

# Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

1207 West 45 Street Austin, Texas 78756

Rev. Paul R. Harris - (512) 453-3835 Church

Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM - Divine Service 10:30 AM

## The Not-So-Great Commission

How about that 15 January sermon, “So, How’s the Fishing?”? Some of you, probably a very few now, heard it before. I preached it 21 years ago, January 27, 2002. I tried not to modify the sermon at all when I re-preached it, but that is hard to do.

This was the sermon that led the former pastor and his cronies to charge me with false doctrine and attempt to have me removed. I am still here; they have been gone for almost 20 years.

The issue was that I dared to say what the first president of the Missouri Synod said in 1879. “When the communists hear this passage, they say: ‘Here you see it, here Christ has plainly told the rich, what they shall do: they are to sell what they have and give to the poor.’ They make a logical mistake, as is evident. They make the mistake which in the art of logic is called in Latin: *Fallacia a particulari ad universale*, i.e. a fallacy from the particular to the universal. It is, for example, stated in Scripture, that Christ Jesus commanded His disciples: ‘Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost’ [Mt. 28:18-20]. Would it not be folly to conclude: ‘Here you see it, that Christ commands all Christians to go into the world and to preach the gospel’” (Walther, *Communism & Socialism*, (1879), 45)?

In this pamphlet, Walther is opposing communism and socialism, but he uses as an example that what he takes for granted would be “folly”, i.e. to conclude that the so-called Great Commission was given to all Christians. This is exactly the error the church has been laboring under since the 70s. It gave rise to *Ablaze* in the LCMS and it’s the thinking behind the WELS and even those in the ELS, embracing contemporary worship. We have to do something to stem the tide of people leaving the church. We’ve got to do something to fulfill the Great Commission.

Bill Bright is founder of the Campus Crusade for Life. The good-folks who, in college, brought me back by God’s grace from the apostasy I dived into while in the military (My own fault; my own most grievous fault, not the Army’s.), were connected to this movement. Bill had as a goal to fulfill the Great Commission by the year 2000. Epic fail there – or trying to do what the apostles are said to have done circa 58 A.D. (Cf. Acts 17:6). I’ve lost count of the number of “this time we’re really going to evangelize the world” movements there have been. Google “He Gets Us”. It’s a \$100 million ad campaign that is parachurch, outside existing structures. I know what you’re thinking: “You (i.e. me) benefited from just such a movement.” File this truth under Balaam’s Donkey. The Lord can use just about anyone to proclaim His Gospel.

There was a shut-in when I got here, a lifelong Lutheran. She said to me after maybe six months, “I never heard a pastor preach like you do.” I responded, “Is that a good thing?” She said, “O yes, a very good thing.” For decades this woman had been ordered, threatened with eternal consequences, goaded, shamed, and urged to fulfill the Great Commission. The Gospel, God’s good gifts and Spirit, His forgiveness, life, and salvation, were for those outside the Church.

This is the story folks were being told in the late 70s and early 80s. Once, your church was a lifesaving station on the beach for those shipwrecked. But over time, you didn’t like going out in the cold and dark. So you stayed in more and more, and the food, drink, and shelter you had for others you kept for yourselves. The shipwrecked perished. So what the church became is a bunch of people that felt so guilty for not wading out in the surf enough that they didn’t think they should use the Gospel for themselves.

Now go back and read the sermon from 1-27-02 or that of 1-15-23. See the point?

# **Theses on Justification**

## **A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (Continued: VI – VIII)**

### **VI. The Universal and Finished Results of Christ's Work of Obedience**

19. Christ is the Savior of all. This means that the whole world of sinners has been redeemed, forgiven, and reconciled to God in Him. (Rom.3:24–25; 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 9:28; Ap IV, 103; XXIV, 22–24; FC SD III, 57; XI, 15)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That it is improper to speak of God being reconciled to man; That we can only speak of man being reconciled to God by man's repentance or change of heart; That God has redeemed but not reconciled the world.

20. God has accepted the vicarious offering and sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, in whom therefore God is propitiated and reconciled with all sinners, so that for Christ's sake God's wrath against all sinners has been and remains stilled, and Satan, sin, death, and hell have been and are conquered. (Rom. 5:18; Col. 2:14–15; 1 Thess. 1:10; Heb. 7:27, 10:12; 1 John 2:2, AC III, 3; Ap XXIV, 22–24; FC SD XI, 28)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That God's acceptance of His Son's perfect sacrifice does not have as its necessary concomitant the propitiation of His wrath against all sinners.

