

added by man to embellish baptism. For most assuredly baptism can be performed without all these, and they are not the sort of devices and practices from which the devil shrinks or flees" (102).

Most, though not all, of these practices have been left out of our rite, as Luther suggested, and as his later reforms of the rite show. But we often retain other elements, such as, "Depart thou unclean spirit and give room to the Holy Spirit" (96). We pray the Lord's Prayer, renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways, and confess the Apostles' Creed.

Luther translated the Baptism rite into German with this exhortation to the pastor, parents, sponsors, and witnesses: "In all Christian earnestness I would ask all those who administer baptism, who hold the children, or witness it, to take this wonderful work to heart in all its seriousness. For here, in the words of these prayers, you hear how meekly and earnestly the Christian church concerns itself about the little child and how it confesses before God in plain undoubting words that he is possessed by the devil and is a child of sin and wrath, and prays very diligently for aid and grace through baptism that he may become a child of God" (101).

Having celebrated the Baptism of Our Lord in Epiphany and the Temptation of our Lord at the beginning of Lent, it is appropriate for us this Lenten season to hear how Baptism enrolls us into a great spiritual warfare. "Remember, therefore, that it is no joke to take sides against the devil and not only to drive him away from the little child, but to burden the child with such a mighty and lifelong enemy. Remember, too, that it is very necessary to aid the poor child with all your heart and strong faith, earnestly to intercede for him that God, in accordance with this prayer, would not only free him from the power of the devil, but also strengthen him, so that he may nobly resist the devil, in life and death. And I suspect that people turn out so badly after baptism because our concern for them has been so cold and careless; we, at their baptism, interceded for them without zeal" (102).

He concluded with the highest praise of Baptism. God "himself calls it a new birth by which we are being freed from all the devil's tyranny, loosed from sin, death, and hell, and become children of life, heirs of all the gifts of God, God's own children, and brethren of Christ. Ah, dear Christians, let us not value and administer this unspeakable gift so indolently [lazily] and indifferently; for baptism is our only comfort and admits [us] to every blessing of God and to the communion of all the saints. To this may God help us. Amen" (103).

FUTURE DATES (see wylcms.org for information)

June 5-6: Luther Classical College Christian Culture Conference, Casper

June 8-10: Pastors Wives Retreat, C'Mon Inn, Casper

June 12-16: Continuing Education for Pastors, Fort Robinson, NE

June 22-24: Uinta County Family Retreat

July 11-13: Homeschool Retreat, Casper Mountain

July 28-30: Fathers Sons Retreat

July 2-Aug. 3: Synod Convention, Milwaukee, WI

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around March 20 (April/Spring 2023 issue).



Wyoming District Round-Up

March 2023

District Website: 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)**

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

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

Prince of Peace, Buffalo (served by **Rev. Rene Castellero, Im-**
manuel, Sheridan) called **Rev. Kurt Cockran**, who returned the call.

Bethel, Lander (served by **Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein, Wind**
River Lutheran Mission, Ft. Washakie and Mt. Calvary, Dubois) called
Rev. Travis Berg (Trinity, Cheyenne). He has accepted the call and will
be installed June 25, after the completion of the school year at Trinity.

Our Savior's, Chadron (served by **Rev. Dan Praeuner, emerit-**
us) has called a seminary candidate.

Trinity, Riverton (Rev. Mark Mumme) will meet to call an assis-
tant pastor/head teacher on March 12.

Immanuel, Burns and St. John's, Kimball (served by **Rev. An-**
drew Dimit, assistant pastor at **King of Glory, Cheyenne**) called a candi-
date from the seminaries. Candidate placement takes place April 25 and
26.

Rev. Mark Preus (St. Andrew's, Laramie) received, but has re-
turned, a call to Ascension Lutheran Church, Huntsville, Alabama.

Rev. Marcus Baikie (Our Savior's, Cheyenne) has received a
divine call from Faith Lutheran Church, Shumway, Illinois.

The Christian in Community: Three Communities, Three Out- **comes**

In the history of God's condemnation of Sodom and Gomorrah
(read Genesis 18:16–19:38), the Holy Spirit shows us three distinct com-
munities. He has caused this sobering account to be written so that we
may repent, look to Him for every good, and pursue a way of life that
keeps His commandments.

The first community is the church and household of Abraham. Concerning Abraham, God said, “For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him” (18:19). Abraham’s household was both home and church. The Word of God was faithfully and regularly taught and preached in it. They gathered for worship daily and weekly. They interceded before God for their wicked neighbors (18:22–32). Their faith was in the coming Savior, the Seed of Abraham, together with all that God had promised. Their lives conformed to God’s Word by “doing righteousness and justice.”

