preserves to us our daily bread and all the comforts of this life. For though we had received of God all good things in abundance, we should not be able to retain any of them, or use them in security and happiness, if He did not give us a permanent and peaceful government. For where there are dissension, strife and war, there the daily bread is already taken away, or at least diminished.

—The Large Catechism,

Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38-44). This, in particular, was the sign which caused many Jews to believe in Him. It was also the sign that greatly motivated the Pharisees and the chief priests to plot His death (John 12:9-11). They thought that Jesus was building grassroots support so that He could eventually mount a rebellion against the Romans and declare Himself the King of the Jews. False messiahs had tried this before and brought death and destruction upon the land. Indeed, there were some among the common people who had this same mistaken hope about Jesus' purpose. After He miraculously fed the five thousand, they tried to take Him by force and make Him king (John 6:15).

In both cases Jesus withdrew, making clear that this was not the kind of king that He came to be. He did not come to overthrow tyrannical governments or bring earthly prosperity. He came, as Caiaphas unwittingly prophesied, to die on behalf of the people, so that all who believe in Him might be gathered together into His kingdom to receive heavenly bread and eternal life.

Collect: Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The task of a priest is to intercede to God on behalf of men, so that God might be favorable toward men and bless them. Because of men's grievous sins against God, this requires a sacrifice and the shedding of blood for atonement, so that God might be appeased and forgive those who have sinned against Him.

The Levitical priesthood was a teaching tool, reminding the Israelites of this need for someone to intercede for them and atone for their sins. But the Levitical priesthood was not able to accomplish the atonement that it taught. Its priests were sinners themselves, and subject to the curse of death. Jesus Christ alone, who is holy and undefiled, is our Intercessor and High Priest. He atoned for our sins by offering Himself upon the cross, thereby obtaining favor for us in the sight of God the Father. This atonement happened "once for all," but now He continues to make intercession for us by daily forgiving all who come to Him in faith.

Pastors, since they do not make sacrifices for sin, are not like the Levitical priests. Rather, they are stewards whom Jesus Christ uses to give out the gifts that His atoning sacrifice has won. St. Patrick was such a steward to the Irish people, bringing to them the Gospel and Holy Baptism.

Collect: O God, who didst call Patrick to preach the Gospel, grant to Thy servants steadfastness in the confession of the true faith that they would preach that unchanging Gospel in the midst of the darkness of this age; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

After Jesus fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, He crossed the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum, in part to get away from the crowds who wanted to make Him a king. But the crowds followed Him, and when they found Him in Capernaum they began to pester Him for another sign. Jesus rebuked them and instructed them to receive the true bread of life from heaven by believing in Him.

He was teaching them about His two natures. “The bread,” as He says, “is My flesh” (verse 51). Yet He says that this bread came down from heaven. How is this possible? Jesus did not, of course, bring His flesh with Him from heaven. But since the flesh of Jesus is personally united with the Son of God, Christ can say that He is the “living bread which came down from heaven.”

This teaching is what sparked complaining among the Jews. They knew He had flesh, but they completely rejected the idea that He was also true God who had come down from heaven; nor did they believe that His flesh could obtain life for the world. But those who are faithful are able to hear and understand this by the power of God’s Holy Spirit. The Church is where our Lord Jesus continues to feed us with His heavenly blessings on earth!

Collect: Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

These verses teach how it is possible that Jesus' flesh is "living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51), as we learned yesterday. Joseph was not His natural father, as the Jews in Capernaum thought. Jesus had been conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary. Therefore He is simultaneously God and man, having true flesh, yet being from heaven.

When this wonderful truth was revealed to Joseph, he, unlike the Jews in Capernaum, did not complain about it at all. *He* had much more reason to complain than they did, for it appeared as though his betrothed had been unfaithful to him, and now he was being told that he should go ahead and take her as his wife! But Joseph did not heed human reasoning. He obeyed the Word of God and believed that the Child in Mary's womb was indeed from heaven. Moreover, he believed the prophecy of the angel, that Jesus would "save His people from their sins" (verse 21).

