

explain difficult words or concepts to the reader. Although he used the language of the Saxon court, which would be understood in both north and south Germany, he kept to simpler and more straightforward expressions that would be easily understood by all the people.

The translation of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek text of the Bible into the common language of the people was a major contribution of the Lutheran Reformation. God gave His written Word to all people. He intended all to read it, hear it, and take it to heart. Luther translated with the confidence that God's Word is powerful and sufficient to accomplish His good will in those who read and hear it. The Bible is clear enough for all to learn its doctrine and find joy in its teaching of Christ. By making the Bible—the source of all doctrine—available to the whole church, the errors and deceit of the pope's church and of other sects and deceivers are confounded. Where God's pure Word is, there is Christ, and there also is His holy Church.

At the heart and center of all of Scripture is Christ, His Godhead and humanity, His life and obedience to the law, His atoning death for us, His resurrection and ascension, and His treasures of Word and Sacraments. Luther wrote in the Preface to the Old Testament (AE 35.236),

I beg and really caution every pious Christian not to be offended by the simplicity of the language and stories frequently encountered there [in the Old Testament], but fully realize that, however simple they may seem, these are the very words, works, judgments, and deeds of the majesty, power, and wisdom of the most high God. For these are the Scriptures which make fools of all the wise and understanding, and are open only to the small and simple, as Christ says in Matthew 11[:25]. Therefore dismiss your own opinions and feelings, and think of the Scriptures as the loftiest and noblest of holy things, as the richest of mines which can never be sufficiently explored, in order that you may find that divine wisdom which God here lays before you in such simple guise as to quench all pride. Here you will find the swaddling cloths and the manger in which Christ lies, and to which the angel points the shepherds [Luke 2:12]. Simple and lowly are these swaddling cloths, but dear is the treasure, Christ, who lies in them.

FUTURE DATES (see wylcms.org for information)

Nov. 28: Panhandle Youth Gathering, 3:00 PM, Immanuel, Alliance
Dec. 27-28: Youth Retreat, St. Paul, Thermopolis
Jan. 2: Panhandle Family Gathering, 3:00 PM, Immanuel, Alliance
Feb. 11-12: TTGNJ Convocation, Ramkota, Casper (registration materials forthcoming)
Feb. 18-20: Youth Breakaway, St. Andrew's, Laramie

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around December 20 (January 2022 issue).



Wyoming District Round-Up

December 2021

District Website: www.wylcms.org

"Here I Stand" on the Word in My Community

"...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS..." (Eph. 1:16)

For **Rev. Ralph Jaeger** (emeritus, Laramie), health

For **Rev. Michael and Jennifer Wittrock** (emeritus) with health needs.

For **Rev. David Caspersen** (emeritus, Cheyenne) as he recovers from heart surgery.

For our active-duty chaplains, **Rev. Lynn Christensen (Japan)**, **Rev. Ryan Mills (Colorado)**, **Rev. Scott Shields (Alaska)**; and national guard chaplain **Rev. Gerald Heinecke (Prince of Peace, Buffalo)**.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

St. Paul's, Sidney is being served by **Rev. Ted Bourret (St. Paul's, Potter and Salem, Gurley)**.

Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon) is serving **Grace, Merri-man, NE** (Nebraska District) while it considers its future.

Trinity, Gillette is being served by **Rev. John Christensen (emeritus, Thermopolis)** during the vacancy.

Trinity, Cheyenne (Rev. John Preus) has decided to call a pastor to serve as assistant pastor and headmaster for the school.

Rev. Neil Carlson (Zion, Chappell and Trinity, South Divide) has returned a divine call to Our Redeemer, Immanuel, and St. John's Lutheran Churches in Herington, KS.

Here I Stand: That Christ Be Preeminent in Everything

Our district theme for these past three years was taken from Luther's confession before Emperor Charles V in April 1521, "Here I Stand." Like Luther, our consciences and our confession of faith are bound by the Word of God. We make that confession by what we say, how we live, what we suffer for, and in whose name we die. We make that confession in our churches, in our households, and in our communities—i.e. the Three Estates.

We have considered what that faithful confession of Christ looks like in these Three Estates, or areas of life. The church estate is where God's Word is preached for the salvation and comfort of sinners, where the Sacraments are administered according to His Word, and where Christians come together to receive these treasures, pray together, and care for one another. The household estate includes our marriages and children, the domestic life in which we care for our family, work, and manage our possessions. The civil estate is comprised of our various governments, our community, and the relations and culture maintained with our neighbors in the world.

