

VOLUME 29, ISSUE 1
MARCH 2018



IDE TODAY

Iowa District East, LCMS

In This Issue

District Presidium Nominations
LCMS Mission to Spain
"Created Male & Female"

DISTRICT UPDATES



Pastor Calls

Accepted: Rev. Daniel Provost Lakefield, MN to Our Savior, Newton Install 4/15
Pending: Rev. Roy Berquest Fairbank to Trinity, Hayward, WI
 Rev. Philip Girardin Searcy, AR to Immanuel/St Paul, Readlyn

Declined:

Calling Congregations

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Vacancy Pastor</i>
Blairstown, Grace	Doug Woltemath
Charles City, New Hope	Chris Gorshe
Gladbrook, Christ	Troy Peperkorn
Osage, St John	Clarke Frederick
Readlyn, St Paul	Ronnie Koch
Waverly, St Paul	Randy McHone

DCE/School/Teacher Calls

Vacancies:		DCE
Bethany, Cedar Rapids	Trinity School, Cedar Rapids	Kindergarten Teacher
	Valley School, Cedar Falls	4th Grade Teacher
	Valley School, Cedar Falls	HS English Teacher
	St Paul, Latimer	Lead Teacher/Principal
	St Paul, Latimer	5-8th Grade Teacher

About the Cover

Isabella Childers, a kindergartener at Lutheran Interparish School, carries a rose in downtown Williamsburg. Students K-8 participated in a Valentine service project on February 15, sharing the love of Christ with the locals. Each person the students encountered received a rose with a note about Jesus's death on the cross and God's love.

District Convention

June 29-30, 2018

Convention registration for Delegates and Exhibitors will be open in April. Delegates can expect to receive a letter in the mail early April with information on how to register.

Convention forms and information can be found on our district website, under the tab "Convention '18".



Life Together: Laity & Clergy

40th Convention of Iowa District East LCMS
 June 29-30, 2018 | The Hotel at Kirkwood | Cedar Rapids

New Facebook Page

IDE has a new facebook page! Follow us on [facebook](#) and [twitter](#) to stay up to date with IDE news and events. Additionally, recent articles written by leaders in our IDE community as well as a daily Psalm, Hymn, and Prayer focus will be made available.



Iowa District East - LCMS

[<https://www.facebook.com/iowa-District-East-LCMS-709175552615705/>]



@lcmside

<https://twitter.com/lcmside>

Calendar

MAR 24	Early Childhood Conference
MAR 30	Good Friday, District Office Closed
APR 12	New Missions Committee Mtg.
APR 17	Board of Directors
APR 19	Worship Committee Mtg.
MAY 28	Memorial Day, District Office Closed

2018 District Convention

2018 Presidium Nomination Report

The congregations of Iowa District East (IDE) have made the following nominations to the presidium of IDE. Twenty-nine congregations submitted these nominations. The nominees are listed in the order of congregational nominations received.

District President: Brian Saunders - 28; Max Mons - 4; Dan S. Johnson - 1;
Matthew Rueger - 1

1st Vice President: Max Mons - 24; Matthew Rueger - 3; Brian Saunders - 2;
Kris Kincaid - 1; Michael Knox - 1; Steve Rempfer - 1

2nd Vice President: Matthew Rueger - 19; Max Mons - 2; Paul Beisel - 1; Kris Kincaid - 1;
Michael Knox - 1; Dean Rothchild - 1; Michael Scudder - 1

The names of those agreeing to be placed on the 2018 District Convention ballot will be published in the Convention Workbook.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mark Brase, IDE Secretary and Peter Hoft, IDE Assistant Secretary



Life Together: Laity & Clergy

40th Convention of Iowa District East LCMS
June 29-30, 2018 | The Hotel at Kirkwood | Cedar Rapids

President's Piece for Peace

Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders

In this year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation I wish to continue the articles on the 1545 explanation (known as the Wittenberg Reformation), of how the 1517 Reformation is carried out in the critical articles of faith throughout the church. There are a total of six articles and we find ourselves at number IV, titled "Proper Discipline."

In the 16th century there was a very different relationship between the government and the church. In fact, in matters of discipline, the church expected the state to assist them and exercise punishments on behalf of the church. A quote from the hand of the author of the Augsburg Confession, Phillip Melancthon, reads like this: "Secular authority is obliged to assist the church to preserve Christian discipline, as is written in Romans 13 secular authority shall honor good works and punish wicked deeds. And it is written in Isaiah 49 that kings shall foster the church, that is, they are to display assistance to the preachers with their protection and by arranging for their support and furtherance of the Gospel."

