



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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VOL. 103 No. 3 MONTHLY

March 2017

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF DIVINE SERVICE?

(The first of a three-part installment on the Divine Liturgy)

As you may know, Pr. Bruss and I had the opportunity in Sunday School to spend a few months on the topic of what happens at church. Our Lutheran service is called “Divine” because it is the most superlative word that can be used. Theologically, it is called Divine is because the Divine One serves us. He is “with us” in worship.

How do I know this? Let’s look to the Scriptures. By the time one comes to Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus has already died on the cross and risen from the dead. He is speaking His final words to His disciples telling them to make other disciples by baptizing in the Name of the Triune God. Consider this part 1, but let’s not stop there. Part 2 in the disciple-making process is teaching them everything Jesus taught or commanded (the preaching and teaching of His Word). Think of this as life-long catechesis. Jesus then adds, “Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Notice how He immediately speaks of His presence with them, connecting His presence to the waters of Holy Baptism and to preaching and teaching. Rather than being a nebulous sort of thing, Jesus specifically links His enduring presence with His disciples in their role of making other disciples in the waters of Baptism and in the preaching and teaching of what He Himself has taught.

Building upon this, in Matthew 18:18 Jesus tells His Church and His ministers that they actually join heaven and earth together: what happens on earth happens in heaven and what is happening in heaven is happening on earth. Jesus says, “Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Continuing in verse 19 Jesus adds, “Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.” The purveyors of the Prosperity Gospel (the “Name It and Claim It” crowd) love verses like this one. However, let’s not twist the verse out of its context. The context of this portion of Scripture deals with repentance and reconciliation. Jesus says in the life of the Church, whatever is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven, etc. And then in v. 20 He says, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them.” The point is, gathering in Jesus’ name, gathering as His Church, gathering around the forgiveness of sins in Him, guarantees Jesus’ presence.

Linking the above two truths we see Jesus abides in His Church. He is present wherever His Name is invoked by two or three or more. And so whatever happens in that service (Church) happens in heaven, and whatever is bound on earth is bound in heaven. Furthermore, He links His presence to the waters of

Holy Baptism and the preaching of everything He taught. This is the essence of the first part of the Divine Service, namely that the Divine One is in our midst.

Coupled with this, Jesus links His presence with the Apostolic Office, which gives way to the Office of the Holy Ministry. In John 21:15-17, there is an interaction between Jesus and Peter. Earlier Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd. Now He is calling Peter to do the work of a shepherd, telling him specifically to “feed My lambs.” Here, Jesus gives Peter the job of shepherd. If you put “shepherd” in Latin, you have the word “*pastor*.” Thus, when Jesus says, “I am the Good Shepherd,” He is saying, “I am the Good Pastor.” Jesus institutes an Office wherein He calls Peter and the other apostles and then later on, other faithful men. This is the expansion of the Apostolic Ministry, of calling other men to serve as under-shepherds. These are to be men who feed the flock and tend to the flock. Who does the flock belong to? Jesus. Jesus does not say, “Feed your lambs!” He says, “Feed My lambs.” The Office of Shepherd properly speaking is His office, but He calls faithful men into that Office to do His work, in His stead and by His command.

This is important because Jesus links His presence and work with the work of this Office. It is a wonderful way of understanding the Office of the Holy Ministry as belonging to Jesus and being His Office. It is not my office, it is His, nor do I conduct the pastoral ministry according to what I think, or what the experts think. I conduct it according to what Jesus teaches and who He is.

With this in mind, look at Luke 10:13-16. The context is of Jesus sending out His 72 disciples to preach and teach. If one traces Jesus’ line of thought backwards, you have the Father who sends the Son, and the Son speaks the Father’s words to the world. The Son then sends His apostles, who are sent to speak His words to the world. What Jesus says to His apostles is this: “Whoever hears you, hears Me.” He does not say, “Whoever hears you, hears you,” but “whoever hears you, hears Me.” This means that wherever the word of God is preached and proclaimed faithfully, who is speaking? Jesus Himself! Within the Church, the normative structure for this is through the Office of the Holy Ministry to the people, His flock.

