

ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

43 N 3rd St., Hilbert, WI 54129

Office: (920) 853-3217

November 2024

From the desk of Pastor Peterson

Grace, mercy, and God's peace to each of you from our risen, victorious, and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

November is upon us, and I want to address you with some comments that are made to me in regard to the upcoming election. Some churches are politically active and encourage their members to vote in a certain way. They also preach and proclaim political points of view from their pulpits. I get asked at times as to why we in the LCMS do not proclaim

But what about Saint Peter and Saint Luke? The answer lies in the call documents that a pastor receives. We are called to not proclaim a certain political point of view, or to tell anyone who to vote for. The pulpit is not a place for political activism, the pulpit is a place where the Law convicts, and the Gospel forgives. The sacrament of Holy Communion is given to people not based on their political views, but for the easing of the conscience (forgiveness of sins) and to strengthen our faith. The sacrament of Baptism is not limited to either Democrats, Republicans, Independents, or whatever political affiliation a person holds. The Sacraments are for God's people to create faith, increase faith, and to give reassurance of God's love for us.

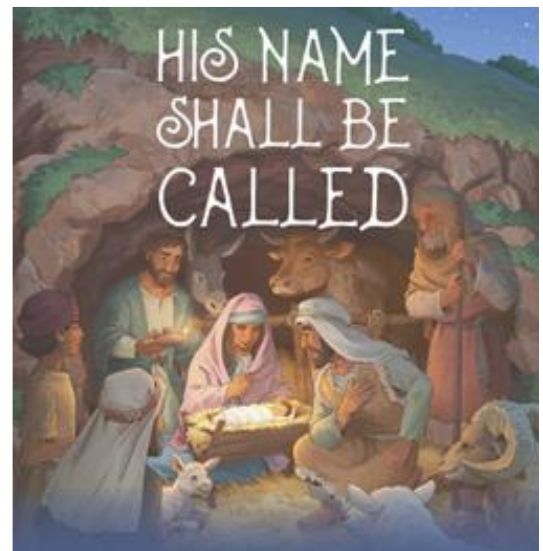
My own view is that we get enough political views on the television, radio, internet, and other forms of communications. While there will be issues that come up and will need to be addressed, rest assured that these topics will not be political, but based on God's Word.

I would though encourage each and everyone of you who read this to exercise your Christian liberty vote for whomever you wish. As far as exercising your right to vote, a recent poll came out the Christian Post (christianpost.com), that did a study for the 2024 election. They found that in this survey that 32 million self-identified Christians who regularly attend church are not planning on voting. The reason why is that they are disinterested in politics, do not care for the candidates running for office, or are just lackadaisical (lazy) about voting. The old saying is that you get the government you voted for or not voted for comes to mind. So, in this light, I would encourage each and every one of you to vote. Vote for the candidate/political party of your choice, make your voice heard.

Remember, God really, really, really does love you.



Pastor Mark Peterson



During the season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of God's Son, who was given the name Jesus—a Hebrew name that means “God saves.” In addition to His earthly name, Holy Scripture calls Jesus by various titles which describe something about His person or work. In this year's Advent series, we are going to examine four titles given to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6. Those titles are “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Everlasting Father,” and “Prince of Peace.” We will learn how each of these titles describes something about who Jesus is and what He did for our salvation.



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

LWML Prayer Service:

We are once again invited to Zion Lutheran, New Holstein, for the annual LWML Prayer Service. It will be held on Wednesday, November 13, at 1:00. An RSVP is requested. Please respond to Judy Paulson by Sunday, November 3. The service is expected to last about an hour.

Free at Last Gifts From the Heart:

Thanks to everyone who donated items to this ingathering of items for the Free At Last ministry in Milwaukee. We are especially grateful that members noticed the additional hygiene items and back packs that are requested. As we learned at the Fall Retreat, each inmate who is released from prison and participates in the Free at Last ministry receives a backpack filled with personal care items. We also received a few program brochures and information sheets. These were available at the recent Fellowship Hour and are now located on the table near the bulletin board. We are blessed to be able to be a part of this ministry.

