



SEPTEMBER 2020

Page 1,2 Pastor's Message
Page 3 Flowers
Page 4 LWML
Page 5,6 Miscellaneous

“WHAT WE BELIEVE—AUGSBURG CONFSSION”

Article IV—Justification

Note: There is a historic saying in Lutheranism that the Church stands or falls on the article of justification. To justify means “to declare righteous.” God’s sure and certain declaration that we are righteous in His eyes is possible only because of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Through His life, Jesus satisfied God’s demand for perfect obedience. Through His sacrificial death, Jesus took God’s wrath and atoned for the sins of the world. The Holy Spirit, through the means of grace, works in in us saving faith, which personally apprehends what Christ has done for us. Our justification before God, therefore, is brought about nay the One who lived, suffered, and died for our salvation. We cannot merit God’s favor through our obedience; we cannot offer sacrifices to pay for our sins. But what we cannot do for ourselves, Christ has done for us. He is the solid Rock on which God builds His Church. On Him and Him alone, we stand forgiven. (See also Ap. IV; SA III XIII; FC Ep III and SD III.)

Our churches teach and confess that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight (Romans 3 and 4 [3:21-26; 4:5]).

From the Pastor

“Jesus said also to the man who had invited him, ‘When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.’” Luke 14:12-14

There is a man with dropsy. His hands and feet and arms and legs are filled with fluid that his body can’t get rid of. To be sure this is painful, but it is a symptom of a greater issue that probably has to do with his liver and kidneys not functioning correctly. In short, the man is quite ill and there is nothing he can do about it. ... Jesus notices the man and certainly has compassion on him, but there is a problem. It is the Sabbath, and no work can be done on the Sabbath. ... So what is Jesus to do?

Jesus is surrounded by Pharisees, by church workers, by pastors; you know, by the good people. They are all there at a banquet of the highest ranking Pharisee in the town; the best of the best. Wherever Jesus looks He sees people who keep the Law; keep to a “T”. They have dotted all their “I’s”. Built hedges around certain sins as to make sure they never break any commandment. They are the good and upright people of society and that is why they are there at that banquet; because they deserve to be so.



This high ranking Pharisee never would have invited a tax collector or a prostitute to his house in order to dine with him. That would have been utter madness. It is guilt by association, at the very least. But more likely than not, he would have seen those sorts of people as unworthy to enter his house. ... To dine with someone meant that you are the person's equal. To break bread with someone means that they are as good at keeping the Law as you are. ... I know this might sound over-simplified and perhaps a little bit cynical but answer me this; when was the last time you invited a prostitute over for supper?

We don't allow sinners, really bad, obvious sinners, into our house. We just don't. We don't associate with drug dealers or users, robbers or thieves, hookers or whores. Partly because we don't want their bad behavior to rub off on us. But the more likely reason, the one that is probably buried down so deep that only our sub-conscience recognizes it, is that we don't think that they are worthy enough, good enough, proper and distinguished enough to associate with us. ... “What would people think?” ... “Imagine the rumors that would be spread!!!” ...

Jesus, to the astonishment of the self-righteous, goes ahead and heals that poor man with dropsy; and He does it on the Sabbath. He goes and does something that all those righteous Pharisees think is ridiculous and unwarranted and downright sinful. And He does so because man was not created for the Sabbath. Man was not created in order to make the Sabbath holy. The Sabbath is holy without us. God sanctifies the Sabbath without any of our work or doing or merit. And He does so for our good and benefit. ... God didn't establish the Sabbath so that we could show Him just how righteous we are by keeping it, and every other Law, perfectly. He created the Sabbath because we can't keep the Law, we can't make things holy; the least of all, ourselves! We need something outside of us to sanctify us, to make us holy, to make us perfect. We need the Sabbath! The Sabbath doesn't need us!

And we need the Sabbath because the Sabbath is Jesus. It is His preaching and His teaching. It is His Absolution and His forgiveness of sins. It is His baptismal flood and His holy supper. All of it is His and it is all for you! It is Jesus for you. Not because you are righteous enough to deserve it. Not because you are good and upright Pharisees who have become worthy enough to have Jesus come into your presence. But Jesus comes here, speaks His Word to you, dines with you, precisely because you are not worthy. You don't deserve it! You haven't earned Jesus. You aren't good enough. You aren't better than the man with dropsy or the tax collector or the prostitute or the drug abuser or the awful sinner out there. You are sinners, just like them. And they need Jesus as much as you do!

Jesus doesn't invite the righteous to His table. He doesn't invite the ones who are worthy enough or good enough. He doesn't invite the ones who can pay Him back. Instead, He only invites the sinner to His table. That is why you come to Church. Not because you are worthy, but because you are unworthy. Not because you are sinless, but because you need your sins forgiven. Not because you have earned it all but because you have earned nothing and need it all to be given to you. Jesus only dines with sinners. And that is why He dines with you! ...

In the name of Jesus. Amen. —
Rev. Eli

Bible Study for Everyone

Join us for Bible Study every Sunday at 8:45 am before Divine Service as we plumb the depths of the book of Galatians, with Martin Luther as our guide. Hear about the Gospel of Christ crucified for you, and how there is nothing in all of creation as beautiful as the words of forgiveness. And if you can't make it on Sunday morning, then join us every Tuesday at 10:00 am to study the book of Luke. From Jesus' birth to

His ascension, He has come to save sinners, both Jew and Gentile. Jesus is for all. He is for the sinner. He is for you.

Something Worth Reading

(All books are available in our church’s library or may be borrowed from the pastor.)

