



# Trinity Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod • [www.TrinityAustin.com](http://www.TrinityAustin.com) • Email: [pastorharris@trinityaustin.com](mailto:pastorharris@trinityaustin.com)  
Rev. Paul R. Harris, Pastor • 1207 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street • Austin, Texas 78756 • (512)453-3835

12 September 2017 A.D.

The Rev. Matthew C. Harrison  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road  
St. Louis, MO 63122-7226

Dear President Harrison:

We greet you in the Name of the risen and ascended Lord of the Church to whom be all glory, honor, and praise!

We write at the suggestion of Fourth Vice-President Wohlrabe. In 2011, after he admonished the newly formed ACELC to follow the Synod's dissent process, our pastor pointed out that we had been following that process since 2005 and had heard nothing from the CTCR since 2008 when we rejected their response to our dissent. He invited us to send all the documentation and he would look into it as, at that time, the Second Vice-President. We sent him everything and heard nothing from him. In January 2017, we directed our pastor to write him again asking for any progress. He replied in a 20 February 2017 letter saying he didn't deny getting the material but he doesn't remember. He checked with the current CTCR. They regarded the issue as settled. Rev. Wohlrabe closed his letter to us saying, "So, I also encourage you to write President Harrison. I assure you that you will receive a much stronger hearing from him than you would have received prior to 2010."

Unless requested, we won't resend the pages of correspondence between us and the CTCR. Most of them are available on our website [www.trinityaustin.com](http://www.trinityaustin.com). Their summary letter to us rejected all of our dissents because we didn't cite Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. This was strange as our dissent was predicated on the contention that the Synod in its 2004 convention had publicly changed positions that it had historically declared to be Biblical and Confessional.

Here is where we stand in regard to our ongoing dissent. We believe, teach, and confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church concerning:

- Closed Communion (2016 Res. 5-15, *Convention Proceedings*, p. 163).
- Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as permitting LCMS pastors to lead joint prayer and worship services with Christians not in fellowship with the LCMS or with non-Christians (Constitution, VI, 2, 2016 *Handbook*, p. 13).
- The restriction on women from serving in church positions with functions or accountability that are distinctive to the public exercise of the ministry of Word and Sacraments (2004, Res. 3-08A, *Proceedings*, p. 132). These positions include elders, congregational presidents, and chairmen of congregational boards.

Therefore, we do not commune, confirm, or transfer people who believe, teach, confess, or practice:

- Open Communion;
- Unionism and syncretism, such as permitting LCMS pastors to lead joint prayer and worship services with Christians not in fellowship with the LCMS or with non-Christians;
- Permitting women to serve in church positions with functions or accountability that are distinctive to the public exercise of the ministry of Word and Sacraments, such as elders, congregational presidents, and chairmen of congregational boards.

We trust that we have your full support in this faithful, confessional, biblical, and synodically constitutional practice.

We preach, teach, and confess against our District President, who in the October 2010 *Lutheran Witness* article "Wisdom and Reformation" (enclosed) compared those who practice closed Communion to Proverb's woman of folly and he confused worthy communion with fellowship. Hennings equates a woman of folly with people who say, "The person worthy of partaking of Communion is the person

who agrees with every doctrine and practice of the Lutheran Church; otherwise they should be denied access to Communion." In effect, such a statement appears contradictory to statements from Lutherans such as C.F.W. Walther, who stated in Thesis XXI, in his *The Evangelical Lutheran Church the True Visible Church of God on Earth*: "The Evangelical Lutheran Church requires its members and especially its teachers unreservedly to confess and vow fidelity to its symbols." The "woman of folly" comparison also contradicts the November 1999 document, *Admission to the Lord's Supper: Basics of Biblical and Confessional Teaching* in which the CTCR states: "[C]ommunicants are also confessors and members of church bodies. As such, it is not merely what the individual knows that is in view. It is the doctrine confessed by his or her church body that is the important thing. We ask those who join our church if they accept the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions even though they may have only studied the Small Catechism" (p.57, emphasis original). We request that you as his ecclesiastical supervisor require President Hennings publicly to retract this egregious attack on and serious misrepresentation of the doctrine of closed Communion.

Finally, we preach, teach, and confess that as 1 Corinthians 11 states there must be divisions in churches "so that those who are approved may become evident among you." Although at District and Synodical conventions a congregation is responsible for hosting the Lord's Supper, this does not nullify your responsibilities "to advise, admonish, and reprove" all who depart from the Synod's Constitution (2016 *Handbook*. XI, B, 2, p. 15). Those hosting Communion services that ignore the deep divisions that publicly exist among us are to be advised, admonished and reprovved for their sin lest we give the false impression that doctrinal divisions can be covered and/or healed by sharing the Body and Blood of Christ. The responsibility for this happening is on the shoulders of your office.