Generally speaking, wherever anyone proclaims the Word of God to you, who are you hearing? Jesus! However, in a narrow sense within the structure of the Church as pastors baptize, absolve, and make disciples, people are not hearing them, Jesus informs us, they are hearing “Me.”

This is a key truth in revolutionizing what is happening each and every Sunday morning. You are not showing up here to hear what Pr. Bruss or I have to say. You are showing up to listen to Jesus. Jesus is present at Church in a unique way. The Divine Service is where heaven and earth meet, making it the holiest place on earth. More on this next time....



Senior Pastor - Rev. J. S. Bruss, ext. 104

Associate Pastor – Rev. Devin M. Kerns, ext. 101

Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102

Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz

TLS Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki, Edith Kerns, Rachel Kathman

REACHING THE WANDERING

Do you know someone in church—a family member, an acquaintance, a friend—whom you haven't seen for a while at the services of the Lord's house? It's not putting too sharp a point on it to say that those fellow Christians place themselves in great danger of falling from the Faith.

And that's not the Lord's desire for them. He wants to save them (1 Tim. 2:4). And so the pastors and elders have been actively working to contact just such fellow Christians of ours. Each month those whom we haven't seen in a while receive a letter and a phone call from us encouraging them to return to the services of God's house. Sadly, however, there also comes a time when, after repeated friendly and pastoral contact, we can't but conclude on the basis of their non-response that those who have strayed no longer desire to be members of the Body of Christ in this place. And so they're released.

That's the use of God's Law that's called for under the circumstances. But we never want it to get to that point. God doesn't want it to get to that point. And yet even this proclamation of the Law, aimed at repentance, is good and right. Why? Because God does not desire the death of the sinner, but that he repent and live (Ez. 33:11).

This is where you come in. Paul tells Timothy, "God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), and Jesus promises, "If you abide in My Word, you are My disciples indeed" (John 8:31). Those whom God has baptized He baptized in all earnest. He wants to keep them in His Word and save them. However, as the parable of the sower reminds us, there are many distractions, "the cares, riches, and pleasures of life," that lead Christians to fall from receiving preaching and the Word and God's Sacrament (Luke 8). We all know what those things are in today's society. Unfortunately, those things ultimately lead them to fall from the Faith altogether. But this isn't what God desires for them.

That's why God gives all of us not only pastors and elders, but also our fellow Christians, His priesthood called to "declare the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). Sometimes a word of concern or invitation or warning from a fellow Christian, rather than from the pastors or elders, carries much more weight with those who have wandered. And never underestimate your prayers, for "the prayer of a righteous man avails much" (Jas. 5:17).

All of us in the Body of Christ have the blessed responsibility to care for one another (Gal. 6:2). And that's not just a social nicety. It's of eternal importance. Why? "*God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing*" (1 Thess. 5:9-11). In other words, God uses you to help keep your fellow Christians in the Faith, especially those who are close to you.

And so we ask for your help. It's quite easy. Pray for them—your prayers avail much. And talk to them. When you do, you'll be proclaiming not your word, but His. And that Word is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword.

May the good and gracious Lord who has begun a good work in all the baptized bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God grant it!

Jon Steph B  

REFORMATION500 MOMENT: ST. JOHN'S MEMBER RECOGNIZED AS "LCMS TREASURE"

Pr. Martin Noland, one of our friends at *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology*, is a list-maker. His latest list (<http://www.logia.org/logia-online/synodical-treasures2017>) is a sort of "who's who" in the restoration of LCMS theology during and after the dark days of the seminary walk-out ("Seminex"), whose sad anniversary happened to coincide with Sexagesima Sunday this year (19 February).