21. Complete and perfect righteousness and forgiveness have been acquired for all sinners. (Ps. 130:4; Rom. 5:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Heb. 10:12, 18; Ap IV, 103; LC II, 38; FC Ep III, 3; V, 5; FC SD III, 30, 57)

22. God, by raising His Son from the dead, has justified Him, declared Him to be the Righteous One, and in Him (i.e., for the sake of His finished work of obedience and satisfaction) has declared (as proclaimed in the Gospel), or reckoned, the whole world to be righteous. (Rom. 3:24; 4:25; 5:18–19; 2 Cor. 5:19–21; Ap IV, 40–41; SA II, i, 1–3)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That forgiveness of sins and justification for all have not been declared by God when He raised His Son from the dead, but have merely been acquired or made a possibility through Christ's atonement.

23. By "objective" or "universal" justification one means that God has declared the whole world to be righteous for Christ's sake and that righteousness has thus been procured for all people. It is objective because this was God's unilateral act prior to and in no way dependent upon man's response to it, and universal because all human beings are embraced by this verdict. God has acquired the forgiveness of sins for all people by declaring that the world for Christ's sake has been forgiven. The acquiring of forgiveness is the pronouncement of forgiveness. (Rom. 3:24; 4:25; 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:19–21; Ap IV, 40–41; SA II, i, 1–3; FC Ep V, 5; FC SD XI, 15)

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### **VII. The Appropriation of Christ's Righteousness (Justification Through Faith)**

24. "The only essential and necessary elements of justification are the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and faith which accepts these in the promise of the Gospel ... ." (FC SD III, 25)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That it is possible to depart from this formulation of justification, particularly by the injection of human works as the cause which moves God to justify, or as the basis for justification, or as the means by which people receive justification.

25. Christ's righteousness and all the benefits of His perfect obedience of life and death are imputed and communicated to the sinner individually through faith (sometimes called "subjective justification"). (Gen. 15:6; Acts 10:43; 13:39; Rom. 3:25; 4:16; 5:1–2; Gal.

3:22–24; Ap IV, 80–86, 148–150, 227, 305, 307; SA II, ii, 24; LC IV, 37)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That God's justifying verdict is a mere fiction, divorced from reality; That in justification men do not become righteous by imputation; That justification is not a real forgiveness or imputation of righteousness but is merely a manner of speaking applicable to any conception of reality or specific doctrinal content.

26. Faith is the only vehicle, or means, through which a sinner can receive, appropriate, and have the righteousness and benefits of Christ, forgiveness of sins, and salvation. (Gen. 15:6; Hab.2:4; John 1:12; Rom. 3:25, 28; Gal.2:16; AC IV, 2; XXV, 4; Ap IV, 43, 45, 50–52, 80–86, 115, 158, 182, 272, 292, 305, 307; XII, 36; SA II, i, 4; III, xiii, 1; LC III, 54; V, 34–35; FC Ep III, 5)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That sinners can appropriate the benefits of Christ by their works.

27. The faith through which we are justified is trust in Christ and is knowing His benefits and appropriating them. (Phil. 3:8–10; AC XX, 23–26; XXIV, 31–32; Ap IV, 45, 48, 50, 80–81, 99, 101, 227, 304, 337, 351, 386; XIII, 21; FC Ep III, 6; FC SD IV, 12)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That justifying faith is mere knowledge of history; That justifying faith is “commitment to Jesus” apart from His work; That faith justifies because it is assent to the teachings of the church; That faith justifies because it is a work of virtue formed or fashioned by love.

28. When used in connection with the article of justification, faith must always be regarded as receptivity, like an empty hand which does nothing, but solely receives a free gift. (John 1:12, 14; Rom. 4:16; Ap IV, 48, 50, 56–57, 80–81, 84, 86, 112–113, 159, 292; XII, 65; SA II, i, 4; ii, 24; LC IV, 37; FC Ep III, 5; FC SD III, 13, 31, 41)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That reconciliation only refers to a change in the heart and mind of man and to his transformation from a state of unbelief to a state of faith, rather than to the propitiation of God and reconciliation by the death of

His Son; That the atonement is complete only when a person comes to faith; That faith is an activity of man that does something to effect or bring about man's justification.

