

Luther also addresses the situation in which the two parties in the marriage cannot get along “for some reason other than the matter of conjugal duty.” He gives the example from Ecclesiastes 7:26 of “a woman more bitter than death,” or “a rude, brutal, and unbearable husband.” His counsel is this: “In addition to these three grounds for divorce there is one more which would justify the sundering of husband and wife, but only in such a way that they must both refrain from remarrying or else become reconciled” (34). Here Luther quotes 1 Corinthians 7:10–11: “Not I but the Lord gives charge to the married that the wife should not separate from her husband. But if she does, let her remain single, or else be reconciled to her husband. Likewise, the husband should not divorce his wife.”

But the command not to remarry in this situation is firm, “for the rest of his days” (35). And Luther urges each party in a difficult marriage to bear with each other. “That would doubtless be a wonderfully blessed cross and a right way to heaven” (34). For “he is under obligation to endure evil or to be released from his cross only by God” (35).

**A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT:** If you find that Luther’s teaching here from Holy Scripture raises doubts or questions regarding your marriage or divorce, or of others close to you, please go and visit with your pastor about it. For many years now the devil has been assaulting marriage through no-fault divorce, same-sex “marriage”, and the civil government’s abdication of its duty to defend and promote marriage as God ordained it. Our churches today must repent of our own previous laxity and failures regarding the marriage of our members and must begin the return to sound and faithful practice regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. God grant us His grace in this endeavor!

#### **FUTURE DATES (see [wylcms.org](http://wylcms.org) for information)**

October 2-4: Teachers Conference, Mount Hope, Casper  
October 3-5: Fall Pastors Conference, Mount Hope, Casper  
November 11-13: St. Andrew’s Youth Breakaway 5-8 grades, Laramie  
February 10-11, 2023: TTGNAJ Convocation, Ramkota, Casper

#### **THE NEXT ROUNDUP**

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around September 20 (October 2022 issue).



## ***Wyoming District Round-Up***

September 2022

*District Website: [www.wylcms.org](http://www.wylcms.org)*

### **“...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 at home and has been able to attend church at both congregations. Thanks be to God! Medical updates can be found linked from the [wylcms.org](http://wylcms.org) home page.

### **PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS**

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

**Trinity, Gillette** served by **Rev. John Christensen (emeritus, Thermopolis)** called **Rev. Clint Stark (Texas)** on June 19, and he has returned the call. The next call meeting is scheduled for September 18.

**Rev. Kenneth Mars** will be installed at **Christ the King, Cody** on August 28 at 4:30 PM.

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

**Bethel, Lander** (served by **Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein, Wind River Lutheran Mission, Ft. Washakie and Mt. Calvary, Dubois**) held its first pre-call meeting July 13

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

**Trinity, Riverton (Rev. Mark Mumme):** **Rev. Anthony Dodgers** (Iowa District East) returned the call as Assistant Pastor and 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.

### **The Christian in Community**

Next Month!

## **REFORMATION 500**

Martin Luther's "The Estate of Marriage" (AE 45.17–49), published in 1522, contains three parts. We considered the first of three parts, regarding who may marry another person, in August (see the August 2022 Roundup).

In the second part Luther discusses "which persons may be divorced" (30ff). This was a hard subject in Luther's day. It is a far harder topic for us today for these reasons: Many of our own church members are divorced, and many of these divorces do not honor God's Word regarding divorce. Furthermore, we are now living in a society with a far different understanding of marriage: where marriage came from; who may marry whom; how long should a marriage continue; what is marriage for; etc. In addition, we have been living with divorce all around us for so long that most of us have no clear idea what God actually said and intended in His Word regarding divorce.

Luther states, "I know of three grounds for divorce." The first ground was covered in the first part, "the situation in which the husband or wife is not equipped for marriage because of bodily or natural deficiencies of any sort" (30). This particular ground for divorce is based upon the inability of one of the parties to carry out the most basic of marital duties and purposes, thus nullifying God's Word and Institution. Again, because the chemical and physical mutilation of our society's children (and adults) is becoming so common in so-called "gender reassignment" evils, we Christians will discover much sad and grievous damage to many of these children when they become adults, wish to have marriage and children, and discover that they cannot because of their mutilation. They will not be fit for marriage.

"The second ground is adultery" (30). This is to say that God permits (though does not require) divorce when the other spouse has been unchaste: "He who divorces his wife on account of [her] unchastity and then marries another does not commit adultery" (31). Luther had quoted Jesus in Matthew 19:3–9:

"Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one'? What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" He said to them, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you:

whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

Luther here observes that when Moses permitted divorce in the Old Testament, this permission was granted to unbelievers as an alternative preferable to murder or other severe harm. But Luther teaches us that Christ does not permit divorce to Christians except in the cases specifically taught in Scripture (as here in Matthew 19). And even when the spouse has been adulterous, the other member in the marriage may choose to admonish the adulterer and reconcile rather than divorce.

But Luther adds this warning: "But a public divorce, whereby one [the innocent party] is enabled to remarry, must take place through the investigation and decision of the civil authority so that the adultery may be manifest to all—or, if the civil authority refuses to act, with the knowledge of the congregation, again in order that it may not be left to each one to allege anything he pleases as a ground for divorce" (32). Because our civil authorities have abdicated this responsibility, congregations must assume these duties for their own members.

The third ground for divorce is what we would today call desertion or separation, the case "in which one of the parties deprives and avoids the other, refusing to fulfil the conjugal duty or to live with the other person" (33). Luther clearly emphasizes that the refusal to do the conjugal duty tempts the deprived party to the sin of unchastity. Before divorcing, the deprived party should admonish and warn the one who refuses "two or three times" and then inform others so that this egregious perversion of marriage may be rebuked before the congregation. If this seems harsh to us, we must acknowledge that Luther is guided by Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 7:4–5, "The husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does; likewise the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does. Do not deprive each other, except by agreement, etc." (34).

What if the husband or wife has become an invalid and is unable to fulfill the conjugal duty? They are not to divorce. "Let him serve the Lord in the person of the invalid and await His good pleasure. . . Blessed and twice blessed are you when you recognize such a gift of grace and therefore serve your invalid wife for God's sake" (35).