The second community is wicked Sodom, in whom not even ten righteous citizens could be found (18:32). Sodom rejected the Word of God which Lot preached to them. They worshiped according to the desires of their own hearts, fearing and loving and trusting their idol-gods rather than the God of Abraham. Their lives showed forth what they believed. And so they pursued every kind of wickedness, including the horrible perversion named after their city (sodomy). When their wickedness was complete—filled up to the full, God in His wrath destroyed them utterly from the face of the earth, “making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:6).

The third community is the household and church of Lot. Here let us take warning! The Holy Spirit explains that Lot was “greatly distressed by the sensual conduct” of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that “as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard” (2 Peter 2:7, 8).

Lot was righteous by faith in Jesus Christ, the promised Seed of Abraham (his uncle). He taught God’s Word and worshiped the true God. He warned his wicked neighbors about their evil. He sought to conform his way of life to God’s commandments. His hospitality and protection of the two visiting angels, and his obedience to their command, demonstrate his faith.

Nevertheless, Lot chose to live in Sodom because he could get rich there (Genesis 13). He chose the torment of perverse and impious neighbors so that he could have financial security and a good retirement. His wife enjoyed the luxuries and pleasures of a good standard of living. His daughters were schooled in the customs and morality of their friends and were betrothed to pagan citizens of Sodom. Lot and his family wanted to have both God and the world with all its pleasures.

And now, compare the outcome of each of these three communities. God preserved Abraham’s household, though through much testing, so that His church continued and His promise of a Savior was fulfilled. Sodom, however, was destroyed in God’s wrath by the sulfur and fire He rained on them.

Lot’s community was also destroyed, however, though Lot himself was saved. His sons-in-law were destroyed with Sodom because they refused to join Lot’s church. His wife became a pillar of salt because she turned back to Sodom and its luxuries. His daughters came into exile with him but wickedly seduced their drunken father to obtain sons through incest. And Lot himself lost all his wealth, his earthly security, and his comfortable lifestyle, and moved into a cave to live with his wicked offspring.

God teaches us this history so that we Christians will “not be unequally yoked with unbelievers,” nor have “partnership...with lawlessness,” nor “fellowship...with darkness,” nor share a portion “with an unbeliever,” nor come to agreement in doctrine or life “with idols” (2 Corinthians 6:14–18). As we see in the destruction of Sodom, “there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death” (Proverbs 14:12). All of our society’s present perversions of Christian doctrine, morality, humanity, marriage and sexuality, and the like, are the way to death.

Nor can we safely take the middle road, like the household of Lot. We may keep our own faith—like Lot, but lose all our family, together with the worldly security and pleasure we worked so hard to get. Since we must live in this world and endure such Sodomite neighbors, we must separate our doctrine and way of life, together with our hearts and our minds, from their Sodomite works and ways. We must protect our wives and children from the corrosive power and working of our society’s evil teaching and morals.

Instead, we must live like Abraham’s little community, with Abraham’s faith and life. Let our households join regularly with our small but faithful congregations. Let our households be Christian homes, where the Word of God is regularly and joyfully read and discussed, where we pray for our needs and intercede for our ungodly neighbors. Let our homes be a beacon of light to those in darkness and precious salt to our tasteless and rotting communities (Matthew 5:13–16). And may God preserve us, our children, and our children’s children in the true faith unto life everlasting.

REFORMATION 500

Shortly after publishing *Concerning the Order of Public Worship* (see February 2023 Roundup) Luther published *The Order of Baptism* (or “Baptismal Booklet Put into German”, see AE 53.96–103). The only significant change from the old Baptismal rite was that Luther translated it into German. Certainly both God and the devil know Latin, which was the previous liturgical language. But Luther concluded that “it would not only be profitable, but also necessary to administer this sacrament in the German language” (101).

We Lutherans today recognize the basic outline of our Baptismal rite (LSB 268–271) in Luther’s 1523 order. It is comforting to see that we maintain continuity not only with the Lutheran Reformation, but even with the church of the Middle Ages. Their Baptism is the same Baptism we receive, done in God’s name and by His command.

But we also recognize elements of the old rite that have been revised or removed. Luther himself noted them in his afterword: “Now remember, too, that in baptism the external things are the least important, such as blowing under the eyes, signing with the cross, putting salt into the mouth, putting spittle and clay into the ears and nose, anointing the breast and shoulders with oil, signing the crown of the head with the chrism, putting on the christening robe, placing a burning candle in the hand, and whatever else has been