29. The sinner is justified through faith alone, without and apart from any merit or works of the law that man does. (Rom. 3:24, 28; Eph.2:8–9, AC IV, 1; XX, 9–14; XXVI, 5; Ap IV, 57, 73–74, 80–81, 84, 159, 227, 231, 257; SA II, ii, 24)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That a sinner contributes to his justification by his own powers, merits, or works; That love or good works precede or cause justification, rather than follow from it as its fruit; That people may comfort themselves with forgiveness and the Gospel and imagine that they have justifying faith, when in fact they continue to live impenitently in mortal sin and have no intention to amend their lives.

30. That the sinner is personally justified through faith alone does not exclude good works as a part of the sanctified sinner's renewal or as the inevitable fruit of faith. (John 15:5; Rom. 6:1–14; Eph. 2:8–10; AC VI, 1; 6; XII, 29; Ap IV, 45, 250–251, 348–350; SA III, xiii, 1–2; LC II, 67–69; FC Ep IV, 8–11; FC SD II, 62–66, 89; III, 23, 32; IV, 7, 10–12, 20)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That faith is purely passive in the Christian life, just as it is in justification; 8 | Theses on Justification That Christians need not concern themselves with good works or the norm of good works, the law of God.

31. That the sinner is justified through faith alone does not exclude the work of the Holy Spirit and the means of grace in the sinner's justification before God. (John 17:20; Rom. 10:17, 15:13; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:3; 2 Thess. 2:14; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23; AC V, 1:2; Ap IV, 64, 73; XII, 40–43; LC II, 38, 53–54; III, 37, 51; IV, 23–24, 29, 41; V, 31, 68; FC Ep II, 4, 13; XI, 10; FC SD II, 46, 50–52, 71–72; XI, 29, 37–38)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That men have the power to bring themselves to faith; That the Holy Spirit will impart His blessings apart from the means of grace.

32. When we say that faith justifies, we say this not in the sense that a sinner's faith is a meritorious or efficient cause or condition of his justification, or in

the sense that God justifies the sinner because of his faith, but (metonymically) in the sense that faith clings to Christ's benefits, in the sense that God justifies us freely for Christ's sake through faith. Faith justifies by virtue of its object. (John 3:16; Rom. 4:5; AC XXIV, 28; Ap IV, 44–45, 53–56, 67, 86, 88–99; FC SD III, 13, 24)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That faith appeases or propitiates God's wrath against sin; That believing that God forgives because I believe is the same as true faith in Christ; That faith is in any sense meritorious.

33. Faith does not justify for the reason that it produces good works or is in itself a good work or for the reason that it meets the "evangelical mandate" to believe, but solely because of its object. (1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9; Ap IV, 57–60, 74, 147–151, 180–182, 308–312, 338; XII 88, 94–97, 116; FC Ep III, 19, 21; FC SD III, 32–33, 35, 43)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That justification is to be understood as the work of the Spirit in giving a new direction to man's life; That although the works of the law do not justify, nevertheless the good works of the believers, flowing from faith, in some way contribute to their justification before God, or that God declares the believer to be righteous not only and solely on the grounds of the holy obedience of Christ but also in part on the basis of his own "newness of life"; That God first justifies the sinner because of his faith, and then justifies the sinner because of the fruits of faith.

34. The sinner's personal justification, i.e., his having or appropriating Christ's benefits, forgiveness, and justification, does not take place because of his contrition or faith, or on the ground of his contrition or faith, or in view of his faith, or after he believes, but solely through faith. (Acts 13:38–39; Rom. 3:25, 28; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:8–9; AC IV, 2; XXVII. 37; Ap IV, 45, 81; XII, 77)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That God's verdict of justification or forgiveness is a conditional verdict which specifies that justification occurs only when a person believes; That conversion or a change of heart is necessary before God speaks His divine sentence of forgiveness, or

acquittal; That our justification before God is a process that involves not merely the work of Christ but also our own willing acceptance of faith, and that only when the process has been completed is man truly declared forgiven by God; That faith somehow creates forgiveness, rather than that it merely receives and embraces a forgiveness already obtained by Christ and offered and distributed in the Gospel; That forgiveness or justification before God is the granting of some inherent righteousness which resides in man, whether it be the indwelling Christ or man's own change of mind and will; That the contrition or faith of the believer is in some way a cause of forgiveness and justification before God; That the redemptive work of Christ only makes it possible for God to pronounce His declaration of forgiveness; That the pronouncement of that declaration is done only when a person has satisfied the condition of faith.