Joining such leadings lights in Pr. Noland's list as the reverend doctors Karl Barth, WAM Jr., Daniel Preus, Ed Suelflow, and Dean Wenthe is St. John's own Mr. Al Wipperman, "lay member of the 1969 'Continuation Committee'; one of the lay founders of Balance, Inc. (later Balance-Concord), which was the publisher of *Affirm* newsletter, with career-long work in and with these organizations; and a persuasive lay voice at national and district conventions."

Pr. Noland's article reminds us all that it's true: *Ecclesia semper reformanda*. "The Church must always be reformed." That is, the Church must always seek in every generation to "guard the deposit entrusted" to us (1 Tim. 6:19). That means not allowing the blindness of our own age to obscure the wisdom of Scripture and our Confession, and seeking—in all that we undertake—to preach, teach, and practice "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). This is not "salvation by orthodoxy," but a humble recognition that we are beggars, entirely dependent upon the *truth of God's Word*.

As Al can tell you, the struggle of the church militant is not always a comfortable thing to engage in, because it always requires casting down the idols of the age, even those in our own hearts. And that always brings conflict (Matt. 10:34). We are far more comfortable with the norms of our society than the norms of God's holy Word; with our impression of what Lutheranism is than what our Confession says it is; with "the faith of our daddies" than "the faith of the Fathers." But *ecclesia semper reformanda* means nothing if it doesn't mean letting the Word of God and the teaching of our Confession have its way with us, even when it makes us uncomfortable. And that realization must bring us all to our knees in beggarly humility, crying out, "Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word! Curb those who feign by craft and sword would rest the kingdom from Thy Son and set at naught all He hath done!" Because we can't do it by our own power or strength.

Which brings me back to Al. For all the "human glory" attached to inclusion in that illustrious list, Al would be quick to reply, "To God alone be the glory!" No matter how distinguished the list and the men, the renewal of His holy Church is always God's work. He uses means, of course—those humble, faithful confessors over the generations to whom we are all indebted. And for them we give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for their tireless work.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Clocks "Spring" ahead Saturday night, March 12th

MONTHLY BREAKFAST

Join us for a potluck breakfast on Sunday, March 12, in Luther Hall between services. Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LENTEN SERVICES: THE PASSION ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

The Wednesday Noon and Evening Lenten services this year take up the theme of the Passion according to St. John. For our evening worship, we'll be using the office of Compline (*Lutheran Service Book*, pp. 253ff.). This service has a long history in Christendom and has recently become somewhat familiar to Sound Words Academy attenders. In the course of the Wednesday evening Lenten services we'll all be learning it together. For those interested in a head start on the various sung parts in Compline, you can go to the following webpage on the LCMS website. There you'll find recordings: <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=453>. Once you've landed there, click the LSB Compline file folder, and then the thumbnails for Versicles, Responsory, Prayer, or Nunc Dimittis and Benediction to hear voice recordings of those portions of Compline. **Ash Wednesday is March 1, with Lenten services March 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5. Service times are 12:15 p.m. and 7 p.m.**

JUNIOR LUTHERANS

We kick off Jr. Lutherans on Wednesday, March 8. Right after a lite dinner at 5:30, children ages 4-5 (X quizzers), 6-8 (Jr. Division) and 9-12 (Sr. Division) are encouraged to descend into the Youth Room to meet their coaches, assistant coaches and assemble into teams. This will begin at 6:00. All teams will begin reviewing the 10-point questions.

How Can You Help? Jr. Lutherans is designed to lay a foundation in our children (ages 4-12) of biblical literature and a solid understanding of Lutheran doctrine. For this to succeed, we need Coaches, Assistant Coaches and parents. Added to this we need multiple quiz boxes which are specially designed for competing; both here at St. John's and against other teams throughout the circuit. Each quiz box (allowing 4 quizzers to compete against 4 other quizzers) costs \$450. If you are interested in helping us purchase quiz boxes, please make your check payable to St. John's with Jr. Lutheran in the memo line.

