

Luther had pleaded in the introduction of the treatise on behalf of the Jews. "I will cite from Scripture the reasons that move me to believe that Christ was a Jew born of a virgin, that I might perhaps also win some Jews to the Christian faith" (200). He acknowledged the cruel mistreatment of the Jews by "the popes, bishops, sophists, and monks" in centuries gone by. "They have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs rather than human beings; they have done little else than deride them and seize their property" (200). Even those Jews who were baptized were often forced to use Christianity as a cloak to avoid maltreatment, not because they believed the teaching of Christ in the Old Testament.

He appealed, "I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians and turn again to the faith of their fathers, the prophets and patriarchs," that is, to the Christian faith of Adam, Abraham, David, and all the others. Luther reminded his readers to remember how kindly the apostles, who were also Jews, dealt with the Gentiles in the New Testament church. "Since they dealt with us Gentiles in such a brotherly fashion, we in our turn ought to treat the Jews in a brotherly manner in order that we might convert some of them" (200–201).

Luther concluded the treatise by urging again "that one deal gently with them and instruct them from Scripture" (229). "If the Jews should take offense because we confess our Jesus to be a man, and yet true God, we will deal forcefully with that from Scripture in due time. But this is too harsh for a beginning. Let them first be suckled with milk, and begin by recognizing this man Jesus as the true Messiah; after that they may drink wine, and learn also that he is true God" (229).

Luther's final exhortation reads as a guide and instruction on evangelizing any of our family, neighbors, and coworkers. "If we really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them not by papal law but by the law of Christian love. We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, that they may have occasion and opportunity to associate with us, hear our Christian teaching, and witness our Christian life. If some of them should prove stiff-necked, what of it? After all, we ourselves [for example, the citizens of Wittenberg] are not all good Christians either. Here I will let the matter rest for the present, until I see what I have accomplished. God grant us all his mercy. Amen." (229).

FUTURE DATES (see wylcms.org for information)

June 6-7: 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 29-Aug. 3: Synod Convention, Milwaukee, WI

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around May 20 (June 2023 issue).



Wyoming District Round-Up

May 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 Castillero, Immanuel, Sheridan**) called **Rev. Daniel Merz**, who has returned the call. A call meeting is scheduled for May 3.

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

Our Savior's, Chadron (served by **Rev. Dan Praeuner, emeritus**) did not receive a seminary candidate and has asked to receive and updated call list.

Trinity, Riverton (Rev. Mark Mumme): **Rev. Kyle Brown** declined the call to be the assistant pastor, headmaster, and teacher. The congregation is considering its options.

Immanuel, Burns and St. John's, Kimball (served by **Rev. Andrew Dimit**, assistant pastor at **King of Glory, Cheyenne**): Pastoral candidate **Ellery Steffensen** has received the divine call as pastor of Immanuel and St. John's. He will be ordained and installed in late June or July.

Our Savior's, Cheyelle will receive a vicar, **Patrick Jackson** (Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne).

The Christian in Community: The Importance of Christian Marriage

For communities to thrive, they have to do well in the transition from one generation to the next. For example, civil communities must pass the authority to rule from one person to another in a peaceful exchange of the

power to rule. Congregations must release a retired or departing pastor and call another faithful pastor to serve them. Christians must baptize and catechize the next generation of Christians and keep them in the true faith. Families must succeed in arranging strong marriages. New marriages must give birth to a new generation of children. If these transitions fail, the community, congregation, or family fails to continue. Alas, we have seen it all too often!

God Himself attends to these transitions among Christians by commanding us to hand on the Christian faith which we have received. In the New Testament this is commanded by Jesus (Matthew 28:18–20) and illustrated by the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 11:23–26; 15:3–4). We are to make disciples by baptizing and teaching God’s Word to the next generation of Christians. The church continues because more Christians are added daily through the faithful use of Scriptures and the Sacraments (Psalm 22:30–31; Acts 2:47).

God made this work our highest priority. From the beginning, God commanded Christian parents to bear and bring up Christian children and teach them God’s Word (Genesis 1:26–28, Deuteronomy 6:1–9). God wants Christian children to be brought forth from our marriages (Malachi 2:15). The first step in this divine commandment is that Christian men should marry Christian women, that together they might bring their children up in the education and instruction of the Lord their God (Ephesians 6:4).

