

WYOMING DISTRICT

# ROUND-UP

Wyoming District—LCMS

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WINTER

2021



## *“Here I Stand” on the Word in the Community*

### *Here I Stand: God’s Word in My Community*

In 2021 we will continue the theme, “Here I Stand,” but focus on our confession and the life in our community, state, and nation. This sphere of life is called the Civil Estate, a “holy order and religious institution established by God” (AE 37.364) for the wellbeing of man. The Civil Estate is centered around government and community, justice and culture. We will give attention to the stand we Christians take outside of home and church in our community.

Like the other two estates (Church and Household), the Civil Estate was established by God in His Word. It is included in the blessing given to newly created man in Genesis 1:28: “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion. . .*” After man sinned (Genesis 3), and after God flooded the world to punish and destroy man’s ever-increasing wickedness (Genesis 6–8), God restored man’s place in the creation and gave him Government to carry out justice and restrain wickedness on earth. He said, “*Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image*” (Genesis 9:6).

This verse established, or reestablished, Government among men and gave it divine authority to carry out what we call “retributive justice.” We can note three things in Genesis 9:6. **First**, God has given man His own authority to carry out justice; this is government. This is what the Holy Spirit also teaches in Romans 13:1, “*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*”

**Second**, divine justice requires divine law and right judgment among men. Government is established to promote just laws and to judge man on the basis of these just laws. Therefore, according to Genesis 9:6, a violation of the law is judged by the authorized man (Government) and is rewarded with a punishment that matches or corresponds to the crime. The murderer is put to death. The thief must restore what was stolen and compensate for the violence done to his neighbor’s property. Just government rewards the one who does what is good but punishes the one who does evil. “*He is God’s minister for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer*” (Romans 13:4).

*There are many good to be defended, many neighbors to be loved, many virtues to be taught, many wrongs to be made right. The Christian takes an active part in resisting and repairing evil. He invests his life and possessions in promoting good and doing good for his neighbor.*

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**Third**, God demands justice and establishes Government among men because of how He made man. He made man in His own righteous image, in conformity to His own law. His law is eternally good as God is good. Man still bears something of the image of God, even as a sinner (Genesis 1:26, 9:6). God imprinted His law into man. God made man for conformity to the law. All law flows out of God Himself from eternity and is a part of His image. He loves the law. He is a just God who hates sin and loves righteousness. Conformity to the law is conformity to God's own nature. Violation of the law directly offends God and provokes His just wrath. Just and lawful Government expresses this aspect of the image of God in man and carries out the justice of God.

God instituted Government to uphold His law among men. Put another way, Government's purpose and duty is to promote and defend justice and peace. **Justice**: The just ruler rewards the one who does good, that is, the one who lives according to the law of God (Romans 13:3; 1 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 2:14). He likewise punishes the one who does evil, the one who violates the law of God (Romans 13:4; 1 Peter 2:14). Yet we know that God is both just and merciful. Justice and mercy belong together. Mercy also flows out of God Himself and is a divine response to justice. There can be no mercy if there is no standard of justice. Eternal justice and mercy meet in the person and work of Jesus, our God and Savior.

**Peace**: The good and faithful ruler also keeps peace in his land. He does this by defending his people from internal and external enemies. Peace is the condition in which citizens can freely live out their vocations according to God's law. Here is a list of the things God commands Government to do to maintain peace: It is to defend and promote the worship of the one true God. It is to enable and require morally upright lives in its citizens. It is to maintain common decency and promote a culture that values what is true, good and beautiful. It is to defend and promote lawful marriage, childbearing, and child-rearing. It is to defend every human life from conception to natural death. It is to defend and promote personal property ownership and inheritance, diligence in work, business and commerce, sound and useful education, medicine, the arts, and the like.

There are, of course, many factors which complicate questions of civil Government, justice, mercy, and peace, as we have learned this past year. There are many evils at work to corrupt just Government and pervert justice. There are many goods to be defended, many neighbors to loved, many virtues to be taught, many wrongs to be made right. The Christian takes an active part in resisting and repairing evil. He invests his life and possessions in promoting good and doing good for his neighbor.

Here I stand in my community! And in my state and nation! Just as Luther in 1521 made his bold confession before Emperor Charles V, the highest ruler of government, so we Christians also take our stand in our civil communities. God grant us a bold and faithful confession!

-Rev. John E. Hill

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*The Wyoming District Office Staff would like to express their sincere thanks to our congregations and its members of the Wyoming District. Your continued support of our pastors and our district is greatly appreciated. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe, and Blessed New Year!*



*President Hill, Jeff, and Tiffany*

I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 1 Corinthians 1:4



## Here I Stand before Kings and Princes (Psalm 119:46)

We are beginning to prepare for the Wyoming District Convention. Convention will be held on Thursday, May 6, 2021– Saturday, May 8, 2021 at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper, WY.