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

"Hold fast the pattern of sound words," Paul instructs Timothy (2 Tim 1:13). St. John's **Sound Words Academy** offers mid-week educational opportunities every Wednesday evening, including:

5:00-5:55	New Testament Greek
5:30-6:00	Lite dinner (Luther Hall; supported by free-will donation)
6:00-6:50	The Rhythm of faith (grades 1-5, Johnson)
	Youth Catechesis I (Kinnett)
	Youth Catechesis II (Kerns)
	Revelation (Bruss)
	Lifelight (Hintz)
7:00-7:45	Lenten Service, "The St. John Passion," Compline (Nave; open to everyone)
7:45-8:40	Young Adults/College Students (Bruss)
	Women's Bible Study: <i>Martin Luther</i> (Kinnett)

ST. JOHN'S ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Save the date: June 3, 2017: St. John's Annual Golf Tournament this summer will be held at Forbes Field. This is a fundraiser for the youth group and their activities and their trip to Higher Things Conference in July. Plan to participate as a golfer, a sponsor, or as a volunteer! More details will be forthcoming.

ANNUAL CHURCH CLEANING SATURDAY, APRIL 8TH

The Annual Church Cleaning in preparation for Holy Week and Easter has been set for Saturday, April 8, beginning at 8:00 a.m. or as close to 8:00 as you can make it. Many willing hands are needed to assist with spring cleaning throughout the building (including dusting high and low and washing down walls throughout). This is also the time we work at preserving all the beautiful woodwork in the church and give the pews their annual treatment of a blend of Rub Cut Oil and Naphtha. For over 75 years this task has been lovingly accomplished by hundreds of willing hands. Last year we had an excellent turnout, which helped complete our cleaning in record time, and we hope as many will join us again this year.

Help is also needed to dust the nave light fixtures and change batteries in smoke detectors (really tall ladder work). Bring a bucket and some cleaning cloths if you can. Plan to join other members for service and fellowship as we prepare our Lord's house for Holy Week and Easter.

REMEMBERING REFORMATION

The link below will take you to an article in the Religion section of Saturday, February 18 edition of the *Topeka Capital-Journal*. The article talks about the various Table Talk groups that are taking place in some of the LCMS churches here in Topeka during our Reformation500 study of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*. The article is also posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

<http://cjonline.com/news/religion/2017-02-17/topekans-remember-500th-anniversary-protestant-reformation>

THANK YOU'S

Thank you to everyone who attended or volunteered at the TLS Chili Supper. Thanks to your generosity the Parent Teacher League will be able to assist with updating the Math curriculum. We appreciate the support from our church community. Thank you again.

Dear St. John's Lutheran Church,

I thank you for your prayers and financial support of my work as Area Representative to Eurasia for LCMS Church Relations. Your support helps make it possible for the LCMS to continue to build strong relations with her partner churches throughout the world. I just returned home from a 27-day journey with Bishop Lytkin of the Siberian Ev. Lutheran Church (SELC) as relations between the LCMS and SELC continue to grow. Bishop Lytkin sends his greetings. We were pleased when Pastor Streltsov was able to visit your congregation and represent the SELC. I look forward to visiting your congregation and providing an update of my activities.

Pastor Daniel Johnson

Thank you to everyone who donated soup and crackers during Doorstep's Souper Bowl Sunday collection! A can of soup can be a meal or two, and your generous donations helped to stock their pantry, and provide meals for our neighbors in need. We also want to thank everyone who contributed to our 14th Annual Operation Soup Line! Monies raised from Soup Line helps Doorstep provide rent and utility assistance throughout the year to our neighbors who are struggling, and need some help.

Doorstep's 2016 Christmas Store was a great success thanks to everyone who worked together to provide for those less fortunate. Doorstep helped a total of 259 households with 811 individuals with food, gifts, toys and household items! They had toys for all of the children because their member congregations and the community stepped up when they learned they wouldn't receive items from Toys for Tots. One family said, "Thank you for your kindness and generosity. Wishing you many blessings this Christmas for you (Doorstep) have truly blessed us." This really says it all.