Christmas Brunch:

Plans have started for our annual Christmas Brunch which will be held on December 15th. Please talk with Bonnie Teinert if you have ideas or are willing to help. This is always an enjoyable time for members of St. Peter and their guests. Watch for sign up sheets for attendance and food donations. More information will be in the bulletin in the coming weeks.



Advent Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministry



It is true that God deserves our worship and praise for all that He has done for us. And in the birth of Jesus into our world, born to save us from our sins, born to give us eternal life—God has given us His very Best. To which we can only respond: “Come, Let Us Adore Him!”

The events surrounding Jesus’ birth—the prophecies foretold and fulfilled, the birth of John to point to Jesus, the divine way God guided Mary and Joseph, the preservation of Jesus’ life from King Herod—all speak to God’s intimate involvement in our salvation. This is the God we adore—the God who spared not His own Son but gave Him up for us all.

Daily Devotions from LHM will help strengthen and encourage your faith as you do the same for others. Have them delivered right to your inbox, podcast the audio devotional, access them on your mobile device through the FREE app, or listen with Spotify, iHeart Radio, Alexa, or Google Home. Seasonal Devotions for Advent and Lent are available in both English and Spanish. Perfect for personal reflection or to share with family, friends and congregations, these seasonal meditations will help prepare you to celebrate the true meaning of these seasons.



Social Media Politics: Speaking as a Christian in the Chaos



By Peter Slayton

As we struggled through the COVID-19 pandemic [in 2020], many people on social media fought about what the government should or should not do and what rights Americans have. Christians weighed in on both sides. Some were pleased with government's recommendations and mandated protocols; others were angry with the same recommendations and protocols. Right now, political talk on social media seems inescapable.

If you choose to wade into the deep waters of social media political conversations, whether related to the pandemic or the elections, first ask yourself these three questions.

1. Who am I?

This is not a philosophical question or a series of positive self-affirmations. This critical question will shape your online interactions.

Americans tend to answer this identity question in terms of our citizenship and our rights: "I am an American. I have the right to free speech. I have the right to free assembly. I have freedom of religion and the right to bear arms."

As a citizen of a country founded on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, all of the above are true. And yet, American citizenship does not fully define who I truly am.

Who am I? I am a Christian — a little Christ. Baptized, justified, sanctified and awaiting His return, I am Christ's own. That's who I am.

If you are a Christian, it is also who you are. We are defined first and foremost by what God has done for us in Christ. And that reality is more inescapable than online political discussions.

2. Who is listening?

Before the internet and chat rooms, before YouTube comments and social media, our social circles rarely intersected. Church friends were at church. School friends were at school. Work colleagues were at work. Family gatherings were with family. Though these circles occasionally overlapped, they remained largely independent of each other.

Social media changed that. Your Facebook newsfeed includes all those circles at once. Church, work, college, high school, hometown and family all exist in one place now. This is called *context collapse*. The separate contexts for conversations have now collapsed into one — your social media wall. Each circle can see and interact with your posts, and each of these converging social circles brings a different perspective or context.

What is appropriate in one social context might not be appropriate in another. A political conservative will not discuss her political opinions with her progressive friends in the same way as she would with her conservative friends. In this way, she is not only being polite but also representing her perspective well.

Your progressive friend, conservative friend, religious friend, work friend, church friend, family and more are watching and reading what you post. They are interpreting you and the Christ you represent based on what you post.

As a Christian, your social media wall is not a "free speech zone" where you can say whatever you want. Your identity in Christ trumps your identity as an American and even as an individual with opinions. Every time. No exceptions.

3. What will you say?

You know who you are. You represent Christ. You know that anyone could be listening. Now, *what* will you say? Consider this big question:

Do your political discussions on social media reflect God's view of this world and your faith in Him as creator and redeemer?

God is not defined by any of the political or philosophical labels that we create. He is neither conservative nor liberal. He is not a Republican or a Democrat. He is not a monarchist or a populist. Our identity comes from Him. We should not return the favor by creating an identity for Him.

He has told us to trust in Him above all else. God regularly called His Old Testament people, whether in slavery or freedom, whether ruled by kings or in exile, to trust Him alone in every political situation.

In the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, God has once and for all shown that He is trustworthy. God's people in the Old Testament trusted in the promise of the Messiah to come, the one who would save God's people; we look back and trust in what *has* been fulfilled — in Christ. God has revealed that He is creator and redeemer of all things.

