

CONTENTS

Volume Twenty One, Number Three

FEATURES

4 Distinctively Lutheran Worship

By Jon D. Vieker

The seminaries of our Synod do well in preparing future pastors when they teach and model for their students a distinctly Lutheran approach to worship. It begins with a faculty that fully and passionately understands and embraces what it is to be distinctly Lutheran in a 21st century context. It is reinforced by a vibrant and healthy worship life that regularly and consistently trumpets a full-throated Gospel proclamation into the ears of seminarians and their families.

7 Distinctively Lutheran Teaching

By Charles A. Gieschen

Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, has become known internationally as a bastion of faithful biblical teaching that is boldly Lutheran. We even have been referred to as the Wittenberg of the 21st century! The reason for such a reputation is the distinctly Lutheran teaching and learning that happens in our pastoral and deaconess formation programs.

10 Distinctively Lutheran in Word and Practice

By Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

A seminary is more than an academic institution. It is a community that brings together uniquely gifted individuals—future pastors and deaconesses eager to serve in works of mercy, and lay leaders committed to Christ’s mission—who will go forth in dedicated service with the Gospel of Christ for the life of the world.

Also in this issue:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| What Does This Mean? | p. 13 |
| Called to Serve | p. 14 |
| Faculty Focus | p. 16 |
| CTSFW Begins 172nd Academic Year | p. 18 |
| So They May Hear | p. 20 |
| Alumni | p. 24 |
| Seminary Guild | p. 26 |
| Military Project | p. 27 |
| Profiles in Giving | p. 28 |
| Bible Study | p. 30 |



For the Life of the World

PUBLISHER
Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President

MANAGING EDITOR
Jayne E. Sheaffer

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Colleen M. Bartzsch

COPY EDITOR
Trudy E. Behning

ART DIRECTOR
Steve J. Blakey

For the Life of the World is published by Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the consent of the Managing Editor of *For the Life of the World* by email at SeminaryRelations@ctsfw.edu or 260.452.2250. Copyright 2017. Printed in the United States. Postage paid at Berne, Indiana.

For the Life of the World is mailed to all pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the United States and Canada and to anyone interested in the work of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture verses are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

The main point of worship is not about what we do for God; it's about what God does for us and gives to us through His Means of Grace. The German word that early Lutherans coined to describe this was *Gottesdienst*, that is, God's service. *Gottesdienst* went into English as *Divine Service*, that is, the delivery point where God serves us, His people, with His forgiveness of sins week after week. Worship as *Divine Service* is distinctively Lutheran!



Every Sunday morning, some 6,100 congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) open their doors for worship. In the life of our congregations, this is the single most important gathering of the week. This is where “the rubber meets the road”—where Jesus comes to be with His people to deliver His Calvary-won forgiveness of sins through Word and Sacrament (Matt. 18:20). As the Augsburg Confession declares: “The Church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered” (AC VII 1).



CTSFW Associate Kantor Matthew Machermer leads the children's choir.

But what is it about these gatherings that makes them distinctively Lutheran? What is distinctively Lutheran about the way we worship? And what does such distinctively Lutheran worship mean for the training of future pastors at our Synod's seminaries?

It's About the Gospel

This year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. By now, you've probably encountered Reformation historians and theologians in print and on video waxing eloquent on a variety of Reformation events and

Distinctively Lutheran

persons. But at the very heart and center of the Reformation was Luther's contention for the centrality of the Gospel, that is, the full and free forgiveness of sins in Christ alone (*solus Christus*), as revealed through Holy Scripture alone (*sola Scriptura*), given freely and completely apart from anything that we might do (*sola gratia*), and received by repentant sinners solely by faith (*sola fide*).

This contention for the centrality of the Gospel affected everything the Church was about, including its worship. In fact, it turned worship completely on its head! Whereas the Church in Luther's day had taught that the Lord's Supper was an unbloody sacrifice, which the priest offered on behalf of the people (i.e., something we do), Luther and his compatriots taught from Scripture that worship was completely the opposite.

The main point of worship is not about what we do for God; it's about what God does for us and gives to us through His Means of Grace. The German word that early Lutherans coined to describe this was *Gottesdienst*, that is, God's service. *Gottesdienst* went into English as Divine Service, that is, the delivery point where God serves us, His people, with His forgiveness of sins week after week. Worship as Divine Service is distinctively Lutheran!