35. Anyone who does not believe, teach, and confess that a sinner is justified alone through faith in Christ does dishonor to Christ and obscures the Gospel. (Gal. 2:21; 5:4; AC XX, 9–10; XXVII, 37–38, 41–43; XXVIII, 35; Ap IV, 3, 12, 18, 120, 149–150, 157, 204, 213, 215–216, 223, 269, 317, 324, 332–333; XII, 16; XV, 9, 18; XXI, 14–15; XXIV, 96; XXVII, 11, 16, 40; Tr 45; FC SD V, 27)

36. Faith is a gift of God, that is, it is worked in a sinner by God alone through the means of grace, without any cooperation, effort, work, inclination, will, decision, movement, activity, or merit of man. (John 6:44, 65; 1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil.1: 29; 2 Tim. 2:25; AC V, 2; FC SD II, 25–27, 40, 48, 54, 89; IV, 10) Theses on Justification | 9

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That the will of man is free in such a manner that he can choose to accept the gift of faith; That God works faith in man as in a robot; That faith is coerced in man by God; That an unbeliever can make a decision for Christ or commit himself to Christ; That faith is not a gift from God; That an unregenerated person can believe in Christ through powers given to him prior to his conversion by the Holy Spirit.

## **VIII. Unbelief, the Rejection of Christ's Righteousness**

37. Just as it is necessary and Scriptural, according to the Gospel, to speak of God as having declared the whole world to be justified for Christ's sake and by raising Him from the dead, it is also necessary and Scriptural, according to the terms of God's law, to speak of impenitent sinners as not justified and forgiven, but condemned. (Matt. 16:19; 18:18, 34; Luke 18:14; John 20:23; Rom. 9:33; Gal. 5:4; AC II, 2; XXVII, 41–43; Ap IV, 29–32, 222; LC II, 66)

It is contrary to Scripture and the pure Gospel to teach: That Christ's work of atonement is of such a nature that even those who do not believe receive justification to life and salvation; That without faith one is not under the wrath of God and eternally lost; That it is proper to speak of saints in hell or to use similar expressions in describing justification; That there can be anonymous Christians, that is, those who have not had access to the means of grace but nevertheless believe without true repentance and faith in Christ, of whom they have never heard and about whom they know nothing.

38. Although faith itself does not cause justification, the lack of faith does cause damnation; i.e., without faith the redeemed sinner to whom God is reconciled does not have the righteousness of Christ or any of the benefits of His work of obedience, but is condemned by God and lost eternally. (Mark 16:16; John 3:36; 8:24; 1 Thess. 5:1–10; 1 John 5:12; Ap II, 40; IV, 69, 80–81; SC IV, 5–8; LC I, 16; II, 66; III, 90–91; FC SD III, 20; VII, 89; XI, 60–61, 78)

## Lenten factoids

**Lenten Factoids:** The original period of Lent was 3 days: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. By the 3rd century, it was extended to 6 days and called Holy Week which is the week before Easter. Around 800 AD during the reign of the great Christian emperor, Charlemagne, it was increased to 40 days. The Sundays in Lent are **not** included. The 40 days correspond to the 40 days in which Jesus fasted in the wilderness in preparation for His battle with Satan...a battle He won by the way.

The earliest Lent can begin is February 5. That last happened in 1818 and it won't happen again at least

through 2100. The latest that it can begin is March 10. That will not happen again until 2038.

The day before Ash Wednesday is called Shrove Tuesday. The word "shrive" means to cut off, and it means to forgive sins. It was the custom on Shrove Tuesday to go to confession and have one's sins forgiven in preparation for Lent. The day was also one of "saying farewell to meat," which is the meaning of the Latin word "carnival." So the custom was to use up all the fat in the house by making jelly rolls or pancakes, and to feast on a roast of fat meat. "Mardi Gras" is the French name for the day, and it means "Fat Tuesday."

Originally, no meat was eaten during Lent, but this was gradually reduced to only Fridays and Wednesdays when fish was eaten instead.

"Giving up something for Lent" is not done to do something for Jesus, the One who did it all for us, but to purposely focus on spiritual things more than on physical things.