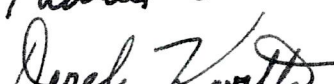

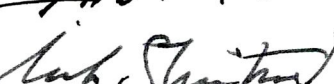

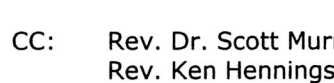
We realize that you receive many letters and of necessity delegate others to respond for you. However, we hope you will favor us with a direct reply.

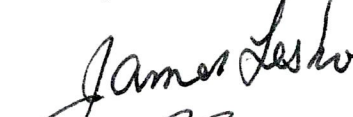
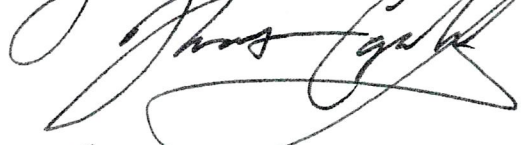


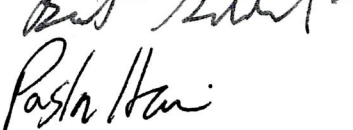
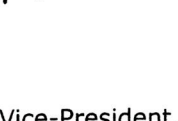
Yours in Christ,

  
Dwayne Potter, President

  
William Inman, Chairman of the Elders

Members of the Voters Assembly •

Trinity is placed in the unenviable position of having to deny our DP access to Communion.

CC: Rev. Dr. Scott Murray, Fourth Vice-President, LCMS  
Rev. Ken Hennings, President, Texas District, LCMS  
Rev. Peter Heckman, Circuit 21 Visitor





## Wisdom and Reformation

by Rev. Ken Hennings, LCMS Texas District President

Proverbs 8 and 9 describe wisdom using many wonderful words and examples. Wisdom brings life to people as she brings to people what they are not able to bring to themselves. *We are told that wisdom "was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began"* (Prov. 8:23). Before people were created, wisdom already existed, and it is important for us to understand this because we do not create wisdom in us. Wisdom comes from God.

The writer of Proverbs uses many different picture words to show how important wisdom is to people. Wisdom is "more precious than rubies" (8:11) and nothing we could ever desire can come close to wisdom. All of the words coming from wisdom "are just; none of them is crooked or perverse" (8:8). Wisdom's "fruit is better than fine gold;" what she yields "surpasses choice silver" (8:19). Whoever finds wisdom "finds life and receives favor from the Lord" (8:35). Wisdom is not something people have the ability to invent. Actually, without wisdom, we produce folly.

Wisdom is described as a woman in Proverbs, and the opposite of wisdom is described as an adulteress, a wayward wife, and a woman of folly (7:5 and 9:13). Wisdom calls out to the simple and offers truth and life. The "woman of folly" speaks untruths. An example of this untruth is found in Prov. 9:17, "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!" Instead of offering life, the "woman of folly" offers destruction and death.

What does all of this have to do with the Reformation? God used a man named Martin Luther to bring the truth of God's Word to people, which offered life and freedom. He proclaimed wisdom at a time when the church was not interested in wisdom. The church of his day had fallen into the trap of thinking and believing that people could earn salvation by what they did in life. The church would recognize certain things people did, and say that these things would grant life and forgiveness. People thought they could force God to do things for them by doing some kind of good work which the church established. This was

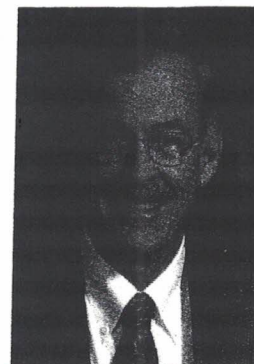
not the truth and came from the "woman of folly" instead of from wisdom. Just as the "woman of folly" deceived and led astray the simple, the belief that people could save themselves did not lead them to God, but away from God.

The "woman of folly" has not gone away. She still cries out for the simple to follow her, but she cannot give life. Her voice can be heard today in the church as more and more regulations are being proposed. There are people who say that only one kind of worship is appropriate for the Lutheran

Church. The person worthy of partaking of Communion is the person who agrees with every doctrine and practice of the Lutheran Church; otherwise they should be denied access to Communion. Mission is not as important in the church as making sure people who do not accept where we are on doctrinal issues leave. People believe that it is God-pleasing to point out every mistake of others and pass judgment on them.

Luther was very clear: God's Word declared everyone a sinner who deserved nothing but death. Salvation comes only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Scripture is the only rule and norm of faith. A person is saved by grace through faith, and even this faith is a gift from God. The person worthy of Communion is the one who believes in the words, "given and shed for you." Luther says much more, but he always pointed people to God's wisdom which gives life and is more precious than anything in this world.

Let me encourage you to not fall for the words of folly that would subtly try to get you to add something to the free grace that God gives. Stick with wisdom and walk in her strength.



Rev. Ken Hennings

*Christ*  
*the Power of*  
*God and the*  
*WISDOM of*  
*God*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:24

*Ken Hennings*