Do your online political conversations reflect that faith?

The answer goes back to the first question: Who are you? You represent Christ in everything you do and say. When you post, someone, somewhere in all your circles, may be asking, "Is that what Jesus says? Is that what Christians believe? Is that what the Bible says about it?"

Well-meaning Christians can get carried away. They may not say, "God is a Democrat" (or a Republican), but their statements imply that they view Him as such. Some suggest that the Bible specifically endorses American democracy. I have seen some Christians state that even though the government is under God's authority, we should really trust our reason and God-given,

decision-making ability. Other Christians imply that we should trust the government to solve our problems. Others say we should not trust the government at all.

Each of the conflicting statements above implies a trust in human reason and solutions rather than the One who created and rules over everything.

The answer to the question "What will you say?" is simple but not easy. It is simple because the call to trust in God above all things, including political things, is clear:

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Small Catechism

Let me encourage you to make your confession more explicit in your political posts and discussions. Take more time to speak of trust in our heavenly Father above all things. Point to Christ as the answer to present problems, not just in the future.

Is there political unrest? Christ answered that on the cross. Is there a pandemic? Christ answered that also. Did your preferred political leader get elected? Christ on the cross speaks to that. His death and resurrection define our existence in this world.

You won't win many internet arguments or score political points with this approach, and you may end up making people even more angry; the world hates Christ (John 15:18; 1 John 3:1). But you might confess Christ and His promises more clearly to those in your circles that desperately need Him.

This article first appeared in the [August 2020 print issue](#) of *The Lutheran Witness*.

Cover image: LCMS Communications/Erik M. Lunsford

Give Me 'Book of Concord' Lutheranism



By Matthew Harrison

The sainted former LCMS First Vice-President Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller Jr. was on the drafting committee for the ordination rite in our *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda*. In the rite, the ordinand first confesses that he regards the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God. After the reading of the list of the three ecumenical creeds and then again after the recitation of the documents of our *Book of Concord*, the ordinand says, “I make these creeds [and confessions] my own because they are in accord with the Word of God.”

Herb added the “because.” It wasn’t in the previous rite. In fact, our confessional pledge was pretty much the same as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s pledge (though we certainly understood this pledge differently). Liberal Lutheranism and historic Lutheran pietism (“faith in the heart is what matters, not words on a page”) have long accepted our *Book of Concord* “insofar as” it agrees with the Word of God. That means the individual and his or her interpretation of the Bible is king. If he wants to chuck part of the Lutheran Confessions based on his own personal understanding of the Bible, he feels free to do so. That’s how liberal world Lutheranism has managed to declare church fellowship with churches that deny the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, the pastor’s absolution, and the divine authority of the written Word of God.

This is important. We all learned and still learn the Small Catechism. We know that each chief part

just sets forth the clear simple truth of the Bible by directly quoting clear statements of the infallible Word of God. If my pastor has not sworn to uphold the divine authority of the Bible and teach it according to the clear confession of the *Book of Concord*, how do I know he’ll preach the truth of the Gospel to me? How do I know he’ll comfort me with the Gospel, after correcting me and calling me to account through the Law? How do I know that he’ll make sure I’m baptized and constantly remind me of that fact when I’m doubting or hurting or suffering? How do I know that he will preach the deeds, life, death and resurrection of Christ as truth for the forgiveness of my sins — forgiving me right now when I need it most? I don’t. It’s a roll of the dice. How do I know my children and grandchildren will be taught the strong Gospel and continue to hear it clearly? If you belong to an LCMS church (or one of the other confessionally Lutheran churches in the U.S.), make sure you hold that pastor and church to these confessional commitments.

The word “conscience” appears on every other page of the *Book of Concord*, and there are hundreds of references to “consolation,” “consoling,” “comforting” and more. But isn’t the *Book of Concord* all about doctrine? Indeed! But here’s the point: Sound, pure, biblical doctrine is always aimed at the repentance and forgiveness and strengthening of poor sinners like you and me. God prescribes strong biblical truth for poor, miserable, weak sinners. And He is “superabundantly generous in His grace” through the “spoken Word, by which the forgiveness of sins is preached in the whole world,” “through Baptism,” “through the holy Sacrament of the Altar,” “through the Power of the Keys,” and “through the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren ... (Matthew 18:20)” (SA III IV).

