



DP Vantage Point

*For Christ and for His world SWD Magnifies partnerships,
Multiplies ministries, and Maximizes resources.*

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Dear brothers in the Office of the Holy Ministry:

“Confessing Christ for the Next Generation.” You have been seeing it on emails and perhaps elsewhere. It’s the new SWD vision, tagline. The first aspect of unpacking that statement comes with the words, that “this is our time to be distinctly Lutheran”.

A couple of times when I talked about being “distinctly Lutheran” the question pops up “What does that mean?” It’s a good Lutheran question. The answer is both easy and complex.

“**Distinctly Lutheran**” we have a unique set of beliefs that set us apart from other Christians and even from other Lutherans, at least on this side of eternity. We are Lutheran Christians with a unique set of confessions. We cling to *sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide*. We are a church of Word and Sacrament.

“**Distinctly Lutheran**” we stand with Martin Luther, not because of who he was but rather because of what he believed, taught and confessed. Martin Luther himself writes:

“It is true that you should not say by body and soul: ‘I am a Lutheran or a Papist,’ for none died for you nor is your master— rather, Christ alone. And you should confess yourself to be a Christian. But if you believe that Luther’s doctrine is evangelical and the pope’s unevangelical, you must not cast Luther aside; otherwise you will cast aside his doctrine, which you regard as that of Christ. So you must say, ‘Luther may be a scoundrel or a saint [Bube oder Heiliger], for that I do not care; yet the doctrine is not his but that of Christ Himself.’ For you see that the tyrants have in mind not [merely] to kill Luther but to destroy his doctrine. It is on account of his doctrine that they attack you and ask you whether you are a Lutheran. Here surely you must not reply evasively, but you must freely confess Christ, whether He be preached by Luther, Claus, or George. The person you may ignore, but the doctrine you must confess. Walther, CFW (2012-12-01). The Church and The Office of The Ministry (Kindle Locations 3676-3683). Concordia Publishing House. Kindle Edition.

“**Distinctly Lutheran**” we proclaim Law and Gospel, sin and grace like no other church. We understand and live in repentance. The 95 theses begin with this statement: When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent” ([Mt 4:17](#)), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” The Small Catechism defines repentance this way: “Repentant believers are those who feel sorry for their sin (contrition) and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior (faith).” We are an Christological church. Article IV of the Augsburg Confession, the article on which the church stands or falls, states:

Of Justification.

1] Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for **2]** Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. **3]** This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

“**Distinctly Lutheran**” is a matter of confession. We are a “confessional church”, with a *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions. One of the moving scenes throughout all of history is that of the stout German monk standing before emperor saying, “*Since your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason...my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me.*”

“Distinctly Lutheran” we are a liturgical church. It is part of our history. Liturgical our seasons of the church year a built around the life of Christ. Liturgical our worship services follow an “ordo”; part and parcel of which is “Confession and Absolution”. Liturgy is part of our confession. The old Latin saying is true: *lex orandi lex credendi* (the law of what is to be prayed is the law of what is to be believed).

In that there is a certain amount of Christian freedom. Part of this is the Formula of Concord states: **31**] Thus [According to this doctrine] the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, provided they are otherwise agreed with one another in the doctrine and all its articles, also in the right use of the holy Sacraments, according to the well-known saying: *Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei*; “Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in the faith.”¹

It is as Dr. James Baneck states in his address to the North Dakota District Convention 2015: “The liturgy is meant to do a number of things. First of all, it places us in the right relationship with God, primarily God coming to His people with His gifts of Word and Sacrament, thus Divine Service. God needs nothing that we would offer Him, but we are beggars in need of everything that God offers and gives us, that is, forgiveness of sins, His holy Word, the preached Word, His blessed meal, just to name a few.”

“Distinctly Lutheran” we understand that church is larger than merely our local congregation. We are church together. Unlike the Reformed we are interdependent; one church sharing a common confession, many self-governing congregations confessing the same faith. Perfect? Far from it. But by the grace of God we are church together, forgiven and forgiving.

“Distinctly Lutheran” there is much more to consider. It is more than merely a core value. It is our identity. It is our confession. It is what “we believe, teach and confess” with so many generations before us; and hopefully with so many more generations after us.

There will be more about this as we move toward our SWD Convention June 7-9, 2015 at CUW.

May our gracious Lord Jesus whose resurrection defeated death, bringing life and immortality to light bless your ministry to His people!

Serving our Lord and His church
Rev. John C. Wille
President, South Wisconsin District-LCMS

¹ Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. (1996). *Concordia Triglotta—English: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (electronic ed.) (1063). Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House.

SWD News:

1) A Call for nominations for SWD Education Executive.

As you probably know, Mr. Mark L'Heureux who has served as our Education Exec for the past five years has accepted a call to serve as the principal of Christ Lutheran School Lincoln Nebraska. He will be leaving sometime toward the end of June.

The SWD Board of Directors has formed a Search Committee to recommend to the SWD Board of Directors a candidate for the vacant office of Education Executive. That Committee is headed up by Bryan Seider, the SWD Board Chair. It consists of: Mr. Gene Ladendorf, Pastor Randy Raasch, Mr. Myron Buss, Mr. Jay Jaehnke, and Mr. John Powers; together with President Wille.