Let Joseph be your example. God's Word is hard for our reason to swallow, and obedience to it brings many trials into our lives; yet do not let this be an excuse to complain. Rather, submit to Christ's teachings with humble faith, knowing that whoever believes His words is saved from sin and has everlasting life.

Collect: O Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit Thou didst inspire in St. Joseph a quiet obedience to the Word: guide and direct us to emulate such virtue in our life and conversation as shall glorify Thee in faithfulness day and night; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The “hard saying” that the disciples were referring to was the assertion of Jesus a few verses earlier: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life” (John 6:53-54). They object that it is too hard to understand, but what they really mean is that it is too hard for their reason to believe. As Jesus says, it offends them.

The true doctrine concerning the Person of Jesus Christ remains offensive to many, especially when it comes to His presence in the Lord’s Supper. Even those who confess that Jesus is true God and true man find it hard to believe that His real Body and Blood could be given to us as food and drink in the Sacrament. They object that “the flesh profits nothing!”, forgetting that Christ’s flesh is not mere flesh, but flesh that is personally united with the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. Therefore His flesh does profit something: it gives life to all those who, by faith and by mouth, eat it and drink it.

Collect: Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Pure doctrine is ‘too much’ for some people to handle. The disciples in today’s reading fell from the faith because their reason could not accept that Jesus’ flesh and blood could give eternal life. While Christ’s teaching remained general they could support it, but when He got specific about the implications of the union between His two natures, they ‘punched out’. Jesus did not call after them, “Wait! I think you are misunderstanding Me!” or “It is ok if you cannot accept this particular saying. At least you believe in Me in a general way.” Instead, He let them go.

Pastors and theologians have a duty to be very precise about doctrine. And sometimes this causes people to leave the Church. The problem in these cases is not pedantry on the part of the pastor, but unbelief on the part of the people leaving. The pure and specific teaching from God’s Word simply exposes the unbelief that hides underneath the surface. We, on the other hand, should respond as Simon Peter did. We must be wherever Christ and His words of eternal life are being preached with precision, even if everyone else is leaving.

Collect: Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord

Judica Sunday

Chapter VI. Of the Third Use of the Law.

1. We believe, teach and confess that although men rightly believing and truly converted to God have been freed and exempted from the curse and coercion of the Law, they nevertheless are not on this account without Law, but have been redeemed by the Son of God, in order that they should exercise themselves in it day and night, (Ps. 119). For even our first parents before the fall did not live without Law, which Law of God was also written upon their hearts, because they were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26sq.; 2:16 sqq.; 3:3).

2. We believe, teach and confess that the preaching of the Law is to be urged with diligence, not only upon the unbelieving and impenitent, but also upon the rightly believing, truly converted, regenerate, and justified by faith.

3. For although they are regenerate and renewed in the spirit of their mind, yet, in the present life, this regeneration and renewal are not complete, but are only begun, and believers are, in the spirit of their mind, in a constant struggle against the flesh, i.e. against the corrupt nature and disposition which cleaves to us unto death. On account of this old Adam, which still inheres in the understanding, will and all the powers of man, it is needful that the Law of the Lord always shine upon the way before him, in order that he may do nothing from self-imposed human devotion; likewise, that the old Adam also may not employ his own will, but may be subdued against his will, not only by the admonition and threatening of the Law, but also by punishments and blows, so that he may follow and surrender himself captive to the Spirit (1 Cor. 9:27; Rom. 6:12; Gal. 6:14; Ps. 119:1 sqq.; Heb. 13:21).

4. Then as to the distinction between the works of the Law and the fruits of the Spirit, we believe, teach and confess that the works which are done according to the Law, as long as they are and are called works of the Law, are only extorted from man by the force of punishment and the threatening of God's wrath.

5. But the fruits of the Spirit are the works which the Spirit of God who dwells in believers works through the regenerate, and are done by believers so far as they are regenerate [spontaneously and freely], as though they knew of no command, threat or reward; for in this manner the children of God live in the Law and walk according to the Law of God, a manner which St. Paul, in his Epistles, calls the Law of Christ and the Law of the mind (Rom. 7:25; 8:7).