The most important thing about Lent is that it is the time we consider more closely the last week of Christ's life, actually the last two days, where He suffered the most intensely for our sins. This time in Christ's life is called the Passion. Every year for Lent we read the account of Jesus's Passion. Over the six Wednesdays of Lent, we read it from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. On Good Friday, we hear it from St. John. By following Christ on His way to the cross, we identify closely with His suffering. When Easter comes, we celebrate with great joy His Resurrection.

## "Faith worked Through these Means"

A 9-Part Advent-Lent Sermon Series on  
The 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, & 6<sup>th</sup> Chief Parts of Luther's Small Catechism

In the edition of *Aesop's Fables*, illustrated by Arthur Rackham, G. K. Chesterton has written the introduction. He says that "it is universally known among other things 'that there is such a thing as being too clever by half'" (xi). Since 1991 or perhaps 1992 I have devoted the midweek services during Advent and Lent to preaching on the Catechism. I point out each year that this was the practice during the Reformation. I have done it for my entire time here. Which means

this year we are completing our 6th passage through Luther’s Small Catechism. And I fear or maybe just think that perhaps in my desire to be fresh, poignant, trenchant even, I ended up being too clever by half.

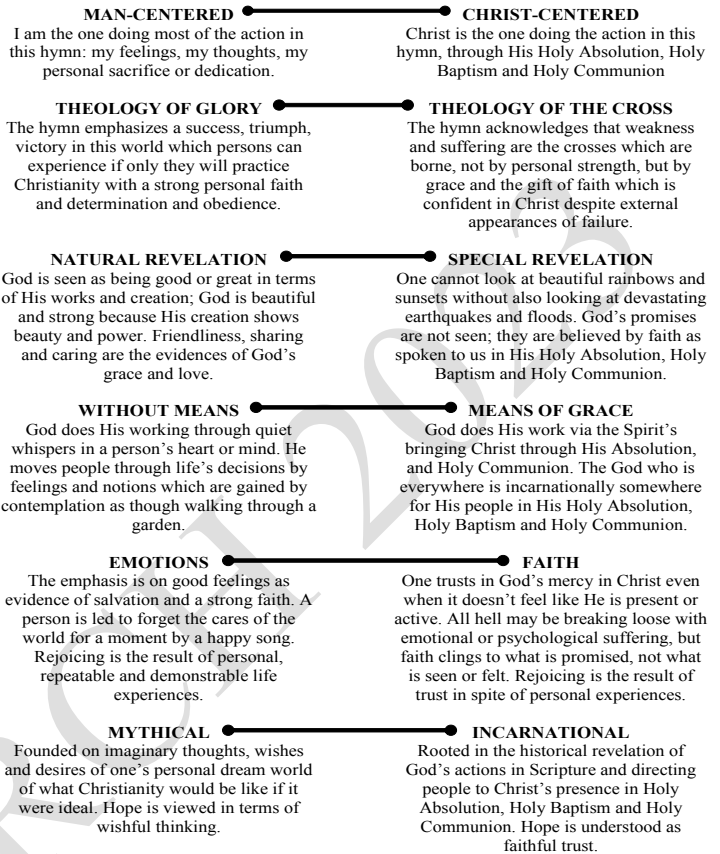
So, this year, I’m taking my title out of our Augsburg Confession Article V where we say this: “To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is provided the Gospel and the Sacraments. Through these as through means, He gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where He pleases, in those who hear the Gospel” (Tappert, 31). In keeping with my desire to renounce my cleverness, I thought it would be good to just follow the Catechism’s questions for my sermon themes if not titles. So this is “what that looks like.”

All services times are at 7:30 PM. With the exception of Ash Wednesday, if you don’t stay to visit, you can be walking to your car at 8:20 at the latest.