2017 FLOWER CALENDAR

The following services are available in the next few months if you would like to provide flowers for any of them: March 12, 19 and 26; April 1; May 14, 20 28.

LWML SPRING QUARTERLY

The last Sunday in March, the 26th, will be the Lutheran Women's Spring Quarterly at St. John's. There will be quilt tying in the undercroft, along with devotion and refreshments from 2-4 p.m.. All women of St. John's are invited... even if you haven't done this before. It's a quick and easy process to learn. No need to bring needles this time! The Lutheran Women in Mission's Spring Theme is: Engage, Encourage, Equip, Enjoy. **Engage** in quilt-tying, **Encourage** others in fellowship, **Equip** the needy with blankets, **Enjoy** being with your Sisters in Christ. Hope to see you Sun., March 26th!

ST. JOHN'S WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Mission Gifts (Received in 2016 – Distributed in 2017)

The St. John's Women's League would like to thank each of you that helped with the Bazaar and Luncheon. The following is a breakdown of how the funds were dispersed towards missions:

Bethesda Lutheran Home & Services, Inc.	\$150.00	LCMS World Relief/Human Care Missions	\$500.00
Concordia Seminary			
Ft. Wayne Student Assistance	\$300.00	Lutheran Bible Translators	\$150.00
Concordia Theological Seminary			
Military Project	\$300.00	Kristin Lange/Project Wittenberg	\$500.00
Concordia University – Seward			
Dennis Hintz Scholarship	\$200.00	Lutherans for Life	\$300.00
Concordia Seminary			
St. Louis Student Assistance	\$300.00	Lutheran Heritage Foundation	\$250.00
Doorstep	\$300.00	Lutheran Hour	\$300.00
Haskell Indian Lighthouse	\$300.00	LWR Quilt & Kit Shipping Fund	\$100.00
KS District LCMS Kansa Seed Deaf Ministry	\$200.00	Ks. Dist. LCMS – Disaster Relief	\$450.00
Laborers for Christ	\$200.00	Soldier of the Cross	\$400.00
Let's Help	\$300.00	The Apple of His Eye Ministry	\$100.00
LCMS National Offering Global Missions	\$250.00	The Orphan Grain Train	\$100.00
LCMS World Relief/Human Care – Disaster	\$500.00	Topeka Lutheran School Daily Fund	\$1,000.00
Topeka Lutheran School Center			
For Young Children	\$200.00	Topeka Rescue Mission	\$500.00

Distributed in February of 2017 Total: \$8,150.00

THESE MISSIONS NEED YOUR HELP:

March 31st is the deadline for your mission mite offerings to help fund 19 mission grants in the 2015-2017 Biennium. With God's never ending love on your side, you can help raise the \$169,435 still needed to reach the Mission Goal of \$2,000,000. These LWML Mission Grants still need your help and prayer support: ***Renovation of JEM Seminary Buildings, Hope and Healing to the Navajo People, Bringing the Gospel to the Lost Sheep of Israel.***

Our Focus this Month is LCMS Young Adult Corps. As with many generations, young adults today are not always sure of their future vocation. The LWML grant LCMS Young Adult Corps provides scholarship funds to serve in areas in which their talents and services are needed (poverty/inner city areas, and areas of disadvantage and/or long-term recovery). Sometimes these young men and women need to experience the joys of helping people in places where they have never visited.

This grant has yet to be funded and our fiscal year ends in just about six weeks on March 31. We are in the last stretch of our biennium with much of the hill to climb. Let's continue in prayer and encourage

our young adults through the LCMS Young Adult Corps. Paul speaks of mutual encouragement in Romans 1:12, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. Let's pray for the people involved with this ministry and that God will continue to bless our mite offerings.