6. Thus the Law is and remains both to the penitent and impenitent, both to regenerate and unregenerate men, one and the same Law, namely, the immutable will of God; and the distinction, so far as it concerns obedience, is alone in the men, inasmuch as one who is not yet regenerate does what is required him by the Law out of constraint and unwillingly (as also the regenerate do according to the flesh); but the believer, so far as he is regenerate, without constraint and with a willing spirit, does that which no threatening of the Law could ever extort from him.

—The Formula of Concord, Epitome, Art. VI

Jesus said that He gave us a new commandment, but was it really new? In the Old Testament, God had already commanded, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The commandment to love was not a new thing. Love is the fulfillment of the Law! The Law of love was already inscribed on human hearts and proclaimed in the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. The new thing in Jesus’ commandment is not the first part, “love one another,” but the second part, “as I have loved you.” Jesus was not commanding a different love, but a love which flows from a perfect focus. It is love which occurs in light of Jesus’ love.

Before faith in Christ, all attempts at love are futile. We cannot love the Lord our God. We cannot love our neighbor as ourselves. Our hearts are only sinful and selfish. If we “love” God, it is to try to earn favor with Him. If we “love” man, it is to get something back in return. But through faith in Christ, things are different. We do not need to earn God’s favor; Jesus won it for us when He died on the cross. We do not need something back from man; we have everything we need through Christ. We even have a new heart, worked by the Holy Spirit, which drives out our sinful desires and learns to love in righteousness. Our love is changed in light of Jesus’ love. Since He loved us and secured for us eternal life, we love others, not for ourselves, but out of thankfulness to God and a true desire to serve our neighbor.

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Sometimes Christianity is falsely presented in terms of a ‘theology of glory’. It is said that Christians who *really* trust in God will stop having sinful desires, avoid every trouble, and be successful in every aspect of life. This is obviously false, since Paul says that God “comforts us in all our tribulation.”

However, sometimes even a good theology of the Cross can be misconstrued as yet another form of the theology of glory. Sufferings and troubles can be framed as ‘tests of our strength,’ whereby we prove to God that we are worthy of His kingdom. This too is false. Paul lays out the truth when writes: “we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves.” This is not the boasting of a man who never wavered under tribulation. It is the confession of one who was filled with weakness. Paul presents himself as a man burdened beyond measure, and yet upheld by Jesus Christ.

This is what the Christian life really looks like: despair of oneself and trust in God. Like St. Paul, we have no confidence in ourselves. Our faith is in God “who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.”

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

King Ahaz is not the only person to weary God in this passage. There are many Biblical “scholars” who weary Him with their false interpretation! They try to make the “virgin” prophesied in this passage into simply a “young woman” who conceived and bore a son in a natural way. But if that were so, this sign given to Ahaz wouldn’t be much of a sign, would it?

We confess that this passage is a direct prophecy about Jesus Christ and His miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. As our Nicene Creed says: “I believe...in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary...”

Instead of testing the Lord our God, we believe His Word and we thank Him for providing Jesus as our salvation. Jesus is truly our Immanuel, “God with us,” since He is God present in human flesh. He came and lived humbly with us on this earth so that we might live in Him in His heavenly glory. He reconciled us to God through His suffering and death so that God might be with man and man would be forever with God in the life of the world to come.

Collect: We beseech Thee, O Lord, pour Thy grace into our hearts, that, as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by His Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of His Resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The context for today's reading is the story of the golden calf. While Moses had been up on Mount Sinai for 40 days, the people of Israel made an idol for themselves. They took gold from their earrings and constructed a calf to worship. It was a sin of the worst kind, since it directly broke that first and primary commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods.

Sin cannot simply be dismissed. We cannot comfort ourselves, saying, "It's ok. God will just forget about my sin." Sin has consequences. Sin deserves death and punishment. Though not all sin involves making a golden calf, all sin is rebellion against God and breaks the First Commandment.

Moses knew what their sin deserved, and so he offered himself as an atonement for their sin. He asked God to blot him out of the Book of eternal life instead of punishing the Israelites. In this way, the people would be forgiven, but justice would be preserved.