Nov. 30	What is Baptism?	Baptism 1
Dec. 07	What Benefits Does Baptism Give?	Baptism 2
Dec. 14	How Can Water Do Such Great Things?	Baptism 3
Feb. 22	What is Confession?	Confession 1
Mar. 01	What Sins Should We Confess?	Confession 2
Mar. 08	What is the Sacrament of the Altar?	Sacrament of the Altar 1
Mar. 15	What is the Benefit of this Eating and Drinking?	Sacrament of the Altar 2
Mar. 22	How can Bodily Eating and Drinking do Such Things?	Sacrament of the Altar 3
Mar. 29	Who Receives This Sacrament Worthily?	Sacrament of the Altar 4

**AN INSTRUMENT FOR EVALUATING SERVICE MATERIAL**

*LOGIA, A Journal of Lutheran Theology, Epiphany/January 1994, Volume III, Number 1, p.66*



***LCMS District Takes a Stand against Redefining Marriage***

*This was occasioned when a Senator from Wyoming voted in favor of the duplicitously named “Respect for Marriage Act” which has the hope of protecting LGBTQ marriages from being outlawed by the Supreme Court as it did with abortion. A publicly identified member of an LCMS Wyoming congregation voted for it. The LCMS, to my knowledge has never done this before when LCMS politicians were exposed as Pro-Abortion. We thank our Lord for the Wyoming District (prh).*

**A Statement from the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod For Her Pastors and Congregations**

December 5, 2022

God created man as male and female and instituted marriage as the lifelong conjugal union of one man and one woman. By this design for mankind God continues

to create the fruit of children, gives companionship in marriage and family, and provides help against lustful desires. God gave marriage to be the fountainhead of goods that He intends for all children and adults, for all communities, and for all churches. These truths about marriage are not private religious opinions. The Biblical teachings on marriage are taught by nature itself. They have no particular traditional, national, ethnic, or cultural character to them. They are universal truths. They apply to all people of all places and all times. They are the foundation and source of all just civil laws for marriage and family. Every legitimate government is bound by God to promote and defend them.

H.R. 8404, “An Act to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act,” rejects this foundation for just and good laws. It proposes to repeal “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,” to replace God with government and His laws with unnatural laws. It requires that lies about man’s nature and about marriage be established with favored legal status. All legislators who voted for H.R. 8404 have publicly repudiated the works and will of the one true God. By this legislative action they have established a favored, secular religion which is openly set against the Holy Triune God. They have rejected God as the only source of just laws, that is, of justice, goodness, beauty, and every civil good. Legislators who claim that Christian doctrine permits or even requires the passage of H.R. 8404 have compounded a sinful vote with a false confession.

The governmental establishment of an unnatural, unbiblical definition of marriage does not obligate Christians to give it any faith or credence. Christian love does not permit us to live a lie. All Christians are called to confess the truth of marriage even if this law brings down civil and financial penalties on them. “We must obey God rather than men.” By upholding the lifelong, conjugal union of one man and one woman we defend God’s plan for protecting people from the loneliness, pain, and other evils that follow from the destruction of the family.

God the Father sent His Son to be born of a woman within a marriage, to be born under His eternal law. By His crucifixion and resurrection He obtained eternal redemption and life for all. The Church rejoices with

every Christian that Jesus offers this redemption and this healing as an answer to all evil, loneliness, and pain. We bring the good news to every sinner that Jesus invites you into the true family of God through faith in Him.

We acknowledge that the passage of H.R. 8404 will give the enemies of Christ the legal means to afflict faithful Christians and churches with many evils. Yet by God’s grace in Christ we will continue to proclaim God’s truth, live according to God’s Word, love all our neighbors as God teaches, and bear the malice of others with fortitude. For we have a never-ending source of comfort and hope in God our Savior. God teaches us to strengthen one another’s hearts to have hope “through the endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures” (Romans 15:5). Jesus Himself bids us “rejoice and be exceeding glad” when we are persecuted for the truth of Christ (Matthew 5:12). And He says, “When these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). God grant us peaceful hearts, cheerful minds, and bold courage to speak and live according to His Word.

In Christ’s name,

Pastors of the Wyoming District of The Lutheran Church—  
Missouri Synod  
Rev. John E. Hill, President, Wyoming District LCMS  
Rev. Paul Cain, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sheridan, WY, 1st  
Vice-President  
Rev. Jonathan Lange, Our Saviour and St. Paul’s Lutheran  
Churches, Evanston and  
Kemmerer, WY, 2nd Vice-President  
Rev. Allen Strawn, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, NE,  
3rd Vice President  
Rev. John Preus, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY  
Rev. Travis Berg, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY  
Rev. Kevin Rose, Peace and Our Savior’s Lutheran Churches,  
Marbleton and Pinedale, WY  
Rev. Travis Sherman, Grace Lutheran Church, Gordon, NE  
Rev. Mark Maas, King of Glory Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY  
Rev. Rene Castellero, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sheridan, WY  
Rev. Norman Wacker, Bethlehem and Mount Calvary Lutheran  
Churches, Moorcroft and Sundance, WY  
Rev. Paul Beyer, Emeritus, Casper, WY  
Rev. Jais Tinglund, Zion and Grace Lutheran Churches, Emblem  
and Greysbull, WY  
Rev. Zachary Viggers, Trinity Lutheran Church, Gillette, WY  
Rev. Jared Korb, St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Worland, WY  
Rev. Mark Preus, St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church and Campus  
Center, Laramie, WY