ANNUAL ST. JOHN'S SMORGASBORD

Save the Date: April 25, 2017: The 59th Annual St. John's Smorgasbord for Missions will be Tuesday, April 25 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in Luther Hall. Many helping hands will be needed for the large meal preparation, beginning Monday the 24th through clean-up the evening of the 25th. Please mark your calendars and let family and friends know about this terrific, annual mission project.

CHILDREN'S THEATER WORKSHOP

This event will be held on Saturday, March 4 from 9 a.m. – noon at the Topeka Civic Theatre and Academy, 8th and Oakley. This free event is for children in grades 2-8 and includes dance, costumes and make-up. RSVP is required to annmah@att.net or 785-266-9434. Sponsored by the Lutheran Fine Arts Council of Topeka.

ORGAN AND TRUMPET CONCERT

This concert features Melody Steed, Organist and Keith Benjamin, Trumpet. The event will be held on Sunday, March 5th, 3:00 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 1234 SW Fairlawn Road. This event is sponsored by the Topeka Chapter of the American Guild Organists, the Fine Arts Council of Topeka and First Lutheran Church.



TLS NEWS

Kindergarten Roundup at TLS—Come see what all the buzz is about! Join us at Topeka Lutheran School, 701 SW Roosevelt Street, for an exciting preview of Kindergarten on **Wednesday, March 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.** During this event you can meet our teachers & staff and see the benefits of a Christ-centered education. Your child will enjoy a morning of activities lead by “real cowboys” while parents hear about the exciting future at TLS and learn about the enrollment process. Refreshments will be served.

EASTER LILIES

Member of St. John's have the opportunity to place an Easter lily in the church for Easter Sunday, April 16. Complete the following form and return it to the church office by Sunday, March 26 – with \$9.00 per lily. **You may take your lily home following the 11:00am service on Easter Sunday.** For memorials you may list up to 2 names or you may prefer “in memory of loved ones.”

Name(s) _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

In memory of: _____

DOORSTEP NEWS

March is St. John's month for helping to work at Doorstep. Volunteers are needed to work the below times and locations. Note: You do not have to work the whole shift as shift times can be split up.

- (1) The clothing room on any Wednesday during the month of March. You will primarily be helping to sort and organize donated clothing. Hours are 8:45 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- (2) Volunteer in the clothing room on Monday, March 13th between 8:45 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- (3) Volunteer at Doorstep's Dovetail Shoppe on any Thursday or Friday in March from noon – 2 p.m.

Food items are still needed for the pantry. St. John's is one of four congregations responsible for stocking the pantry during the month of March. Needed items are: Macaroni & Cheese, Spaghetti Sauce, Canned Soups, Peanut Butter, Tuna, Pinto Beans, Canned Fruit, Oatmeal, Jelly, Powered Milk, Evaporated Milk, Dry Cereal, Rice & Pasta. Monetary donations are always accepted: Make sure to note your membership with St. John's.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR MARCH 2017

March 5	Jesus and Zacchaeus	Luke 19:1-10
March 12	The Triumphal Entry	Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40
March 19	The Widow's Offering	Mark 12:41-44
March 26	The Lord's Supper	Luke 22:1-23

Bible Verses for March:

Preschool

With You there is forgiveness, therefore You are feared.	Psalm 130:4
Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!	Mark 11:9
We love because [God] first loved us.	1 John 4:19
[Jesus says,] <i>"This is My blood ...poured out for you...for the forgiveness of sins."</i>	Matthew 26:28.

Elementary

The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.	Luke 19:10
Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!	Mark 11:9
Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.	Deuteronomy 6:5
Jesus took bread...and He took a cup.	Matthew 26:26-27

Sunday school is one important tool for parents to nurture the faith given to your children in Baptism. Don't let your children miss out on this opportunity to grow spiritually and to get the life-giving Word into their ears, in their hearts, and on their lips. Parents, be an example for your children by attending Bible class while the children are in Sunday school.



THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19–20a)

So that we may obtain faith in Christ, God instituted the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments. Through the gospel and sacraments, as through means, God gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when He wills, in those who hear the gospel. (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 5)