Of course, Moses could not really do this. He was a sinner too! He could not make an atonement for the people's sin. But his proposal signified what Christ would later do on our behalf. The sinless Son of God did make an atonement for our sin. Jesus offered himself on a cross so that we might be forgiven for every transgression committed under the Law.

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

There are two covenants (or testaments) in the Scriptures: the old covenant given through Moses, and the new covenant revealed in Jesus Christ. The first covenant was focused on the Law and it included all the ceremonies and civil laws of Moses. The new covenant is focused on the Gospel. John 1:17, “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

The people could not keep the requirements of the old covenant. While the Israelites assured Moses that they would obey everything in it (Exodus 24:3), this promise was broken almost as soon as it was made. The people needed forgiveness for breaking the covenant, but the laws of that covenant could not provide this forgiveness to them. Hebrews 10:4, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”

The new covenant replaced the old covenant, providing God’s fulfillment of all that Moses had written. In the new covenant God is the sole actor. The promises of the Gospel are not dependent upon our obedience; they are given to us by grace. Likewise, there is forgiveness for our sins. The first covenant gave shadows and types of redemption; the new covenant reveals Jesus Christ as our true Redeemer: “He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

After Paul left, the Corinthian church was faced with problems. False prophets came in and sowed division. They tried to tear down Paul's reputation and undermine his apostolic authority. But St. Paul was not so much concerned about his reputation as he was with the doctrine of Christ. He did not want a false report about himself to be a hindrance to their faith! Therefore, in this epistle he reminds the Corinthians about the character which he and his companions showed while they were still with them: "we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart."

The devil is always seeking to sow division in God's Church. He uses false prophets to create factions in congregations. He tears at the reputation of pastors so that people become offended and rebel against their ministry. In such cases, we should not allow ourselves to be driven by emotion. Christ's love should compel us and guide us, for it holds believers together as one Church. Christ "died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."

Collect: We beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people, that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord Palmarum (Palm) Sunday

Article III.

Also they [the Lutherans] teach, that the Word, that is, the Son of God, did take man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are Two Natures, the divine and the human, inseparably conjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but for all actual sins of men. He also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day; afterward He ascended into Heaven, that He might sit on the right hand of the Father, and forever reign, and have dominion over all creatures, and sanctify them that believe in Him, by sending the Holy Ghost into their hearts, to rule, comfort and quicken them, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin. The same Christ shall openly come again to judge the quick and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed.

—The Augsburg Confession

Success and failure are not always what we think they are. Sometimes the things we think are failures turn out to be the greatest triumphs. Jesus was the triumphant King as He rode into Jerusalem. He would triumph in exactly one week. Jesus would triumph on the Cross. His crown was the sharp one that was twisted and put on His head. His scepter was made of reed. His royal robe, a purple cloak. Those who crucified Him intended those things to be a mockery of Him, but those things were truly His kingly vestments.

Jesus triumphed through suffering and death. In suffering and death He broke the power of sin, death, and the devil. The image of victory is not the image of a Caesar riding through the streets to the adoration of the crowds. Victory is precisely in the bloody death of the one hanging on the Cross. Our triumph is not in our strength or talent. It is found in Christ. We find victory and life as we live our baptismal life in Christ. Jesus brings all of His faithful with Him in His journey to Jerusalem, all the way through to His ascension. We share His triumph with Him.

Collect: Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who amid so many adversities do fail through our own infirmities, may be restored through the Passion and Intercession of Thine Only-begotten Son, who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

By faith we call the Cross Christ's glory, and we see Him as He is nailed to His place of victory. He appears to be a dying criminal to the natural eyes. But, in fact, He is being exalted upon His cross at that moment, lifted up to the skies. We don't often think of Jesus' crucifixion as part of His glorification, but it is. As a matter of fact, Jesus' glorification begins with His passion. The mocking, the scourging, the crucifixion are all part of His glorification, because in those things He is perfectly and passively obedient to His Father's will. Jesus glorifies the Father in these things, and therefore the Father glorifies Him.