Rev. Darrell Debowey, Zion Lutheran Church, Laramie, WY  
 Rev. Ted Bourret, Salem and St. Paul's and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches, Gurley, Potter, and Sidney, NE  
 Rev. Kenneth Humphrey, Trinity Lutheran Church, Morrill, NE  
 Rev. Jon Olson, Trinity Lutheran Church, Casper, WY  
 Rev. Christian Preus, Mount Hope Lutheran Church, Casper, WY  
 Rev. Daniel Mulholland, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Fort Bridger, WY  
 Rev. Kenneth Mars, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Cody, WY  
 Rev. Ron Garwood, Christ the King Lutheran Church and District President Emeritus, Cody, WY  
 Rev. Samuel Needham, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Thermopolis, WY  
 Rev. Scott Firminhac, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Torrington, WY  
 Rev. Richard Boche, District President Emeritus, Cheyenne, WY  
 Rev. Jacob Benson, St. John's Lutheran Church, Lovell, WY  
 Rev. Darren Pflughoeft, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lusk, WY  
 Rev. Mark Mumme, Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverton, WY  
 Rev. Richard Mueller, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alliance, NE  
 Rev. Patrick Baldwin, Christ Lutheran Church, Rawlins, WY  
 Rev. John Christensen, Emeritus, Thermopolis, WY  
 Rev. James Rockhill, Bethlehem and Redeem Bethlehem and Redeemer Lutheran Churches, Crawford and Harrison, NE  
 Rev. Ralph Morris, Emeritus, Gering, NE  
 Rev. Daniel Holthus, Emeritus, Casper, WY  
 Rev. David Bott, Redeemer and Christ Our Savior, Jackson and Star Valley, WY

## Casandra Complex

*The Casandra Complex refers to the myth where Casandra is cursed to know the future accurately but have no one believe her. In an attempt to win her love the god Apollo had given her the gift of seeing the future. When she didn't reciprocate with love, he, being unable to take back his gift once given, made it so no one would believe her predictions. I have been warning and warning and warning of the dangers of social media before it was even called that. Yet few people are listening. It could be because I have never been a part of that. When the Internet was new and chatrooms were the buzz, I was invited to various confessional ones. I declined. I wrote blogs for Brother John Steadfast at their request. I did this 14 times and then bowed out. I gave them permission to use any of my blogs they wanted. I didn't want to participate in the give and take that is expected in these online communities. All of this is to say, I may not really know social media, but some who do better than I are giving the same warnings. I read this article in Christian News, 7-11-22, 24. (ph).*

## Social Media is Destroying Mental Health, and it's Far Worse Than We Think

Rachel Alexander | Posted: May 09, 2022 12:01 AM

The advent of social media has brought a dilemma — we want the benefits it brings so badly, but at the same time it is destroying our mental health with all the hate and criticism. The old saying “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words may never hurt me,” has finally become outdated, because whoever coined it never predicted a constant barrage of hate 24/7, seven days a week. Our bodies aren't meant to handle this level of insults and criticism, which increases with more “friends” and platforms (Are they really friends if they're constantly criticizing you, bringing you down? It's overdue to call them “connections”).

At the same time, social media has added so much busyness to our lives that most of us don't have the time to constantly research and keep up with it; how to stop the nonstop notifications, some which are related to our jobs that exacerbate the anxiety. It seems like every day there's a new reason to notify you popping up from some platform, ridiculous time-wasting dots always in red to make you tend to them, like “you haven't posted in a while,” or “thought you might be interested to see what Joe has posted,” etc. Those notifications on Facebook used to be blue, but the company changed them to red when psychologists found that people were more likely to click on them if red. And piling on, we've all learned by now that even our real friends say hurtful things on social media that they would never dare say to our faces, popularizing the phrase “armchair warrior.”