It's Biblical

You might think that such a radical Reformation understanding would have drastically affected the way that Luther and the Wittenbergers worshiped. You would think that they would have thrown out the entire Latin Mass and written up something fresh and new. But, in fact, it was quite the opposite. In his liturgical reforms, Luther removed only the portions that taught false doctrine (e.g., invocation of the saints) or

promoted salvation by works (e.g., the Mass as an unbloody sacrifice). The rest he left as is.

Luther recognized and rejoiced in the utterly scriptural basis on which the vast majority of texts of the Latin Mass were grounded (e.g., Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Creed, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, etc.). The texts that you find in *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)* today (e.g., Divine Service, Setting Three) very much follow Luther's reform of the Latin Mass. In *LSB* there are also Scripture references throughout to show just where in the Bible these magnificent texts are grounded. Distinctively Lutheran worship is biblical!

It's Catholic

Luther had an "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" approach to worship reform. His approach was conservative in the sense that he sought to conserve the best of what had been received from those who had come before him. But more profoundly, Luther's approach was also catholic. By catholic I do not mean Roman Catholic, but rather universal, or literally "according to the whole." This means that Luther valued what had come before him, from the church catholic in time, that is, the services and hymns from the past, some of which needed reform but not wholesale rejection.

We see this approach not only in Luther's reform of the Latin Mass mentioned above, but also in the hymns that he wrote for use in the Divine Service. Of the 37 hymn texts Luther wrote during his lifetime, only nine can be considered completely original creations. The other 28 hymn texts were either paraphrases of Psalms or canticles from the Bible (11) or translations/reworkings of existing hymns or liturgical texts (17).

All of this suggests that Luther valued highly the Psalms, hymns and liturgy that had come before him, and that he worked to reform and preserve these treasures. He wanted them to serve as vehicles for proclaiming the Gospel into people's ears and hearts. As he wrote toward the end of his life: "For God has cheered our hearts and minds through his dear Son, whom he gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. He who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it. But he must gladly and willingly *sing* and *speak* about it so that others also may come and hear it" (*Luther's Works*, vol. 53, p. 333). Now that's distinctively Lutheran worship!

What Does This Mean?

One of the objectives of our Synod is to "recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers . . ." (*2016 Handbook*, p. 11). Toward that end, the members of Synod have established two seminaries whose primary purpose is to fulfill the Synod's objective of recruiting and training of pastors for service in the congregations of Synod.

The seminaries of our Synod do well in preparing future pastors when they teach and model for their students a distinctively Lutheran approach to worship. It begins with a faculty that fully and passionately understands and embraces what it is to be distinctively Lutheran in a 21st century context. It is reinforced by a vibrant and healthy worship life that regularly and consistently trumpets a full-throated Gospel proclamation into the ears of seminarians and their families; by a worship life that is enlivened by a rich and wide-ranging exploration of the biblical texts in real time worship; and by a worship life that values and upholds our liturgy and hymnody as treasures of the church

Worship

By Jon D. Vieker




catholic and as vehicles for the proclamation of the Gospel today and for future generations.

One of Luther’s favorite hymns as a young man was a one-stanza prayer to the Holy Spirit. Luther once quipped that it must have been “composed by the Holy Ghost himself, both words and music” (*Luther’s Works*, vol. 53, p. 265). Luther added two more stanzas, and today we know the hymn as “Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord” (*LSB* 497). This hymn was sung to open every LCMS convention for at least the first hundred years. Its final stanza is particularly appropriate during this Reformation anniversary year:

Come, holy Fire, comfort true,
Grant us the will Your work to do
And in Your service to abide;
Let trials turn us not aside.
Lord, by Your pow’r prepare each heart,
And to our weakness strength impart
That bravely here we may contend,
Through life and death to You, our Lord, ascend.
Alleluia, alleluia! (*LSB* 497, stanza 3)

For Further Reading

James L. Brauer, ed., *Worship, Gottesdienst, Cultus Dei* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005).
Robin A. Leaver, *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther’s Wittenberg* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 2017).
Norman Nagel, “Whose Liturgy Is It?” *Logia* 2 (April 1993): 4–8. <http://wp.production.patheos.com/blogs/justandsinner/files/2014/09/Whose-Liturgy-Nagel.pdf>
Peter C. Reske, *The Hymns of Martin Luther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016). 

The Rev. Dr. Jon D. Vieker (Jon.Vieker@lcms.org) serves as senior assistant to the President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. From 1998–2010 he served as assistant director for the LCMS Commission on Worship.



Service to Celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Tuesday, October 31
7:30 p.m.



Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

The service will also be live streamed at www.ctsfw.edu/DailyChapel or www.facebook.com/CTSFW.