When Jesus was lifted up to the skies upon a wooden cross, all the world was lifted up as well. The world was lifted out of the muck and mire and darkness that had enveloped it. As the shadow of death enveloped Jesus, it was lifted from this world, it was lifted from all who have faith in Him. Jesus had fallen to the ground and died so that we might live. Through faith in Him we have died to sin, and in Him we live. Rejoice that He has been lifted up and has drawn us to Himself.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, grant us grace so to contemplate the Passion of our Lord, that we may find therein forgiveness for our sins; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1: LUKE 22:1–23 WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

Jesus said, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” Why was Jesus so eager to eat a meal with these twelve men? Eating a meal can be one of the most intimate things that we do with other people. To invite someone over to your home for a meal is not just sharing food, but a sign of unity and friendship. That other person is being brought into an event that most other people do not share with you. And when you share food and drink you are sharing life. You share the wealth that you have, the resources. And you give that person the things that nurture and strengthen his or her natural life.

Jesus eagerly desired that unity with His disciples. And He eagerly desires that with us. Through the Eucharist we are dining at God’s table; not just as guests, but as family. Jesus longed for the world to come to Him in faith and share in this meal with Him. He longed for the new kingdom to arrive. Not that He longed for the suffering, but He longed for the new reality to be accomplished.

We have peace and unfettered access to our heavenly Father through Jesus. That is what Jesus longed for. That is what He wanted so badly to be accomplished. And He gives us the benefits of His suffering after that ultimate Passover meal as the Church continues to celebrate our forgiveness and life in His Gospel and Sacraments.

Collect: Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds are continually afflicted, may mercifully be relieved by the Passion of Thine Only-begotten Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–32 MAUNDY THURSDAY

Ordinary bread and wine are the Body and Blood of Christ in His holy Sacrament. This mystery is beyond understanding. To venerate the holy Sacrament of the Altar is a faithful thing to do. Martin Chemnitz, the greatest Lutheran bishop and theologian after Luther, and writer of the Formula of Concord, said, “Here those statements of the ancient church are also pertinent which teach that the ancients venerated and worshiped Christ the God-man, indeed the very flesh of Christ, not only in the Supper but also on the altar where the mystery took place.” Chemnitz taught the veneration of the Sacrament. He also said, “We do not want to have anything to do with such people... that regard it as idolatry to adore the most venerable sacrament, nay, Christ in the Sacrament.”

There is nowhere where the consecrated bread and wine are that the Body and Blood are not. Where the Lord’s Supper is, there is Christ. We do not focus on the bread and wine as bread and wine. We worship the Christ who is present in that bread and wine. The bread and wine are the place of His presence, but it is He whom we venerate, adore, and worship. Yes, we worship Christ in the Eucharist. We worship Christ in the Sacrament as we observe His command to take, eat, drink, and remember in true faith.

Collect: O Lord God, who hast left unto us in a wonderful Sacrament a memorial of Thy Passion: Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so use this Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood that the fruits of Thy redemption may continually be manifest in us; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Jesus' type of death was not physically unique. Nor was it uniquely physically painful. It was, of course, terribly painful, but no different than other crucifixion victims. One hears the assertion today that Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross was a unique demonstration of self-sacrificial love, and therefore an example to us. Of course it was self-sacrificing love, but there are plenty of other incredibly moving examples of self-sacrificing love. There is more to the crucifixion than just horrible suffering and self-sacrificing love. The cross is also the punishment for sin. This is the center of the issue.

Sin is a legal issue before God. "For the wages of sin [lawlessness] is death" (Romans 6:23). Jesus is paying the penalty for sin. He is being executed. And yet we know Jesus is sinless. This is known as "substitutionary atonement." This is what makes Christ's work mean something to us. This event isn't just some tragic event that happened two millennia ago. It isn't *just* an inspiring story from antiquity. It is God's work of reconciling the world to Himself. This is what the crucifixion means for us. The substitutionary atonement of Christ for us is the heart of our faith. Without that, the passion and crucifixion are just 'inspiring stories'.

Collect: Almighty God, we beseech Thee graciously to behold this Thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the Cross; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Jesus is sinless and does not deserve death. He is pure and perfect. It is fitting that He be placed in a new tomb where no decay or death has ever entered. Though Jesus suffered death, He never suffered corruption. “For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27).