In each of the Three Estates we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and God. Among the numerous Scriptures that teach us this truth is Colossians 1:18, “He is the beginning [or source], the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.” To be preeminent means to have the first place, to lead and rule, to be Lord and God. He is preeminent in everything, in all creation, in every nook and cranny of our lives, in the church and in our households and among the nations. But here is the problem. In our hearts (as we also see in the world around us) we so often relegate Christ to be Lord only in a small corner of our private life, but not in everything. Let’s test this problem.

Clearly, Jesus is Lord of the Church: “And he is the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18). But how is that Lordship exercised? Through His Word. But when His Word is denied or dismissed or explained away, Jesus is not regarded as preeminent. The Holy Spirit teaches us here that Jesus is truly the source and ground of our faith when His Word is delivered in pure doctrine and preaching and His sacraments are faithfully administered as He commands us. He is preeminent in our churches when we Christians repent of our sins and lead godly and virtuous lives, loving one another, forgiving one another. In this way we confess that Jesus is our God.

Jesus wants to be preeminent in our homes also. This happens when God’s Word is read, taught, and taken to heart and life within our homes. His Lordship is honored when we honor marriage, the headship of the husband and father, and the ordered harmony of wife and children with him, as He has commanded us. We honor and uphold His divine authority when we bring up our children and youth in His discipline and education. This is how we confess Christ in our homes.

And should Jesus Christ be preeminent also in our civil governments and communities? Yes, also in the civil estate: “in everything.” Here also Jesus Christ is Lord and God. He is preeminent in our communities and nation, just as He is in church and home. All cities and nations belong to Him and are under His divine authority. He commands that His moral justice and His truth prevail in all things, and He commands civil rulers to reward such justice and truth and punish those who violate it. It is His will that His compassion and mercy be given to those in need. We confess Jesus as Lord and God when we promote His justice and truth in our communities.

Our pastors will again preach the Word of Christ’s coming and birth to us this Advent season. He comes as our Savior from sin, as Judge of the living and the dead, as Preacher of righteousness, as the Fulfillment of all God’s gracious purposes for us. But He always comes and Lord and God:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, **that in everything he might be preeminent.** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:15–20)

The Lord God who rules in our hearts and minds also rules in our churches, in our homes, and in the world. He is the one who was incarnate and made flesh in the Virgin Mary, thus becoming “the firstborn of all creation.” He is the one who reconciled us and all His creation to the Father, “making peace by the blood of his cross.” He is the one who has established the church as His bride and His body through His resurrection, for He is “the firstborn from the dead.”

We confess that this Jesus, so small and lowly in the manger, is the omnipotent God, our Savior from sin and death. He claims every part of our life, every relationship, every possession, every aspiration. He claims our hearts and our minds, our bodies and our souls. In repentance and faith we too fall down and worship Him. In true godliness and virtue we hear and obey His Word, rejoicing.

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the Gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Colossians 1:21–23)

REFORMATION 500

As might be expected, the reforms introduced since 1517 caused unrest in Wittenberg while Luther was away at the Wartburg Castle. In early December, 1521, Luther made a secret journey to Wittenberg to see the situation for himself. He stayed with his closest colleague, Philip Melancthon, and was able to visit with many of his friends. By December 12 he had returned to the Wartburg.

While in Wittenberg Luther’s desire to translate the Bible into German took shape, with encouragement and resources given to him by his coworkers. It took Luther eleven weeks to translate the entire New Testament. His coworkers—especially Melancthon—then assisted him in the process of revising and editing this initial translation. The printing was done in parts and was completed by September 21, 1522. Luther immediately began work on the Old Testament, which progressed quickly at first, but then bogged down as the Hebrew text became more difficult and Luther’s other duties increased. The entire Bible, including the Apocrypha, was finally published in 1534. Luther and his colleagues continued to improve and update the translation throughout Luther’s lifetime. It was reprinted numerous times.

Although others had translated the Latin Vulgate into German before Luther, this translation was the first to use the Greek New Testament recently published by Erasmus (2nd edition, 1519). Luther’s Bible was a literary accomplishment, contributing to High German like the King James Bible has informed the English language. The translation was beautiful, for Luther had a keen ear for the sound and rhythm of his native tongue, as well as for the nuances of meaning conveyed by the choice of words and phrases.

Luther also provided prefaces for the Bible and for many of the books of the Bible. The printed editions included illustrations—woodcuts—that helped teach the doctrine of Scriptures. Luther added marginal notes to