“The Spirituality of the Cross: The Way of the first Evangelicals”—Gene Veith

Essentially, your vocation is to be found in the place you occupy in the present. A person stuck in a dead-end job may have higher ambitions, but for the moment, that job, however humble, is his vocation. Flipping hamburgers, cleaning hotel rooms, emptying bedpans--all have dignity as vocations, spheres of expressing love of neighbor through selfless service in which God is masked. Perhaps later, another vocation will present itself. Vocation is to be found not simply in future career decisions but in the here and now. ...

Vocations are multiple. Any given person has many vocations. A typical man might be, all at the same time, a husband (serving his wife), a father (serving his children), an employer (serving his workers), an employee (serving his bosses), a citizen (serving his country). Notice how a person at a particular job can be both a “master,” charged with supervising subordinates, and at the same time a “servant,” answerable to superiors. Leadership and submission may both be called for as the different vocations make their claims. The doctrine of vocation helps sort out and gives dignity and significance to each of the roles we are asked to play.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Don't forget the **Flower Calendar**

Sign up to provide flowers for Sunday worship. You can arrange your own bouquet, either from your garden, or from the store, or call Sue's Flowers (phone number on the calendar) and she will arrange your bouquet and deliver to the church. Call the church office and leave a message on the Monday before, if you want some acknowledgement in the bulletin.





Welcome to all Women of the Congregation!

"Be Still"

Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:10

Support Concordia Theological Seminary Food & Co-op Financial Assistance - \$8,000

Students and their families are Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, are blessed to visit their Good and Clothing Co-op to help offset their financial needs. Often seminarians and their wives cannot find jobs to provide income for their families because they will only be in town for a short time. Being able to shop using a point system and volunteering at the Co-op provides these families with much needed support during a time when they are be prepared for the ministry. This grant would provide roughly a month's worth of fresh food purchases, which on average includes 600 pounds of ground beef; 300 gallons of milk; 175 dozen eggs; 250 packages of cheese; 3,500 pounds of fresh produce; and 200 bottles of 100% fruit juice.

What can you do to help?

- Pray often
- Give often

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MITE Sunday is September 13. The Mite Box will be available in the narthex every Sunday for your donations. Thank you for your support!



REMEMBER

- Our ongoing ingathering of non-perishable food and personal hygiene items.
- Continue to collect plastic grocery bags for Feed the Future Backpack Program, (please double bag).
- Greeting cards for all occasions in the card rack in the narthex. We ask that you leave a \$1.00 donation.
- Next regular LWML meeting will be held on Saturday, September 12th at 9:00 am

NORTH CENTRAL FALL ZONE RALLY

Plans are still in the works about the Rally on October 17. Please pray about these decisions to be made by the Zone Board. We want to keep everyone safe, but we surely do miss the fellowship of our sisters in Christ.

"Be Still" is the theme from the virtual District Convention, and we are keeping that theme for this fall event (or non-event). We need to always remember that listening for God's guidance is so important. Please pray for God's will to be done.

STEWARDSHIP TODAY:

As it was for Jesus, so it is also for us. We get more from giving than we do from simply getting. Giving softens our hearts and frees us from the worries of this world and making a living. For when we are singularly focused on making a living, we are singularly focused on what we get. For such a time as this in 2020, God has given the task of stewardship to His people. We are called to faithful stewardship in times of plenty and in times of want, in times of certainty and uncertainty. As stewards of the creation trust granted to each of us, we care for our neighbors and serve the Lord all at once. (from: StewardCAST- LCMS)

Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. (2 Timothy 2:7, Footnote --Working through His Word, the Lord opens eyes and minds to understand the scriptures.) (ESV)

THANKS!

King Soopers has sent us \$346.03 from their Loyalty Card Program for the period April 1st through June 30, 2020. Altogether 26 households participated.



Wheat Ridge Endowment Fund Update

Many of you with retirement and/or investment accounts know that they experienced a severe negative adjustment in March 2020. The Endowment Fund experienced the same. It has recovered a little less than one-half of the March loss so far. This has impacted the cash available for the intended Ministry Outreach uses for this year and likely next year even more so. In addition, a wonderful Ministry Outreach blessing of more Wheat Ridge member children attending Bethlehem Lutheran School and applying for Tuition Assistance (the number one outreach request) has resulted in 96% of the distributable funds going to that use. Thus, this year and perhaps next year, there are no funds available for other requests. We will keep you posted if that changes for the positive. Please keep the Fund in your prayers for great investment results and don't forget to put Wheat Ridge Endowment Fund in your Estate Plan to help fund future Ministry Outreach opportunities. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask.

Dan Clark, Treasurer

Sign up now.

We need your help in helping our neighbors in need!

The effect of the COVID-19 shut-down reaches our neighbors on many levels. The Action Center now serves twice as many families (100-115 per day) who are having difficulties due to homelessness and unemployment, while donations have declined dramatically. The Wheat Ridge LWML group will have an ONGOING food and personal hygiene items drive to help these families. Please consider bringing a few items on Sundays from the following lists to help our neighbors who are in need.

Personal Hygiene Items

Feminine Products are in great need and they are always in short supply, baby diapers, baby wipes, toothbrush, toothpaste, lotion, shampoo, bar soap, body wash, comb, brushes.

Non-Perishable Food Items

tuna, peanut butter, canned meats, canned soup, canned vegetables, spaghetti sauce, pasta, dried and canned beans, cereal, macaroni and cheese, baby food, baby formula, paper products, laundry supplies



the
ACTIONCENTER
COMMUNITY*COMPASSION*CONNECTION