Give me *Book of Concord* Lutheranism! *Book of Concord* Lutheranism does not need to be supplemented. It cannot be supplemented with modernism or post-modernism without subtraction. It doesn’t need Anglicanism (apostolic succession, broad church latitude in doctrine, ambiguity in its public confession of Christ in the Sacrament). It doesn’t need Roman Catholicism (a pope, episcopal order, dogma of tradition, seven sacraments, obscure liturgical intricacies or

splendorous vestments). It doesn't need to be supplemented by pop evangelical, what's-happening-now, wandering, skinny-jeaned, unvested preachers. It doesn't need Eastern Orthodoxy (dogma of the authority of the church fathers and seven ecumenical councils, much less infant or toddler Communion).

Are there things that we can learn from all the above? Sure. But not to supplant what our Confessions make clear or to add what's allegedly missing. The liturgy and worship taught and done well point to Jesus, not the pastor. Ceremonies are free, but when our Confessions speak of such things, they always mention fasting, pilgrimages, feast days, Sundays, shaved heads and head coverings, even as St. Paul says, "Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath" (Col. 2:16; see also Ap VII 32–46). While the church's worship is free and flexible, the Confessions carefully state that we avoid "useless, foolish displays" (FC SD X 7).

Lutherans have a positive view of liturgy and ceremony. We have a positive, affirming relationship with the church of all times and its best biblical practices. The church did not begin with Martin Luther. The Confessions state that Lord's Supper "is more devoutly celebrated ... among us" (AC XXIV 9). "And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other such things" (Ap XXIV 1). Lutherans keep the order of the communion service. We use hymns ancient and new, but all must point to Christ. The church from its beginnings adopted these things because they aided in teaching and preaching Christ. As a great Lutheran pastor once put it, "The church is still the church whether it's adorned with a glorious liturgy or appears as a pauper" — that is, with a simple liturgy and the Word of God and Sacraments and no pizzaz.

"The body of the Lord is not usually given to those who have not been examined and absolved" (AC XXV 1) or those who "do not know what they seek or why they come" (LC V 2). The marks of the church — pure Word, rightly administered Sacraments — are enough for "the true unity of the Church" (AC VII 2). There are lines of church

fellowship in the rejections and condemnations of the *Book of Concord*. See the Preface to the *Book of Concord* on why condemnations cannot be avoided. At the same time, the Confessions clearly affirm that the church extends beyond the boundaries of confessional Lutheranism, and we do not condemn simple Christians ("whole churches," says the preface) who simply believe Jesus is their Savior. "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16).

The Gospel rules all this. All of it serves the Gospel of free forgiveness in Jesus. All things must point to Christ, emphasize Christ, deliver Christ, serve Christ. In turn, as Christ serves us, we serve our neighbor in love using all things for the benefit of the neighbor, believer or not. And above all, solid, biblical *Book of Concord* doctrine serves sinners in need of Jesus.

Give me *Book of Concord* Lutheranism.

-Pastor Matt Harrison



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter article – November 2024

The consequences of shallow thankfulness

Can you imagine a Thanksgiving dinner without turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and pumpkin pie? I know I can't! To not have these on the menu, or worse, to run out of them with the family around the table, would be a culinary sin of epic proportions. An attempt to serve bratwurst and hamburgers in place of the standard fare would ring hollow and seem totally inappropriate and out of place. It isn't that the food would be bad; brats and burgers are pretty tasty. But not for Thanksgiving — they just don't go together!

This month, as we continue to walk through the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788), we turn our attention to verse three. Here, William Watkins Reid, Sr., the man who penned this text, draws attention to some things that do not go along with faithful, thankful stewardship.

Forgive us, Lord, for selfish thanks and praise ...

We see this often with small children. They greedily snatch the candy out of a grandparent’s hand, savagely destroy the wrapper, and attempt to stuff the entire delicacy in their mouth in one bite, only to have a parent say, “Tell grandma thank you.” This is followed by the pro forma thanks that is uttered between chocolate chews. It isn’t really thankfulness; it is simply checking a box to keep mom or dad off their backs.