In Genesis 24 Abraham demonstrated the urgency of this transition by arranging the Christian marriage of his son Isaac. Read this chapter! You will see how Abraham sent his servant on a journey to arrange for the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah. It is a beautiful love story, not in the worldly sense of dating and erotic love, but in the far deeper commitment to God’s Word and to Christians providing for the Christian faith of their children and grandchildren. Abraham refused to allow his son to marry one of the pagan Canaanite daughters. They were idolators and would give Abraham idolatrous grandchildren. Instead, Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac from the household of faith.

In his commentary on this Scripture, Luther taught: “Marriage is not a trifling matter; but it is the most serious and most important matter in the whole world, because it is the source of human society and of the human race. Life in its entirety has nothing that excels it in worth” (AE 4.221). And again, “Holy Scripture honors marriage with true and most ample praises and shows how it is the source and origin of the household, the state, and the church, which derive their origin and growth from it so far as their substance [more children!] is concerned” (AE 4.249).

For this reason, God urges Christian young people to marry a Christian of the same faith and confession, to baptize and raise up their children in God’s Word, and to see to it that they also marry within the faith. We Lutherans have the pure faith taught in Holy Scriptures; therefore, we must keep God’s command with great zeal and earnestness. In this way God sustains and strengthens our Christian families and congregations from generation to generation. In this way God grants us great blessings in household and congregation and among our neighbors.

Furthermore, we defend marriage among our pagan neighbors, not only for the sake of our children and our congregations, but also for the very neighbors who are destroying marriage and household through fornication, divorce, abortion, deliberate barrenness, and all the LGBTQ evils. We defend marriage exactly as Luther himself did from Genesis 24: “Marriage ... is the inseparable union of one man and one woman, not only according to the law of nature [Natural Law!] but also according to God’s will and pleasure” (AE 4.222).

But among ourselves especially we see the whole picture, the grand plan which God intends for marriage in our midst: “Marriage is the divinely instituted and lawful union of a man and a woman in the hope of offspring, or at least for the sake of avoiding fornication and sin, to the glory of God. Its ultimate purpose is to obey God and to be a remedy for sin; to call upon God; to desire, love, and bring up children to the glory of God; to live with one’s wife in the fear of the Lord; and to bear one’s cross” (AE 4.244). God grant us these blessings for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

REFORMATION 500

In late Spring, 1523, Martin Luther responded to accusations that he was promoting a teaching that denied the virgin birth of Jesus. The treatise he wrote was titled, “That Jesus Christ was born a Jew” (AE 45. 199–229). In the first part he demonstrated that Jesus was a Jew, born of the seed of Abraham as God had promised, but born of the Virgin Mary, as had also been foretold and was reported in the New Testament. The second part was an appeal to Christians to deal kindly with the Jews.

Luther took up key passages of the Old Testament that clearly showed that Christ must be born of a virgin, beginning with Genesis 3:15. The Seed of the woman must be able “to crush the devil’s power, that is, sin and death,” and so had to be without sin (that is, not begotten by a man), and so also, born of a woman without a man (202). The preaching of this comforting sermon sustained the fathers from Adam on. In this way “they were sustained through faith in Christ just as we are; they were true Christians like ourselves” (203).

In Genesis 22:18, “In your Seed shall all the Gentiles be blessed,” God again spoke of the Virgin birth, since the blessing could not have come from one who was begotten by a man. Nevertheless, he must be born of a woman as her natural child, since he must be the Seed of Abraham. This Seed would obtain God’s blessing of righteousness for all people. “It is a short saying, to be sure, but a rich gospel, subsequently inculcated and used in marvelous fashion by the fathers in both writing and preaching... For it is the living word of God, in which Abraham and his descendants believed, and by which they were redeemed and preserved from sin and death and the power of the devil” (204).

In a similar way Luther explained 2 Samuel 7:12–14 (Son of David), Isaiah 7:14 (Son born of a maiden—a young virgin), Genesis 49:10–12 (from the tribe of Judah), Daniel 9:24–27, and briefly Haggai 2:91 and Zechariah 8:23. “There are many more” such Scriptures, but Luther concluded that this was enough for a beginning (229).