As we know, Jesus will not remain in this tomb. He will rise up in three days. Of course, the world has always tried to deny His resurrection. Immediately after His death the chief priests and Pharisees tried to secure the story of Jesus’ failure, that He did not rise. Ironically, the Jews, by insisting on a guard to prove Jesus did not rise, inadvertently offer greater proof of His resurrection. How could the disciples steal the body with a Roman guard standing in front of the tomb? To this day, all arguments against Christ’s resurrection are inadequate. And again, our hope and joy is that we find our life in His. Jesus’ tomb mirrors our tombs. That is, our tombs will be temporary. Jesus will raise us just as he was raised.

Collect: O God, who didst enlighten this most holy night with the glory of the Lord’s Resurrection: Preserve in all Thy people the spirit of adoption which Thou hast given, so that renewed in body and soul they may perform unto Thee a pure service; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Festival of St. Joseph

83. In House and Home Where Man and Wife

I Hus og Hjem, hvor Mand og Viv
Magnus B. Landstad, 1861
Tr., Ole T. Arneson, 1908

Kommt her zu mir
German melody, c. 1400

1. In house and home where man and wife
2. If thou hast giv - en Him thine heart,
3. And if thy home be dark and drear,
4. O Lord, we come be - fore Thy face;

To - geth - er lead a god - ly life,
The place of hon - or set a - part
The cruse be emp - ty, hun - ger near,
In ev - 'ry home be - stow Thy grace

By deeds their faith con - fess - ing,
For Him each night and mor - row;
All hope with - in thee dy - ing;
On chil - dren, fa - ther, moth - er;

There man - y a hap - py day is spent,
Then He the storms of life will calm,
De - spair not in thy sore dis - tress,
Re - lieve their wants, their bur - dens ease,

There Je - sus glad - ly will con - sent
Will bring for ev - 'ry wound a balm,
Lo, Christ is there the bread to bless
Let them to - geth - er dwell in peace

To tar - ry with His bless - ing.
And change to joy thy sor - row.
The frag - ments mul - ti - ply - ing.
And love to one an - oth - er! A - men.

Clergy of the ELDoNA, affiliated congregations and missions

Rt. Rev. James Heiser

Salem Lutheran Church, Malone, TX

Rev. Jeffrey Ahonen

Good Shepherd L.C., Tony, WI; Apologia Lutheran Mission, Deer Park, WI; Peace L.C., Ironwood, MI; Pure Blessings Lutheran Church, Brandon, WI

Rev. Jerald Dulas

Sts. Peter & Paul L. C., Simpsonville, SC; All Saints Lutheran Mission, Myrtle Beach, SC; St. Michael & All Angels Lutheran Mission, Martinez, GA; St. Bartholomew Lutheran Mission, Fort Myers, FL; St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC, Ormond Beach, FL

Rev. Douglas Handrich (Emeritus)

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Peoria, IL

Rev. Kent Heimbigner

Charity Lutheran Church, Burleson, TX

Rev. Benjamin Henson

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Peoria, IL

Rev. Jacob Henson

Apologia Lutheran Mission, Deer Park, WI

Rev. Michael Henson

Trinity Lutheran Church, Herrin, IL

Rev. Martin Jackson

Lamb of God Ev. Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR

Rev. Mark Mueller

Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cambridge, MN

Rev. John Rutowicz

St. Boniface Lutheran Church, Niles, MI

Rev. Josiah Scheck

Christ Lutheran Church, Richmond, MO

Rev. Eric Stefanski

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Harrison, AR; Emmanuel Lutheran Mission, Conway, AR

Rev. Timothy Tolar

St. Luke Lutheran Church, Kenai, AK
Homer Lutheran Mission, Homer, AK

Rev. Brandon Warr

St. Patrick Lutheran Church, Chipley, FL

Rev. Dcn. Gary Harroun

Trinity Lutheran Church, Herrin, IL

Rev. Dcn. Anthony Oncken

Salem Lutheran Church, Malone, TX

Rev. Dcn. Floyd Smithey

Sts. Peter & Paul Lutheran Church, Simpsonville, SC; St. James Lutheran Mission, Knoxville, TN

Rev. Daniel Mensing