During the convention, there will be a slideshow in celebration of 50 years as the Wyoming District– LCMS.

Please pay special attention to the following deadlines.

1. District President and 1st Vice President Nominations are due to the Secretary (Rev. Paul Cain) no later than **January 6, 2021**.
2. Voting delegate names (pastoral and lay) are due to the Secretary (Rev. Paul Cain) no later than **February 6, 2021**. The registration forms for pastoral and lay delegates were mailed to all congregations in August. Please send the original copy to Rev. Cain and a copy to the District Office. If you need another registration form, please contact the District Office.
3. Reports and overtures are due to the President (Rev. John Hill) no later than **February 6, 2021**.
4. Nominations to other offices are due to the Secretary (Rev. Paul Cain) no later than **February 6, 2021**.
5. The Convention Workbook will be published no later than **March 25, 2021**. This will be published on the District website for you to print at your convenience or use electronically.



Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein, Wind River Lutheran Mission (Fort Washakie and Crowheart), was installed as Pastor at Mount Calvary in Dubois on December 6, 2020. We pray that God would bless his service to Mount Calvary.

We welcome Rev. Jonathan Durkop and his family to the District. He was installed as pastor of Zion, Douglas and Our Redeemer, Glenrock on October 25th. Pictured left are: (top row) Rev. Jon Olson, President John Hill, Rev. Dr. Christian Preus (bottom row) Rev. Gerald Heinecke, Rev. Jonathan Durkopp, and Rev. Andrew Richard. We pray that God would bless his ministry and the congregations he is serving.





### **REFORMATION 500: The Burning of the Bull**

The events leading up to Martin Luther's burning of the papal bull began with his posting of the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517. This momentous event soon embroiled Luther in the political and judicial branches of both the papacy and civil government. But when Emperor Maximilian died on January 12, 1519, the negotiations surrounding Luther's future were suspended until the election of Emperor Charles V on June 28. However, Luther's public debate with Johannes Eck in Leipzig in the summer of 1519 provoked new attacks upon him. The papacy especially perceived that he had questioned the papal claims of authority and much of its theological foundation. Luther was becoming notorious.

Early in 1520, Eck finally succeeded in persuading the papal curia at Rome to take action against Luther. Eck himself came to Rome and on May 2 delivered a draft of formal charges against Luther to Pope Leo X. A final version was dated June 15. The charges were published in a papal bull that was first posted on July 24 at St. Peter's Basilica and at the papal chancellery in Rome.

A bull is a formal papal letter sealed with a *bulia*, a formal papal seal. This bull, entitled *Exsurge Domine* ("Arise, O Lord" from Psalm 74:22), threatened Luther and his supporters with excommunication. It quoted 41 supposedly heretical statements published by Luther on such subjects as penance, faith, the Lord's Supper, indulgences, excommunication, the office of the keys, the pope, good works, and free will. The bull made no attempt to refute Luther's statements from Holy Scripture. According to the bull, all Christians were to condemn these errors. Within 60 days of the publication of the bull, Luther was to stop preaching, writing, and defending his statements, all his books were to be burned, and he was to recant (repudiate or renounce) his errors. He was to be excommunicated if he had not recanted after the 60 days. He was to be proclaimed and treated as a notorious and stubborn heretic and made an outlaw by the civil rulers.

The bull did not officially go into effect until it was delivered to Wittenberg. As the summer of 1520 wore on, Luther and his protector, Duke Frederick the Wise, learned of the actions being taken against him.

By August they knew the bull had been issued, and plans were being made to counter it. Eck posted the bull in parts of Germany in late September. A copy finally arrived in Wittenberg by courier on October 10.

In the weeks that followed, Luther wrote "The Freedom of a Christian," accompanied by a friendly letter to Pope Leo X. At the same time, he wrote and published a fiery treatise, "Against the Execrable Bull of the Antichrist." He stated, "It is impossible for anyone who favors this bull and does not oppose it to be saved." He was untroubled by the threat of the papal excommunication, "By God's grace I am free; I cannot and will not let anything comfort me or dismay me. I well know where my comfort is to be found; which is quite certain to me before men or devil" (Brecht I.411). In a letter to Duke John Frederick, dated October 30, 1520, he wrote: "As the bull has in no way frightened me, I intend to preach, lecture, and write in spite of it" (AE 48.183). At the beginning of December he began work, by Duke Frederick's request, on the "Defense and Explanation of All the Articles," which was published in the middle of January 1521.