“

*Discipline is no
one's enjoyment.
Yet it is a
command of God...*

”

As you are well aware, no such relationship exists today in these United States between the government and the church. I am pretty sure I don't even want a government voice in the matters of discipline in the church. Whether the state is involved or not, we do have a clear Word of God instructing us as to the proper manner and purpose of discipline. According to the Gospel, the work of the churchly court is solely to punish improper doctrine and unrepentant manifest sin. In our day of tolerance and laxity it sounds strange that the church would even exercise discipline.

The Commission on Constitutional Matters has said the church without proper discipline, based upon Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, quickly becomes a church body of false doctrine. One of America's most learned Lutheran Theologians of the past century, Rev. Dr. Michael C. Reu, a man who was fervently devoted to the mission of the church, feared for the mission because "Lutheran church bodies in North America and Europe cared so little about the evangelical message that they let it be undermined by a failure to exercise discipline." Lack of discipline is not simply failure to address doctrinal issues, it also robs the people of God of the truth of the saving Gospel. Nothing is more damaging to the mission of the church than that.

In our current setting we do have a well thought through and well trained system to address matters of discipline. It begins with brother-to-brother conversations that bring to bear the concerns one has for another. If that does not resolve the issue, we are guided to discuss the matter with independent and objective witnesses who can help us to understand each other, and assist in resolving the issue. Should that also not bring about reconciliation, there is an ultimate authority who must make judgments. Matthew 18:17 gives that authority to the church. Each and every step is for the purpose of maintaining the true doctrine of Scripture, and lives that live in adherence to that doctrine. Via these measures, the wayward heart is brought to repentance and by faith, retained in the Holy Christian Church.

While there is no punitive action by the state in such issues there are consequences for impenitence. The church has the authority to ex-communicate the obdurate unbeliever. This too is for the purpose of bringing the individual or group to repentance. Discipline is no one's enjoyment. Yet it is a command of God and number IV in the six articles of the 1545 Wittenberg Reformation, for the sake of maintaining harmony and unity in the church. It was important in the 16th century, and it is just as important in the 21st century. We have the same Lord, the same Christ, and the same Holy Gospel throughout eternity. God be with you all.

Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders is the President of Iowa District East and Assistant Pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, IA.



Reformation 501: Re-Evangelizing the Western World *The Case of Spain*

Rev. Dr. Dean Rothchild

A gathering was held on Saturday January 27th, 2018 at the District Office. Presenting at the seminar was Rev. David Warner, our District supported missionary to Spain, and Rev. Dr. Detlev Schulz of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. Our District has been supporting mission work in Spain for the past number of years. Rev. Warner and his wife Shelee were in the United States for a few weeks visiting their first grandchild in Minnesota.

Rev. Warner presented on the work being done in Spain. He also gave a historical perspective on the work which has been done to this point in Spain. The Lutherans in Spain had previously been connected with the Lutheran Church of Argentina. That arrangement has changed in the past number of years and our Synod now has two called missionaries to Spain, Rev. David Warner and also Rev. Adam Lehman. While they are both involved in Word and Sacrament ministry amongst the 6 congregations spread throughout Spain, they also are providing theological training for men who will serve as Pastors in Spain.



Rev. David Warner
Missionary to Spain

Dr. Schulz presented on some of the early mission work which took place in Frankenmuth, Michigan beginning in 1845. He shared a couple of excellent quotes from Wilhelm Loehe. Loehe said: "If the Lutheran Church has the pure Word and sacrament in a pure confession, it obviously has the highest treasures of the church unperverted. It thus has God's fullness and the living source from which all deficiencies may be supplied, and it can claim for itself all the advantages of which other denominations justly boast." Loehe also said: "It is God's will that all men be saved and come to knowledge of the truth. God is completely sincere about this. This is why Christ had to atone for our sins, and not only for our sins but for the sins of the entire world. The means by which we appropriate this atonement—Word and sacrament—must be made known to all men. This doctrine makes us zealous in calling the heathen."ⁱ



Rev. Dr. Detlev Schulz
Concordia Theological Sem.
Fort Wayne, IN

Spain has a population of 48.5 million people. 70% of that population would identify as Roman Catholic. They have not had clear Gospel proclamation for a long time and so the identity with Rome could be considered at best, cultural Catholicism. 25% of the population now identifies as atheist, unbeliever or agnostic. 2.5% would identify as "other", with the largest slice being Muslim immigrants. 2.5% of those surveyed gave no reply. As one can see, this is a large mission field where the Gospel can be preached.