We never really outgrow this either. Our shallow thankfulness takes the form of feigned humility when praise is being offered. We are thankful that our admirers noticed and called us out: “Look at me! Aren’t I special?” No thought at all is given to the fact that the Lord was the One who gave us the ability and opportunity for accomplishment. Our false blush is really only masking our selfish, credit-seeking gain. Once again, we find ourselves idolatrously thanking ourselves.

For words that speak at variance with deeds ...

What carries more weight: words or action? The steward who gives voice to the Gospel in the Divine Service but then lives like a pagan in the world does great damage, not only to others but to the Gospel itself! This is the consequence of failed stewardship. It is idolatry that separates the steward from the Lord.

Worse yet, it also impacts others negatively. When the failed steward is the reference point outside the Christian community, there are those who want no part of being Christian or following the Christ they claim. We see this play out in the impact of overt political activity among Christians based on

governing policy as opposed to fidelity to the Word of God. When our lips and our lives are out of sync, like what used to happen with old movie projectors, the impact isn’t funny — it obscures the Gospel!

*Forgive our thanks for walking pleasant ways
unmindful of a broken brother’s need ...*

Our creature comforts often become an obstacle to faithful stewardship. This is true of both individual and corporate stewardship. Financial stewardship is often limited by our desire to be comfortable and have the latest toys and gadgets. Congregational stewardship is often limited by the desire to focus on what is best for the congregation as opposed to how resources might be best stewarded to reach the community with the Gospel.

When we see someone in need, or broken by the world, we often look at them as freeloaders. We admonish them to get a job. We insist that they learn our language, learn our customs, and make them their own. But this gets in the way of seeing every human being the way that Jesus sees them. Remember, that broken person is one for whom Jesus went to the cross to die and rise. When we are unmindful of these needs, our shallow thankfulness also stands in the way of the Gospel.

This stanza reminds us of the challenge we face. Our hearts are master idol-makers. Our shallow thankfulness threatens our souls and hinders others from seeing Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Stewardship is serious business. It is a task for which we were created. In our sinful failings, we are never relieved of these duties. In our Baptism, we are restored to be stewards of the Gospel. Our faithful stewardship is all about that Gospel.

Forgive us when our thanks are shallow, O Lord!
In this month of Thanksgiving, grant us the grace to offer heaping helpings of this stewardship so that others may see Jesus!

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry:
lcms.org/stewardship



November

- 1 James Behnke
- 4 Bev Boesch
Lori Schwalenberg
- 5 Pat Schaefer
- 7 Kelly Schwalenberg
- 8 Joanne Hernke
- 15 Judy Paulson
- 16 Casey Kalies
- 19 Richard Kamps
Nicholas Krepline
Halley Lau
- 21 Jennifer Vander Sande
- 29 Kelley Mueller
Jamie Hackbarth
- 30 Jim Kamps

YOUR GIFTS CAN
HELP US
HELP



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text-to-give opportunities:**

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View the latest stories, videos and podcasts, as they
become available, at lcms.org/hurricane-response.



HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY

November

- 3rd Dean & Maria Schroeder



November 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Altar Guild: Donna Marose DeAnn Eldred					1 All Saints' Day <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	2
3 All Saints' Day (observed) <i>White</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School Daylight Saving Time Ends	4	5 6:30p Bible Study	6 <i>4:15p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke</i>	7	8 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	9
10 25th Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) Fellowship 9:30 Sunday School	11 Veteran's Day	12 1:00p W.I.M. Meeting & Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study	13 1:00 p.m. LWML Prayer Service Zion, New Holstein <i>4:15p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke</i>	14	15 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	16
17 26th Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	18 Newsletter articles due	19 6:30p Bible Study	20 <i>4:15p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke</i>	21 6:00p Council Meeting 6:30p Elders Meeting	22 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	23
24 Last Sunday of the Church Year <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) 9:30 Sunday School	25	26 6:30p Bible Study	27 <i>4:15p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke</i> <i>7:00p Divine Service @ St. Luke</i>	28 Thanksgiving <i>White</i> 8:30p Divine Service	29 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	30 Christmas Decorating 9:00 a.m.

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion