

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church
1207 West 45 Street Austin, Texas 78756

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Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM
March 26, 2017 Volume 19 Issue 2

April– May 2017

In This Issue...

You will find a correction in print and I was going to have one in practice, but have since changed my mind (see below). And finally, in this issue you will find musings on a proposed addition.

First, the in-print correction. I published an article in last month's *Te Deum* from the August 2016 *Lutheran Witness* entitled "When a Good Host Says 'No'". In the last paragraph, we read, "So it is that with Christian love and concern for our non-Lutheran guests, we kindly say 'no' when they ask to commune with us."

I would like to tell you I left this as a landmine waiting to see if any of you discovered it. I would like to say I purposely didn't flag that with parenthetical comments pointing out the error. I sometimes do both the above, but I honestly can't tell you I did either in this case. I may have read right over that. One of you did not.

Our Communion policy, specifically the part under what circumstances we will not commune fellow members of the LCMS, stands in stark relief to the conclusion of the *Lutheran Witness* article. If you believe that all Lutherans should be able to commune together, if you believe the only issue that Closed Communion addresses is that of non-Lutherans communing, then you don't agree with Scripture, our Lutheran Confessions, our Trinity's Communion policy.

The correction in practice *not* coming to a Divine Service near you is because I discovered my current practice is less confusing. You

probably have noted that younger guest pastors when bestowing the Peace of the Lord upon the congregation, and this is on *everyone* not just our members, not just those we are communing, but everyone in the assembled congregation, they hold the chalice containing the Blood of Christ and the Body of Christ above the chalice and say those words. I was taught to place my left hand on the altar and turn my right toward the assembly and say those words. It was explained the same way: My hand on that altar with the other toward the congregation indicates the Body and Blood of Christ now on this altar bestows peace upon the assembled. I read of my practice in a 1960's work which cites *The Order of Holy Communion* a 1959 work. The other practice dates to the 16th century as a way to retain/ restore another practice (see below). I would rather retain my practice and outright restore the other if I was so moved rather than conflate the two.

The proposed addition that I once was sure of is now back to a musing. It is introduced by the article below by Rev. Rick Stuckwisch. It is a portion from the paper on liturgy that he gave here at the 2013 ACELC conference. He wasn't able to present it because of time constraints. A son of our congregation ran across it and directed it to me. The article "Lift High the Christ" is about the elevation and adoration of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It explains its history and practice, and it spurred in me a semi-dormant desire that now is more of a musing.

I have made no secret since 2009 when I serialized in our newsletter my 2004 *Logia* article "The Angels are Aware and We are Too" that I thought

it was time to restore the practice of elevating the Body and Blood of Christ and give the congregation the opportunity to bow or genuflect to show adoration of Christ in the Sacrament. I said at the time and have since that it is needed now to starkly confess the truth of the Real Presence to the conservative Reformed and Evangelicals who think they have the same doctrine that we do. I also surmise it may aid in stopping some of the millennial age group who hear my clear Closed Communion announcement and still come forward to receive the Sacrament even though they are specifically asked not to.

There are some who are opposed to the practice of elevating the elements and giving the congregation the opportunity to bow. They can't be opposed to the adoration of Christ in the Sacrament as they are doing this already when they sing the *Agnus Dei*, bow and kneel at the altar. Also, our Lutheran Confession says that adoration is to be done and will be done by all except those who deny Christ is really God. Here's what the Formula of Concord says: "Likewise, the teaching that the elements (the visible forms of the blessed bread and wine) are to be adored. Of course, no one except an Arian heretic can or will deny that Christ Himself, true God and Man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper when it is rightly used, should be adored in spirit and in truth in all places but especially where His community is assembled" (FC, SD, VII, *Lord's Supper*) 126).

We Confessional Lutherans toe the line between the Catholic and the Reformed. The Catholics parade a Communion wafer through the streets

in their Corpus Christi festival and require all to adore what *isn't* the Body of Christ since He doesn't give us His Body for that purpose. The Reformed deny that any adoration is due or may be expressed in a Communion service because the Body and Blood of Christ are as far removed from our altar as heaven is from earth. We say, when we are using the Sacrament as Christ instituted it, His Body and Blood are to be adored. This cannot be denied.

What can be withheld without sinning, without being less of a Lutheran is physically bowing, kneeling, or genuflecting. In the same way, you can not kneel at the confession of sins or at the altar and not be sinning. In the same way, you can not make the sign of the cross over yourself and not be sinning. In the same way that, should we ever have a Baptismal font with water perpetually in it, you would not be sinning if you walked by and didn't dip your fingers in it and apply water to your forehead in remembrance of your Baptism. It's interesting that this latter practice, which is not nearly as ancient or as well attested as the elevation and adoration, is usually much more amenable to Lutherans than the first two are.

As we have some fine Confessional Lutherans now who don't make the sign of the cross or kneel for confession, I'm sure we have some fine ones who don't wish to physically genuflect or bow at the elevation. That is no sin, and isn't un-Lutheran. The elevation and subsequent bowing or genuflection is adiaphora, a middle thing, neither commanded or forbidden. Sometimes in the history of the church it has *not* been done for good reasons; sometimes it *has* been done for good reason.

As I pay no attention to who kneels or makes the sign of the cross

now, so I would pay no attention to who genuflects or bows. Middle things must remain free. I may not say, "You *must* do it." You may not say "You *must not* do it."

I had planned on closing this article with a decision to restore the elevation and adoration. But after reading that 1998 work on the subject, I'm left feeling their elaborate instructions take away from the adoration that is going on with the bowing and kneeling we do now. However, I believe it was the Australian Lutheran scholar Herman Sasse who said in 1959 that the offense which once rested on crucified Christ now rests on His Real Presence on our altar. It is no offense to believe that the bread and wine stand for, symbolize, or represent the Body and Blood of Christ. It is grave offense to reason, Reformed doctrine, and Protestants in general to say that Body and Blood of Christ *are* on that altar. Elevating these and bowing before them reinforce that truth in us and confess it to the world.

Liturgically I try to start where a congregation is and lead them to towards a richer liturgical tradition without doing violence to what they are comfortable with. My sense is that many of the younger people want to introduce elevation and adoration. I know for a fact that in 2009 a good percentage wanted to do so at once. But as with introducing chanting, acolytes, processions, the sign of the cross, ashes, Burying the Alleluias and more, I go very slowly. Sometimes slow turns into stop, and this is where my musings start.

Lift High the Christ, His Flesh and Blood Proclaim

Here is Part IX of my ACELC free conference paper (16 April 2013). It is one of the sections that I omitted in my presentation of the paper, because of time constraints. The entire paper will be made available on the ACELC website. *Rev. Rick Stuckwisch*

[There is one] particular ceremony, or pair of ceremonies, [that] needs to be considered, because it touches upon a decisive theological point. Here I refer to the Elevation and the Adoration of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. Actually, more time and attention should be given to this topic than this paper can afford, but for now, if nothing else, let us have it on the table for discussion.

The Elevation of the Sacrament occurs after each of the elements is consecrated with the Word of the Lord. Thus, after Christ has spoken, "This Is My Body," His Body is lifted up by the celebrant at the Altar, in and with the consecrated Bread, in order that all may see it; and all are thus invited to adore the Lord in His Body. In the same way also, after Christ has spoken, "This Is the New Testament in My Blood," the Chalice is lifted up for all to see, that all may adore the Lord in His Blood.

Luther dealt with questions concerning the Elevation and the Adoration of Christ in the Sacrament throughout his lifetime as a reformer. His attitude and criteria remained consistent, but were applied somewhat differently in the advice that he gave, depending on the particulars of each situation and its immediate context. Bear in mind that he had to confront competing challenges on either side: Roman sacrificial notions, and the adoration of the Host apart from the Holy Communion, on the one hand; and Zwinglian denials of the Sacrament altogether, on the other hand.

Because of its associations with the Roman sacrificial Mass, Luther was at first inclined to do away with the Elevation. However, several considerations led him to preserve the practice, and to defend it against critics and detractors: First, he wanted to exercise patience and care for the piety of the people, lest they be scandal-

ized by such a dramatic change at the highest point of the Divine Service. Second, he recognized that the Elevation could be understood evangelically, as a commending of the Body of the Christ to the communicants. For this very reason, Luther notably retained the Elevation in both his Latin and German Masses, describing it as a proclamation of Christ in the Sacrament, and as a gracious invitation to eat and to drink His Body and His Blood for the forgiveness of sins.

As a third and final reason for retaining the Elevation, Luther set himself in opposition to Karlstadt and others, who insisted that the practice was contrary to the Gospel and to the Holy Scriptures, and that it therefore had to be abolished. Here, as previously mentioned, Luther insisted on its freedom.

It was not Luther, but his own pastor, Johannes Bugenhagen, who finally did away with the Elevation in Wittenberg (in the late 1530s). He did so while Luther was away, and there are some indications that Luther was unhappy with this change in practice, especially because there were many people who then perceived it to be a capitulation to Zwinglianism. In any case, Luther consistently supported Pastor Bugenhagen, and he did not publicly object to the change in ceremony. Although he mentioned on occasion the possibility of restoring the Elevation to the Liturgy in Wittenberg, that did not happen.

Toward the end of his life, Luther indicated that it would be just as well for the Elevation to be let go from the practice of the churches; not because he was opposed to it, but for the sake of unity among the Lutheran territories, since many of them had already done away with this ceremonial practice.

In considering the Elevation of the Sacrament, it has to be taken into account what a prominent and visible part of the Roman Mass this practice was, and what a volatile issue it became in the context of the Reformation. In that light, it is actually remarkable that the Lutherans kept it at all, and for so long. That this continuation of the practice was not solely as a consolation for the weak, nor simply a matter of polemics against the Zwinglians, is demonstrated by a similar but slightly different practice that developed in some of the Lutheran territories of the Sixteenth Century. In those places, the Body and Blood of Christ were elevated before the people at the Pax Domini, the pastor facing the people with the Host and the Chalice in his hands. Evidently there was also a rite that would sometimes accompany this new ceremony, drawing upon the words of Luther from one of his writings against Karlstadt: "Look, dear Christian, here are the Body and Blood of your Lord Jesus, which He gives to you for the forgiveness of sins." In some cases, this new ceremony was used in addition to the historic Elevation. Both practices were understood as a strong confession of the Body and Blood of Christ.

With or without the Elevation, as far as Luther himself was concerned, and for other Lutherans after him, there still remained the Adoration of Christ in the Sacrament; although this practice became controversial among the Lutherans, mainly after Luther's death, in connection with a receptionist trend in Melanchthon and his followers.

The "Adoration," here, refers specifically to bending the knee (or genuflecting) at the consecration of the Sacrament. That is to say, it is the bodily worship of Christ, the Lord our God, in His Sacrament.

"Receptionism" is the view that Christ is not present in the bread and

wine, except in the actual eating and drinking of the elements. This view developed with Melanchthon, and continued after him, on the basis of Aristotelian philosophy (or, rather, on a misunderstanding of Aristotle's "four causes"). Especially as Melanchthon grew closer to John Calvin, in the years after Luther had died, he and others would make disparaging remarks about "bread worshipers," referring to those (such as Luther!) who adored the Lord Jesus Christ in His Sacrament.

Luther, in his lifetime, explicitly answered the receptionist position, along with its implications for the celebration of the Sacrament, especially in a couple of letters that he wrote to a Pastor Wolferinus. Therein he indicated that the proper "use" of the Sacrament, in accordance with the Lord's Institution, begins with the consecration of the elements (with the Verba Domini) and continues until everything has been consumed. Within that breadth of "use," as Luther describes, the bread is the Body of Christ Jesus, and the wine is the Blood of Christ Jesus, exactly as the same Lord Jesus Christ has spoken in the consecration: "This Is My Body," and "This Is My Blood." Therefore, we eat and drink because the Holy Supper is the Body given and the Blood poured out for us. Likewise, everything is consumed, in keeping with the Word of Christ: "Eat," and "Drink." None of the elements that He has consecrated with His Word should be returned to common usage, nor simply "disposed of."

The Lutherans of the Sixteenth Century (and well beyond) followed Luther's lead in this regard, and took these matters quite seriously, as the various Lutheran Church Orders (and several controversies) make plain. In fact, church practices emulated Luther's "consecrationist" position, in spite of the growing entrenchment of

Melanchthon's "receptionism" in subsequent generations. Regrettably, the Formula of Concord, in its article on the Lord's Supper, has frequently been interpreted through the filters of those later developments, and has therefore been misunderstood in a "receptionist" manner.

As regards the Adoration, in particular, the Formula of Concord has likewise been misunderstood. On the surface, it would seem as though the Formula rejects this ceremony, when it explicitly disavows the adoration of the bread and wine. However, that particular "antithesis" is actually confessed in response to those (including Melanchthon) who had accused the Lutherans of "bread worship," as mentioned earlier. The point is made, precisely because Luther himself, and many others, did adore the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament, while yet distinguishing His sacred flesh and blood from the creaturely elements of bread and wine, which do of course remain in the Holy Communion.

It is especially clear that the Adoration is actually defended and affirmed, when one compares the Formula of Concord on this point with the corresponding section of the Examination of the Council of Trent, by Martin Chemnitz (a primary author of the Formula). For "no one except an Arian heretic can or will deny that Christ Himself, true God and Man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper when it is rightly used, should be adored in Spirit and in Truth in all places but especially where His community is assembled" (FC/SD VII.126). As Luther had also written in 1544: "In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is deserving of honor and adoration, the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, proffered, and received both

by the worthy and by the unworthy" (LW 34: 355).

What Will Happen to Me If I Don't Attend Church?

Written by Pastor James Albrecht,
Lutheran Spokesman | July, 2015

Short answer: nothing.

Where nothing happens, there is no spiritual growth. No lightning bolt will fall from the sky warning you about spiritual danger. No one will return from the dead to plead with you about using your time of grace wisely. Nothing visibly upsetting may happen at all. In time, your conscience problems will go away, as well. Soon, there will be enough of a callus that you won't feel a thing.

Jesus shared the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus in order to bring focus to this very issue. The man who "*fared sumptuously every day*" failed to realize that while he felt alive and well satisfied, he was severely malnourished and dead. His soul and conscience had flat-lined, evidenced by an obvious lack of concern for his neighbor in need. Nothing happened to him, of course. Until he died. Then oh, how he wished that God would send Abraham back from the dead to warn his brothers! "Nothing doing," to paraphrase the response. "*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them*" (Luke 16:29).

The apostle Paul testified before Felix and Drusilla at Caesarea. They had front-row seats in an opportunity of a lifetime, but brushed aside the invitation and call to repentance. "*Go away for now; when I have a convenient time, I will call for you*" (Acts 24:25). As far as we know, nothing happened: no further discussion, no repentance, and no faith. Nothing.

As they passed through Samaria, James and John earned their nickname, "Sons of Thunder," for wanting to call

down fire from heaven. The target was a village of Samaritans who did not care to welcome Jesus to their town. "If that's how they feel," the two surmised, "then allow us to give them the judgment they deserve." But no fire flashed from the sky. No plague ravaged that community. Instead, nothing happened at all. Jesus simply by-passed the town. No miracles were performed. No Gospel was preached. No sinners were saved (Luke 9:54-56).

Where nothing happens, there is no spiritual growth. Where there is no spiritual growth, there is spiritual atrophy. Some will remember the days when having a baby landed the mother in the hospital for two weeks. Total bed rest seemed like the best treatment after the rigors of labor. Today we know that it was the worst thing to do. When the new mom finally got out of the hospital, she was so weakened by the days of doing nothing that she could barely handle the duties of motherhood.

Faith grows through the Gospel. Where Christ is preached, hearers are blessed and made stronger. It works that way, not because the preacher is so dynamic or the music so uplifting, but because God operates through His Word and Sacraments. These are the tools He supplies for our spiritual good. If you knew that Jesus would be in your church on Sunday to bless your children, to put His hand on your shoulder, to personally assure you of His forgiveness and love, would you be there? He is there, and He does that through the Gospel. What if you can't make it on a Sunday? What if your ox falls in a pit and you need to get it out? (Luke 14:5) Then get it out. But, as the old joke goes, "If it falls in the pit every Sunday, you'd better either fill in the pit or get a new ox."

If you can't come to church, ask your pastor about ways the church

might come to you: video recordings, printed sermons, online services and so forth. But do it before nothing happens.

James Albrecht is pastor of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church in Okabena, Minnesota.

Dutch Health Minister: "If freedom of choice results in a situation that nearly no children with Down syndrome are being born, society should accept that"

(Editor's note. This comes from our friends at SPUC—the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children.)

Last week, members of the Dutch opposition party asked Minister of Health Edith Schippers, if she planned to take any measures to prevent the near elimination of babies with Down syndrome which has happened in other countries.

The Netherlands is making NIPT (Non Invasive Prenatal Testing), by which a range of chromosomal and genetic variations can be detected by a blood test, available to all pregnant women in 2017. The introduction of the test has led to 100% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome being aborted in Iceland. In Denmark, the number is 98%.

However, Mrs. Schippers, who has also championed euthanasia for those who feel they have "completed life" replied "If freedom of choice results in a situation that nearly no children with Down syndrome are being born, society should accept that." She said withholding information from parents about the health of their future children is "undesirable" and that participation in the Na-

tional population screening program is an individual decision.
<http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/news/2017/01/>

Send Me Romans and I'll Send You John or Money – An Open Letter to All Missionaries Seeking Money

Posted on February 6, 2017
by Rev. Paul R. Harris

I have been bombarded in the last two years with LCMS pastors seeking funding for their mission field. My response is "Send me the Book of Romans."

What I mean by this is as Paul didn't ask the Romans to fund his missionary trip to Spain without first setting forth his Gospel in the Book of Romans, so don't solicit funds from me or my church without setting forth the Gospel you preach and teach.

I have said, "Send me some sermons you actually are preaching in the field and if it's what we believe, teach, and confess, I will bring it to my people." Not a one has sent a single sermon.

They all assume you not only will comply with their request to meet with you, teach a Bible class, or preach a sermon but that you *should*. Most have the air about them that what they are doing is the work of an evangelist what you are doing is not or at least it's second rate.

They all assume the moniker, logo, slogan LCMS means we all believe, teach, and confess the same things. Only a fool or the Who's "Pinball Wizard" would assume this. And this is where John comes in.

2 John 7-11:"7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have

accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. 9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; 11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds."

Granted Luther said this condemned the Sacramentarians who didn't believe that Christ came in the flesh in Holy Communion, but it applies to more than just them. Anyone who doesn't abide in any teaching of Christ, in so far as they do that, they don't have Christ. To support a pastor practicing open Communion, or turning a blind eye to polygamy, fornication (even under the sweet-sounding phrase 'living together'), or one praying with pagans is to participate in his evil deeds.

The real problem is that the Synod sends her missionaries out to sing for their supper when they should be cutting the vittles for their bureaucrats instead. How much money could be saved by eliminating positions from the bloated bureaucracies in Districts and Synod? I suspect there would be more than enough to fund all our missionaries. Let's drain that swamp instead!

Of course, that being said, we still have the Romans and John problem. We simply don't all believe, teach, and confess the same thing, and the bigger problem is that we don't care enough about this divide to a) admit it and b) address it, and I don't mean by some bureaucratic-driven meet and greet which is designed to *not* let us talk to each other; which is designed to stop me from giving you my Romans and giving you the opportunity to respond according to John.

Trinity Lutheran Church
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Trinity Te Deum is published bi-monthly. Deadline for all articles is the 15th of the odd months.
All articles must be approved by Rev. Paul R. Harris. Articles with no author are written by him.

April 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12:30 Adult Confirmation			Lenten Vespers 7:30 PM			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Youth Crawfish & More 12:30 PM				Maundy Thursday Communion 7:30 PM	Good Friday Communion & Service of Darkness 7:30 PM	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<u>NO</u> Adult Confirmation		PASTOR ON VACATION				
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
			7:15 Romans			
31						
12:30 Adult Confirmation						

May 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			7:15 Romans			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<u>NO</u> Adult Confirmation	Couple's Trip To Coast					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<u>NO</u> Adult Confirmation		Elders Meeting 6:30 PM	7:15 Romans			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
12:30 Adult Confirmation			7:15 Romans			
28	29	30	31			
12:30 Adult Confirmation			7:15 Romans			
Ascension Dinner 5 PM						

April - May 2017