

WYOMING DISTRICT

ROUND- UP

Wyoming District—LCMS
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FALL 2022

The Christian in Community: All the Families of the Earth Shall Be Blessed

Communities have a beginning and an ending. This is not always a result of sin. For example, in Genesis 2, God commands the man who is to be married to “leave his father and mother” in order to be joined into a new marriage and family. The man leaves his old family and his subordination to father and mother in order to become the head of his wife and of the family that God provides.

This was also God’s command when He chose Abraham to be the father of a new community (Genesis 12:1–8). God promised Abraham a Son, a Seed who would obtain the eternal blessing of justification by grace through faith in Himself for all the families of the earth. God told him to depart from one community to form a new community: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.”

God severed Abraham from his old community of land and tribe and family to form a new community, the church of the Old Testament. He removed Abraham and Sarah from the community “where they served other gods” (Joshua 24:2). He commanded Abraham to travel a thousand miles to a land where He would build a people dedicated to the true God alone. Abraham was the father of a new community, a community of faith in the promised Seed (Christ). “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

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This is what God does in our baptism. He separates us from the community of unbelievers. He commands us to “renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways.” He purges us from the filth of our sin by the blood of Christ and renders us “holy and without blemish” before Him (Ephesians 5:27).

And by this baptism He adopts us by grace into His own family as His sons and daughters. He joins us to Christian brothers and sisters in Christ. He creates us to be “a chosen nation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession” (1 Peter 2:9). As He took Abraham from an ungodly community and made him into a people set apart for the triune God, holy before Him, holy in divine worship, holy in confession and virtues and deeds, so He does with us in our baptism.

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.... So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:13, 19–22).

THANK YOU to all the wonderful congregations and people who sent me birthday cards, email posts, letters, and text messages on the occasion of my 80th birthday. Your remembrances were very thoughtful and made getting older a bit easier. The very kind and generous words and sentiments expressed in my regard in the cards and greetings, though mostly pleasant exaggerations, were also greatly appreciated and received with great joy and thanksgiving. It has been an honor to serve the congregations and the great people of the Wyoming District over the years and your friendship and love is a treasure to me and my wife, Betty. Thank you sincerely, and God's continued rich blessings to you all.

*Thank
You*

Dr. Ron M. Garwood



TELL THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS

February 10-11, 2022

Theme: The St. Peter Option: Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land

Speaker: Rev. Peter Bender

What troubles you as a Christian these days? What causes you to fear for the future? What is our response to LGBTQ theology, transgenderism, Woke ideology, cancel culture, global climate change, progressivism, totalitarianism, the loss of freedom, Christian persecution, and a host of other threats? This year's convocation speaker will engage themes from the blessed apostle St. Peter in addressing how we are called to confess and live joyfully and without fear as Christian pilgrims in a world of darkness and hostility toward the Christian faith. Peter says, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15 NKJV).

"The St. Peter Option" will explore how we are called to live in this vale of tears. Peter emphasizes that our calling in this world is always to trust in Christ and to sing the praises of our God without despair, even as we learn His Word deeply so that we might give a defense of our faith. Peter's opening doxology in his first epistle serves as the foundation for living as Christian pilgrims: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials ... yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:3-9 NKJV).

Registration materials will be sent to congregations and posted on the website in December. Online registration materials will be available at www.wylcms.org/ttgnaj



REFORMATION 500

Martin Luther wrote the treatise, “The Estate of Marriage” (AE 45.17–49), in 1522 to address the ills of his day in marriage and household. We considered the first of its three parts in August, regarding who may marry another person, and the second in September, who may get divorced. (Please see the July and August 2022 editions of the Roundup for these summaries.)

Luther proceeds, “In the third part, in order that we may say something about the estate of marriage which will be conducive toward the soul’s salvation, we shall now consider how to live a Christian and godly life in that estate” (35). He passes quickly over the matter of fulfilling the conjugal duty (1 Corinthians 7:9) to make this observation, more true today than it was even in Luther’s day: “What we would speak most of is the fact that the estate of marriage has universally fallen into such awful disrepute” (36). He condemns pagan literature that treats women and marriage as “a necessary evil.” “These are the words of blind heathen, who are ignorant of the fact that man and woman are God’s creation. They blaspheme his work, as if man and woman just came into being spontaneously” (36). You see the echo of pagan errors in our society’s evolution-based doctrine of marriage as a man-made idea.

In Luther’s day the despising of marriage and household took place not only by men speaking evil of their wives or by women grumbling and complaining about their husbands, but also by parents who taught their children to avoid marriage by enticing them into the unmarried priesthood or nunnery. Yet our society does even worse, if possible, by teaching our children to prioritize college, career, material prosperity, and a self-pleasing lifestyle over marriage. Young women choose college and career over marriage and motherhood. Young men choose gaming, pornography, and the juvenile entertainment lifestyle, instead of accepting God’s purpose for their lives in the manhood of marriage and fatherhood. Marriage is viewed as merely one lifestyle option among many, to be chosen only for personal pleasure and fulfillment.