Through our support they have been able to procure a building in Seville which has now been converted into worship space for the Divine Service, and also will be used for catechetical space and other administrative needs for the congregation and their church body. This building was dedicated on November 19, 2017. On that day, they also ordained Rev. Jose Luis de Miguel as the second Spanish Pastor of the IELE.

Each year the partners who support this work in Spain meet together in a "Foro" to evaluate the strategic plan for the IELC. Our District is committed to supporting this mission work in Spain for at least the next two years. President Saunders has been able to attend two of these "Foros." While there, he also had the opportunity to provide theological instruction for men who are working at becoming Pastors.

What would a Divine Service look like in Spain as compared to one of our churches in Iowa District East? It would be distinctively Lutheran, it would be liturgical and sacramental. The Church in Spain

is Biblical and Confessional. Preaching is Christ-centered with Law and Gospel correctly divided and applied. The only difference you would hear is that this is done in Spanish and not in English. It is amazing how the liturgy transcends culture and language. Just as the 42.5% of the population which is unclaimed in the state of Iowa needs to hear the Gospel, so the bulk of the population in Spain needs to hear about Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and risen for the sins and justification of the world.

Please keep the Warner and Lehman families in your prayers as they work to bring the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Spain. If you wish to learn how you can support this work, please contact Rev. Dr. Dean F. Rothchild at the District Office.

i. From Three Books About the Church, p. 112, 81-82, and 83.



Rev. Dr. Dean F. Rothchild is assistant to the President and director of the Proclaiming Christ Jesus Campaign.

LCMS Mission to Spain Seville, Spain

The mission celebrated the dedication of the Seville Church and Ministry Center, and ordained our second Spanish pastor, on November 18 & 19. *"It was a great weekend, made possible by IDE support. Thank You!"*



Capital Campaign Update

As of February 15, 2018

Gifts Received to date

\$732,540

Promised in the next 1-7 years

\$29,780

Total to date

\$762,320



Proclaiming Christ Jesus!
Luke 24:46-47

For more information, contact:

Rev. Dr. Dean F. Rothchild

deanrothchild@lcmSIDE.org

319-373-2112 Office

March Madness

Jan Doellinger

“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3-5 ESV)

Soccer, cross country, flag football, volleyball, cheerleading, basketball, track & field, softball and baseball. These are the sports that our IDE Lutheran schools participate in over the course of a school year. Hundreds of miles have been travelled by teams to get to games and tournaments. Athletic directors have spent hours setting schedules, hiring referees, making sure the field or gym is ready to go, finding coaches, and dealing with parents. Concession stands feature delicious game food. Volunteers are at the admissions table, cleaning up, perhaps coaching, and just being available to help where needed.

Lutheran school sporting events pale in comparison to March Madness in many ways. However, the NCAA can’t hold a candle to what our students and athletes get to experience every day, whether they are in the classroom, on the playground, or on the court. That, of course, is the growth and development of their faith and character because of the gift of Jesus Christ and what He has done for them. When Lutheran school students compete against one another on the field, in the gym, or on the track, our students grow in their relationship with Christ and one another.

Several years ago, I was asked to lead a devotion during the weekend tournament our Lutheran school was hosting. The passage chosen as the theme for the tournament was Romans 5:3-5. I asked one of our 8th grade students to help me write and do the devotion for that Saturday evening. Little did Hallie and I know, our team would be in that final game of the evening, and it was a barnburner! Even though she was physically and emotionally drained, she followed through on her commitment. Here’s how it played out:

Since we were going to be talking about character building Hallie and I thought a ladder might help us visualize what God was telling us. From our theme verse, we put the word *suffering* at the bottom of the ladder. Suffering wasn’t a

very happy topic to be talking about at a tournament, but as Hallie pointed out, there are sufferings going on all the time. Middle school kids could relate to the sufferings she mentioned; getting a bad grade, a poor performance on the basketball court, and disappointment with friends. We all have sufferings that can be distracting. But what is it that keeps us going?

Hallie took another step up the ladder and came to the word *endurance*. In her words, “This is what keeps us keeping on. Our faith helps us get through our struggles or problems. Because of what Christ has done for us, we set our eyes on the goal. We know where Christ wants us to be, wellllll.....most of the time anyway, and He helps us get there.”



The next word higher up the ladder was *character*. Another step higher, a little more challenging to move up to this next step. I asked, “What is character? How does setting a goal and sticking to it produce character?” Hallie’s response was, “Character is who you are. It’s how you do things. It’s what you say. It’s how you react to certain situations. It’s something you learn and something you earn.”