The papal bull had ordered Luther's writings to be burned. In response to such burnings in Cologne and Mainz, the Wittenberg University faculty organized a book burning on December 10, just outside the Elster Gate of Wittenberg. The 60 days had expired. Of particular note, they burned editions of canon (or church) law, by which the papacy retained its power over the church. Last of all, Luther burned a printed copy of the papal bull, *Exsurge Domine*, speaking these words, "Because you have confounded the truth of God, today the Lord confounds you. Into the fire with you!" (Brecht I.424). With this ceremonial act, Luther publicly acknowledged the break between himself and the papal church.

This brief event served as a confession and testimony to Luther's rejection of the pope's church and to his defense of the pure doctrine of Scriptures. In "Why the Books of the Pope and His Disciples Were Burned," published at the end of December, Luther explained that burning "poisonous evil books" was an apostolic tradition (Acts 19:19). He added three vocational reasons why he should destroy these writings, "I am, however unworthy, a baptized Christian, in addition a sworn doctor [teacher!] of Holy Scriptures, and beyond that a preacher each weekday whose duty it is on account of his name, station, oath, and office, to destroy or at least to ward off false, corrupt, unchristian doctrine." He then attacked the pope's canon law in 30 brief theses, identifying this thesis as the "main article": "No one on earth can judge the pope. Also, no one can judge his decision.

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# Spotlight on Education: Church Work Students

## 1. What year are you in your course of study?

I am a first year seminarian studying for my Master of Divinity.

## 2. Tell us where you're from and about your home church.

Most recently, I am from Laramie, WY, but I grew up all over the northern Midwest. I was born in Racine, WI (age 0-2 1/2), lived in East Grand Forks (age 2 1/2-11), MN, and also in Mayville, North Dakota (age 11-16). From 16-20, I was mostly in Berlin, Germany. I consider Laramie (age 20-24) more of my home than anywhere else. My home church is St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Laramie, WY.

## 3. Tell us a little bit about your family.

My father and mother are Rolf and Dorothy Preus. My siblings are Daniel, David, Paul, John, Mark, Stephen, Christian, Andrew, James, Mary, and Samuel. My wife's name is Taitlyn and we have one son, Moses (1.5) and a daughter, Naomi (5 months).

## 4. How did your home church encourage you in your faith and considering church work?

The biggest influence that any of my family members have had on me is my father and my brothers, Mark and Samuel. My dad was a great father and pastor to me growing up. I think being a pastor's kid is unique, because my dad was my head, but my pastor was there to serve me. Since these two people were the same man, I'm sure some children who have been in my position could begin to misunderstand the role of either vocation. For me and my siblings, our father was wise. His discipline of us was obviously merited, but he was also compassionate. All of my siblings are Christians married to Christians. By God's grace, our father raised us to marry Christians. My brother, Mark, is my pastor in Laramie. Time and time again, I would see Mark working around the clock and still finding time to be a good husband, father, and host to many parishioners and students. Mark loves his neighbor so much. I have learned from him how to not let my outgoing personality become a distraction. He and I are similar in a lot of ways, but his age and experience give him wisdom and insight that I do not have. Mark's preaching and Bible studies also encouraged me and built me up. Finally, my brother and best friend Samuel, has encouraged me to be a Christian and a pastor. Samuel is my closest brother in age and we grew up together. Our friendship has been based on love, forgiveness, and encouragement. His interest in talking theology and seeking Christian virtue has helped shape my interests as well. Samuel has always told me that I would make a good pastor and has been kind and generous in what he has seen in my pastoral qualities.

## 5. What do you enjoy about seminary life?

I enjoy the social part of seminary very much. I love talking theology and thinking about theology in ways in which I have not been forced to think about it before. Although Covid and masks seem to be what most everyone is talking about everywhere, my friends and I talk a lot about lectures from our various professors. We also talk about assigned readings and papers that we are working on. Dr. David Scaer goes after me a lot, because of my last name. It is fun, because I have gotten used to dishing it back to him (in a respectful way, of course). Dr. Scaer forces me to think about why I believe what I believe. He despises lazy theologizing. Although I do not always understand what he is trying to get at, his teaching style always challenges me to think harder about my theological beliefs and learn to back them up with the Bible. Dr. Koontz is not only a remarkably knowledgeable historian, but he is a wise and thoughtful theologian. His lectures have taught me more than any other professor's lectures. I have also had him for more classes than any other professor. A second year seminarian I am friends with put it well; "Dr. Koontz never has a bad lecture. No, better yet, Dr. Koontz always has amazing lectures." I am so thankful to be at the seminary, where Taitlyn and I are making many friends and learning so much.



(Continued from page 4)

Rather, he is supposed to judge all people on earth" (AE 31.386f). He explained, "If this article stands, then Christ and his Word are defeated. But if it does not stand, then the whole canon law, together with the pope and see, is defeated" (387). The pure doctrine of Holy Scriptures, however, welcomes such scrutiny and judgment, "Now it is always true that truth and righteousness do not shun judgment, yes, [they] love nothing more than light and judgment, [and] gladly permit themselves to be examined and tried" (395).

### THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around January 20 (February 2021 issue).

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

For **Rev. Vernon Boehlke** (emeritus, Riverton) as he undergoes a new round of treatments for cancer.

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

For pastors and members of Wyoming District congregations that are recovering from COVID.

For **Jennifer Wittrock** (wife of emeritus Rev. Michael Wittrock), recently diagnosed with cancer.

For **Rev. George Naylor** (Mount Calvary, Bayard and St. James, Scottsbluff) as he recovers from COVID at home.

### PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

**St. Paul's, Sidney**, is being served by **Rev. Allen Strawn, St. Paul's, Bridgeport** during the vacancy. The congregation is holding discussions with Salem, Gurley and St. Paul's, Potter (Rev. Ted Bourret) about forming a multi-point parish.

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

**Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein (Wind River Lutheran Mission, Fort Washakie and Crowheart)** was installed as pastor of Mount Calvary, Dubois on December 6. He now serves both Mount Calvary and the WRLM in a parish agreement.

**St. John's, Lovell** has scheduled a call meeting for January 10. The congregation is being served by **Rev. Jais Tinglund (Zion, Emblem and Grace, Greybull)**.

**Trinity, Riverton (Rev. Mark Mumme)** has scheduled a call meeting for January 31 to call an assistant pastor/head teacher.

**Immanuel, Alliance (Rev. Richard Mueller)** has asked for a call list for an assistant pastor/headmaster.

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Rev. Andrew Richard, Headmaster, Mount Hope Lutheran School, organized and hosted the annual teachers conference for 2020. Below is a brief summary of the conference.

On October 4-6, the teachers of the district enjoyed presentations from Dr. Craig Gibson at their annual Fall Teachers' Conference, hosted at Mount Hope Lutheran Church and School. Dr. Gibson is a professor of Classics and Chair of the Classics department at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Greek and Roman oratory and rhetoric, ancient scholarship, and later Greek literature are his main areas of expertise. His current research focuses on later Greek rhetorical education. Dr. Gibson present on the Progymnasmata, a set of ancient Greek and Roman rhetorical exercises. Teachers today might find them most useful in teaching English composition, though the tie to rhetorical study also makes them good preparation for public speaking. The teachers enjoyed seven sessions with Dr. Gibson as he walked through various exercises of the Progymnasmata, explained them, demonstrated them, and worked in classical and biblical examples. There was much positive feedback, and we look forward to our next opportunity to gather as teachers and learn together.

### **Report on Church Worker Student Debt:**

Our churches require significant education for our called church workers (namely pastors and teachers), and this education is not without cost. On Monday, October 5, 2020, attendees (both ordained and commissioned) at the 2020 Fall Pastor/Teacher Conference in Casper, WY were distributed a survey regarding Student Loan Debt. There were 49 completed surveys returned, with over 28% of respondents reporting some level of student debt. The surveys reported debt ranging from \$6,900-\$79,085, totaling nearly \$400,000 across the district. Fewer than 10% of surveys indicated that their parish was aware of their student debt load, with no indications of any parish assistance towards debt reduction. Congregations have the responsibility to reach out to the pastors and teachers they have called, and to have open, honest, and ongoing discussions with them, to ensure that they are being adequately compensated for their labors, and that they are appropriately being cared for.

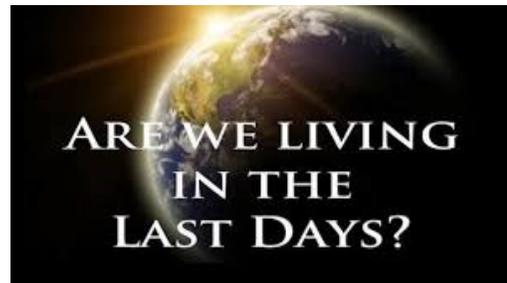
-John Schmall, Lay Delegate  
Board of Directors- WY District



*Wyoming District—LCMS*  
*Tell the Good News About JESUS*  
*2021 Convocation*

*February 5-6, 2021*

The Last Days & The Last Day:  
Living in these last days by  
faith in Jesus



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## **Friday and Saturday Convocation Speaker**

*Rev. Brent Kuhlman*

## **Friday Night Banquet Speaker**

*Rev. President John Hill*

**Convocation Registration Deadline: January 28th**

\$20 adult      \$10 college students

\$5 youth (10+)

**Friday Night Banquet Cost:**

\$20—age 10 and older

*Free—9 & under*

Registration available at [www.wylcms.org/2021ttgnaj](http://www.wylcms.org/2021ttgnaj)  
(Downloadable and Online Registration available)