Luther’s assessment of the divine penalty of God’s wrath upon such evils in the pagan world is now visited upon our society also:

Since God had to suffer such disdain of his work from the pagans, he therefore also gave them their reward, of which Paul writes in Romans 1:24–28, and allowed them to fall into immorality and a stream of uncleanness until they henceforth carnally abused not women but boys and dumb beasts. Even their women carnally abused themselves and each other. Because they blasphemed the work of God, he gave them up to a base mind, of which the books of the pagans are full, most shamelessly crammed full. (37)

We should observe that “the books of the pagans” for us are now the television shows, movies, websites, social media, novels, and even news and government education, all of which are “most shamefully crammed full” of godless and antichristian doctrine and temptation. To all these we apply Luther’s advice: “For this reason young men [and women] should be on their guard when they read pagan books and hear the common complaints about marriage, lest they inhale poison” (37).

Against such evils Luther sets the divine doctrine of God’s Word, which cleanses out the evil and establishes the good for our lives. He writes,

In order that we may not proceed as blindly, but rather conduct ourselves in a Christian manner, hold fast first of all to this, that man and woman are the work of God. Keep a tight rein on your heart and your lips; do not criticize his work, or call that evil which he himself has called good. He knows better than you yourself what is good and to your benefit, as he says in Genesis 2:18, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” There you see that he calls the woman good, a helper. (37)

Luther contrasts the world’s folly with God’s wisdom. “The world says of marriage, ‘Brief is the joy, lasting the bitterness’” (38). “But he who recognizes the estate of marriage will find therein delight, love, and joy without end; as Solomon says, ‘He who finds a wife finds a good thing,’ etc. [Proverbs 18:22]” (38). Luther continues,

Now the ones who recognize the estate of marriage are those who firmly believe that God himself instituted it, brought husband and wife together, and ordained that they should beget children and care for them. For this they have God’s Word, Genesis 1:28, and they can be certain that he does not lie. They can therefore also be certain that the estate of marriage and everything that goes with it in the way of

conduct, works, and suffering is pleasing to God. (38)

Marriage, then, is God's work, and all that it is in it. Those who live with such faith "have peace in grief, joy in the midst of bitterness, happiness in the midst of tribulations, as the martyrs have in suffering" (39). "Nothing is so bad, not even death itself, but what it becomes sweet and tolerable if only I know and am certain that it is pleasing to God. Then there follows immediately that of which Solomon speaks, 'He obtains favor from the Lord' [Prov. 18:22]" (39).

One can criticize Luther's comments by pointing out that he himself has avoided marriage and all its troubles (see page 43). True, Luther did not get married until 1525, three years after this treatise. Yet he teaches not from experience but from Holy Scriptures. See how he again contrasts the thoughts of natural reason with the prayers of the Christian. "That clever harlot, our natural reason," says,

"Alas, must I rock the baby, wash its diapers, make its bed, smell its stench, stay up nights with it, take care of it when it cries, heal its rashes and sores, and on top of that care for my wife, provide for her, labor at my trade, take care of this and take care of that, do this and do that, endure this and endure that, and whatever else of bitterness and drudgery married life involves? What, should I make such a prisoner of myself? O, you poor, wretched fellow, have you taken a wife? Fie, fie upon such wretchedness and bitterness! It is better to remain free and lead a peaceful, carefree life." (39)

But the Christian faith looks at all these things and sees "that they are all adorned with divine approval as with the costliest gold and jewels" (39). And so the Christian man prays,

"O God, because I am certain that thou hast created me as a man and hast from my body begotten this child, I also know for a certainty that it meets with thy perfect pleasure. I confess to thee that I am not worthy to rock the little babe or wash its diapers, or to be entrusted with the care of the child and its mother. How is it that I, without any merit, have come to this distinction of being certain that I am serving thy creature and thy most precious will? O how gladly will I do so, though the duties should be even more insignificant and despised. Neither frost nor heat, neither drudgery nor labor, will distress or dissuade me, for I am certain that it is thus pleasing in thy sight." (39–40)

Likewise Luther reminds the wife that "as she suckles the child, rocks and bathes it, and cares for it in other ways . . . that these are truly golden and noble works" (40). And he has this to say to the woman who is in labor,

"Dear Grete, remember that you are a woman, and this work of God in you is pleasing to him. Trust joyfully in his will, and let him have his way with you. Work with all your might to bring forth the child. Should it mean your death, then depart happily, for you will die in a noble deed and in subservience to God. If you were not a woman you should now wish to be one for the sake of this very work alone, that you might thus gloriously suffer and even die in the performance of God's work and will. For here you have the word of God, who so created you and implanted within you this extremity." (40)

Luther says to the father who "washes the diapers and performs some other mean [lowly] task for his child" and then is mocked as a "househusband" that he is in fact doing what belongs to the Christian faith. "God, with all his angels and creatures, is smiling—not because that father is washing diapers, but because he is doing so in Christian faith" (40).