The Committee has reviewed the position description and that is attached to this Vantage Point. If you would like to nominate someone for the position of SWD Education Executive, those nominations will be received until Friday May 8th. After that, the committee will begin their next steps of reviewing and interviewing. Our hope is that we can have this position filled sometime in June, 2015 (with our Lord's blessing, of course).

2) Seminary Placement:

This time of the year many of us are interested in the placement of seminary candidates. The good news that I can report that all of the seminary candidates will be placed. In fact, an email last week indicated that we have more calls, about 33, than are needed. As an FYI no SWD congregation has requested placement of a candidate this year.

3) South Wisconsin District-LCMS Convention, June 7-9, 2015.

Now that the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus is behind us, it is time to focus on things like the SWD Convention. If you haven't registered the time is now. Please go to the SWD website: <http://swd.lcms.org>. Online registration is closed. You will need to print the registration form from the website and mail it with your payment to the district office no later than April 30. The **Accreditation for Voting Delegates Form** – every congregation needs to submit this form. This authorizes your congregation's voting delegates as accredited and entitled to vote at the convention. If you have not already submitted this form please do this by Friday April 17 to be included in the Convention workbook. The tentative agenda is also there. Special guests include: Rev. Dr. Andy Bartelt, Bible Study leader; Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison who needs no introduction, Mr. Kevin Theriot from Alliance for Defending Freedom to talk with us about our First Amendment rights and conscience. Monday evening will be a time for Gemutlichkeit. Please make every effort to get these items completed as soon as possible; so that we can get an accurate count. That is important for meals, seating, and housing. Thanks!

4) South Wisconsin District-LCMS Floor Committees meet Saturday, May 16 at the SWD Office.

Floor Committees for the SWD Convention will meet at the SWD Office Saturday, May 16th beginning at 9am. If you are appointed to a floor committee, Karen (my assistant) will be contacting you shortly to see if you are willing to serve. Please consider that a privilege to serve. Floor committees edit and draft resolutions, which will be considered by the convention.

1. Nominations:

Rev. Bryan Osladil, chair, Immanuel Sheboygan
Rev. David Totsky, advisory as SWD secretary
Rev. Daniel Torkelson, St. John's North Prairie
Rev. Adam Sorenson, Mount Olive MKE
Craig Toerpe, commissioned, St. John's West Bend
Mr. Gene Ladendorf, commissioned
Mr. Ron Kabitzke, Pilgrim West Bend

2. Administration and Constitutional Matters:
Rev. William Kilps, chair, Good Shepherd Two Rivers
3. Parish Education:
Rev. Randy Raasch, chair, First Immanuel Cedarburg
4. Missions:
Rev. Daniel Torkelson, chair, St. John's North Prairie
5. Elections:
Rev. Douglas Stowe, chair, Divine Savior, Hartford
6. Miscellaneous:
Rev. Joseph Fisher, chair, Pilgrim, West Bend
7. Stewardship and Evangelism:
Rev. Mark Wenzel, chair, Peace, Beaver Dam
8. Minutes and Report of the Board of Directors:
Rev. Chris Gugel, chair, Good Shepherd Sheboygan

3) PW's Calendar Highlights:

- April 12 Lead Divine Service at Our Redeemer Wauwatosa, three services
- April 12 Gospel MKE voters' meeting
- April 13 Church Visitation, Risen Savior, Franklin
- April 14 Ministerial Health Taskforce
- April 15 Visitation and Call Committee, Bethlehem Wales
- April 16 Church Council Visitation, Messiah Beloit
- April 19 Lead Divine Service at Our Redeemer Wauwatosa, three services
- April 19 Visitation, St. Peter's Lebanon Voters' Meeting
- April 20-22 SWD Pastors' Conference, Manitowoc. Preach at opening worship.
- April 23-29 LCMS Council of Presidents' at CTSFW, Placement of seminary candidates.

4) Calling Congregations, Divine Calls, and Clergy Roster:

- Beloit – St. John
- Dellwood/Quincy – United in Christ/St. John
- Hartland – Divine Redeemer (Associate)
- Lebanon – St. Peter
- Menasha – Trinity (associate pastor & principal)
- Milwaukee – Hope
- Necedah – St. James/New Miner – St. Paul
- Neshkoro- St. Paul/St. John/Trinity
- Pleasant Prairie – Good Shepherd
- Portage – St. John
- Racine – Prince of Peace
- Wales – Bethlehem
- Wauwatosa – Our Redeemer

Pastors considering a call:

- Brian Crane – Concordia Theological Seminary, FT. Wayne, IN to St. John/United In Christ
- Seth Flick – Immanuel, Riverside, CA to Divine Redeemer, Hartland
- Ryan Wendt – Christ the King, Billings, MT to Trinity, Menasha

Pastors accepting a call:

- Christopher Amen – Bethlehem, Carson City, NV to St. Peter, Arlington (Installation May 17 @ 3:00pm)
- Dustin Krystowiak – Candidate to Our Savior, Burlington (part-time)

Prayer considerations:

- Bill Otto recovering from complications of several surgeries
- Wally Haas as he continues to struggle with cancer
- The members and Pastor Smallwood of Lamb of God, Kenosha as they are move toward dissolution

May our Lord bless!!

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*It is time for us to be distinctly Lutheran, to plant new churches,
to honor our vocation, and to embrace our communities.*