It's turned politics from the days of friendly, fun, educational entertainment like William F. Buckley Jr.'s Firing Line to cancel culture and threats. Although we all know that most “threats” are merely words, not threats of violence, people have become so thin-skinned due to being in a constant state of anxiety from social media that they are no longer reacting rationally. The left is canceling conservatives for using words that clearly do not intend violence, but are meant metaphorically.



I happened to scroll through all 54 responses to a rather innocuous tweet by an elected official the other day, and was disturbed to see that every single one was rude. That elected official, along with others I've talked to about this, said he never reads any responses on social media — smart guy. But most of us don't have that discipline; our interactions have become part of our jobs or hobbies.

You take a perfectly normal person, who has lived an exemplary life, perhaps someone in Christian ministry, and put them on social media where they add a couple thousand connections. Having worked hard to keep their nose clean, they are unequipped to deal with the onslaught of personal insults. They can't keep up with filters, so when they wake up in the morning and check their phone, the first thing they see is hate. Then they are constantly pinged all day long with more hate. They can't sit and enjoy a dinner with friends because of the incessant interruptions. Many people don't set up filters since they are worried they might miss an important message from loved ones or work, and it's not that easy to set up those filters adequately. And it doesn't even have to be pure hate, even regular criticism 24/7 is demoralizing.

When the left complains about being triggered, and we mock them as snowflakes, they are merely reacting to this new phenomenon of 24/7 criticism by predictably blaming the right. Yet they conveniently omit the fact they are contributing to it with their increased level of viciousness.

Some attention is finally being given to certain unhealthy aspects, but not the hate directed at conservatives. Former Facebook employee and whistleblower Frances Haugen testified to Congress regarding Facebook algorithms that are biased toward inflammatory content. Instagram is triggering mental health problems among teenage girls with its airbrushed photos of too perfect looking young women. Another correlative problem is the constant messages from too many people, no one can keep up with the barrage (notice how many people announce they are no longer using Facebook Messenger), which drives up anxiety, constantly worrying about angry

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attacks when failing to respond to someone in a timely manner.

Unfortunately, a lot of this abuse flies under the radar, because not everyone is active on social media and sees the effects. Some of the older members of Congress aren't good at it, so they may not fully grasp the seriousness of the problem.

A new study came out which found that the average British man rates their mental health only a 6 out of 10, and feels down three times a week. And women are more likely to suffer mental health problems from social media than men.

There's been some awareness of how mental health has gotten worse due to people being locked down during COVID-19, which has hit on how the lack of physical human interaction hurts people, but it's mostly glossed over the fact that it's also because of increased social media exposure.

The end result is depression, anxiety and more serious mental health problems among everyone who isn't a Luddite. People now act out these manifestations by slamming the other political party — and sometimes even their own, because they've become super sensitive, manic and less able to control their emotions. It's considered socially acceptable to lash out in politics, but not in other ways such as screaming at your spouse, so it's an easy avenue for many to vent their mental illness, which in turn contributes to someone else developing mental illness.

Instead of shutting down the abuse, big tech shuts down viewpoints on the right. One elected official told me he thinks one solution is to stop investing in social media companies that do little about the abuse. Many of us don't invest in companies that promote a left-wing agenda, so why not expand that to companies that hurt mental health?

<https://townhall.com/columnists/rachelalexander/2022/05/09/social-media-is-destroying-mental-health-and-its-far-worse-than-we-think-n2606939>

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 HEBREWS BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	2	3	4
5	6 5:30 PM JR. CONFIRMATION	7	8 HEBREWS BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	9	10	11
12	13 5:30 PM JR. CONFIRMATION	14	15 HEBREWS BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	16	17	18
19 BURYING THE ALLELUIAS DINNER 1:30 PM	20 5:30 PM JR. CONFIRMATION	21	22 ASH WEDNESDAY W/ COMMUNION 7:30 PM	23	24	25
26 PLANNED PARENTHOOD PRAYER SERVICE 1:30 PM	27 5:30 PM JR. CONFIRMATION	28				

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	2	3	4
5	6 5:30 PM JR. CONFIRMATION	7 6:30 PM ELDERS MEETING	8 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	16	17	18
19	20 5:30 PM JR. CONFIRMATION	21 7:00 PM VOTERS MEETING	22 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	23	24	25

26	27	28	29	30	31	
	5:30 PM JR. CONFIRMATION		LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM			

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