By these descriptions Luther teaches us that in the marriage estate "we find God's word and good pleasure, by which all the works, conduct, and sufferings of that estate become holy, godly, and precious so that Solomon even congratulates such a man and says in Proverbs 5:18, 'Rejoice in the wife of your youth,' and again in Ecclesiastes 9:9, 'Enjoy life with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life'" (41). He also gives this wise and Biblical advice for those who are married, "No one can have real happiness in marriage who does not recognize in firm faith that this estate together with all its works, however insignificant, is pleasing to God and precious in his sight" (42). It is in the marriage estate "that husband and wife cherish one another, become one, serve one another, and other attendant blessings" (43).

Luther also observes, in contrast, what is still true today, that fornication "destroys not only the soul but also the body, property, honor, and family as well" (43). "The estate of marriage, however, redounds to the benefit not alone of the body, property, honor, and soul of an individual, but also the benefit of whole cities and countries" (44).

After further urging marriage upon young people as they enter adulthood, Luther then comes to the crowning argument,

But the greatest good in married life, that which makes all suffering and labor worth while, is that God grants offspring and commands that they be brought up to worship and serve him. In all the world this is the noblest and most precious work, because to God there can be nothing dearer than the salvation of souls. (46)

He continues,

God has entrusted to [the marriage estate's] bosom souls begotten of its own body, on whom it can lavish all manner of Christian works. Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal. (46)

Finally, Luther addresses "one big, strong, objection" to the marriage of young adults (he recommends marrying young, such as age 20 for men and 18 for women). The objection is this,

Yes, they say, it would be a fine thing to be married, but how will I support myself? I have nothing; take a wife and live on that, etc. Undoubtedly, this is the greatest obstacle to marriage; it is this above all which prevents and breaks up marriage and is the chief excuse for fornication. What shall I say to this objection? It shows lack of faith and doubt of God's goodness and truth. It is no wonder that where faith is lacking, nothing but fornication and all manner of misfortune follow. (47)

He suggests that avoiding marriage is avoiding work, for "in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). He adds,

He who would enter wedlock as a Christian must not be ashamed of being poor and despised, and doing insignificant work. He should take satisfaction in this: first, that his status and occupation are pleasing to God; second, that God will most certainly provide for him if only he does his job to the best of his ability. (47-48)

To the young married couple struggling to care for children and make ends meet, Luther summarizes,

"Take satisfaction in the fact the [God] has granted you a Christian marriage, and know that he will exalt you there; and be thankful for his gifts and favors" (49).

Future Dates (see wylcms.org for information)

Pastors and Teachers Conferences: October 2-5, Mount Hope, Casper
St. Andrew's Youth Breakaway (Jr. High): November 11-13, St. Andrew's, Laramie
TTGNAJ Convocation: February 10-11, 2023, Ramkota, Casper

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations after October 20 (November 2022 issue)

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

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

For our active-duty chaplain, **Rev. Ryan Mills (Colorado)**

For **Rev. Neil Carlson (Zion, Chappell and Trinity, South Divide)** continues his rehabilitation.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

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

Trinity, Gillette (served by **Rev. Jon Olson** after September 25) called **Rev. Zachary Viggers** (Alta, Iowa) on September 18.

Prince of Peace, Buffalo (served by **Rev. Rene Castellero, Immanuel, Sheridan**) continues in the pre-call process.

Bethel, Lander (served by **Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein, Winder River Lutheran Mission, Ft. Washakie and Mount Calvary, Dubois**) is preparing to call a pastor.

Our Savior's, Chadron (served by **Rev. Dan Praeuner, emeritus**) continues in the call process.

Trinity, Riverton (Rev. Mark Mumme): Another call list is being built for an assistant pastor/head teacher.

Immanuel, Burns, and St. John's, Kimball are being served in their vacancy by **Rev. Andrew Dimit (King of Glory, Cheyenne, assistant pastor)** with assistance from the pastors of the High Plains Circuit.

Rev. Marcus Baikie (Our Savior's, Cheyenne) is considering a call to a parish in Missouri.



The St. Andrew's Youth Breakaway will be held on November 11-12, 2022 at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus in Laramie, WY. This is open to all Wyoming District youth in grades 5th through 8th. Registration materials will be published to the District's Facebook page in October when they are made available. If you have any questions regarding this year's youth breakaway, please contact Rev. Mark Preus or email standysouthbreakaway@gmail.com

Synod Convention Deadlines

October 29, 2022: Deadline to submit nominations for Synod Secretary and Convention-Elected Boards and Commissions.

Until October 29, 2022: Circuit Forums meet to elect voting delegates to the Synod Convention. Before they meet, congregations need to select representation and may make nominations or submit overtures.

Information regarding Synod Convention can be found at www.lcms.org/convention



Shown left, Mr. Michael Hill was installed as the first tutor for St. Andrew's Lutheran School on September 4th.

St. Andrew's Lutheran School started in September 2022 and will provide a Christian education in a classical setting to students grades 1st through 12th.

For questions about the school or to inquire about classes, please contact Rev. Mark Preus or Mr. Michael Hill.