My next question to this insightful young Christian woman was, “What is Christian character?” Hallie said, “It’s how God created me. It’s when we focus on being thankful for what Christ has done for us and wants us to be rather than where *we* want to be. It means putting our hope in Jesus, not in our self. It’s that hope that will never disappoint us or let us down. Since Christ died on the cross for us and rose again we have the hope of eternal life. Our struggles here on earth are getting us ready for heaven.”

Final question: “How does knowing all this give you *hope* through everyday ups and downs?” From high atop the ladder came this response: “I have comfort and reassurance that the Holy Spirit is continually helping me through my battles whether they be at school, in my faith life,

or on the court. The Lord has blessed me with my teachers, coaches, parents, PRINCIPAL 😊, and friends to rely on. They help me persevere through my struggles and keep my hope on the ending reward – being with Jesus in Heaven.”

Our March sadness is one of repentance and sorrow that sent Christ to the cross to pay the price for our sins. It is my prayer this article has been a reminder and encouragement to you in

that our Lord has promised to be with us in our sufferings and struggles. We pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit so that by His goodness and grace we can be empowered to be the Christian characters that He would have us to be. By His grace, may we grow in faith, able to overcome temptations and sufferings, strong in character, always focused on the hope that is before us which is life eternal, with Him in Heaven. We look to Easter Sunday with April Gladness!



Jan Doellinger serves IDE as the assistant to the President for schools.

LUTHERAN INTERPARISH SCHOOL Williamsburg

K-8 Service Project, February 15

Students divided into their chapel families and participated in a walking field trip to downtown Williamsburg on Thursday, February 15, in order to Share His Love to the community as a joint Valentine's Day/Lenten Season Project in the community. In addition to distributing a free rose to individuals, they passed out a flier that said, "Yesterday was Valentine's Day and we also started the Lenten Season when we remember Christ's death and resurrection. The red on this rose reminds us of the blood that Jesus shed on the cross for our sins. By His death and resurrection our sins are forgiven and our sins are washed away. The yellow on the rose is like sunshine and reminds us of the JOY we have daily as we serve Christ.

It also gave information about LIS and our mission here. This project was funded by Thrivent's Live Generously grant. The only cost was the cost of the roses - 200 beautiful roses from Sam's Club - \$235.36. What a great witness for our school in sharing the love of Christ!



Second Annual Blood Drive

Lutheran Interparish School hosted its second annual blood drive on Wednesday, January 10. The blood drive was hosted by 5th grade student Emma Oberg and her mother Rebecca Oberg. They worked with Principal Mark Grewe to get all LIS students involved. Blood donors must be at least 16 years old, so the young students asked their families, teachers, and neighbors to consider giving the gift of life. Seven people gave blood for the first time at this event. In all, the blood drive collected an impressive 44 donations. Each donation can help up to 4 patients in need. This was a great way to celebrate National Volunteer Blood Donor Month.



To help celebrate this success, we had a school-wide Hot Chocolate Party! Hot chocolate, with flavors, topped with marshmallows, Reddi Whip, and sprinkles.

GRACE Waterloo

The Sunday School of Grace Lutheran Church, Waterloo, presented "God's Family Tree" to the congregation, on December 17. The worship service, following the tradition of the Jesse Tree, traced the history of God's plan of salvation from Adam and Eve to us, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Symbols, representing the family ancestors, were placed on the banner "tree" following appointed scriptures. A tree with fruit was symbolic of Adam and Eve; Abraham was represented by a field of stars. Joseph was pictured as a hammer and saw. Children shared God's Family Tree through speaking parts and song. The congregation participated through liturgy and hymns. The music and scriptures in the service showed how the tree was planted, promised and pruned, and then presented to us and the world at Christmas.



COLLEGE HILL Cedar Falls

Brothers in Christ Productions will premiere their newest short film *Crave* on Saturday evening, April 21, at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, IA.

Crave follows the story of Olivia, a college freshman who, living life on the secular college scene, becomes disconnected from the Word of God. When a sudden tragedy strikes, she finds herself in a desperate search for the meaning of life. The film, together with a 3-part Bible Study, is intended to direct Christians, from Junior High youth to adults of all ages, back to the life-giving Word of God.

The film, shot in the fall of 2017, is directed by Micah Verseemann of Waverly, Iowa. The film is co-produced by Rev. Matthew Verseemann (former Iowa District East pastor, now serving at Trinity Lutheran Church in Decatur, IL), and Kathleen Franck of Waverly. The film was shot in the Cedar Valley area including Immanuel Lutheran Church and College Hill Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa. It was comprised of a cast and crew of 22 people from 8 different states as well as other volunteers and extras from the surrounding area.

Everyone is invited to attend the free premiere showing on April 21. Doors open at 6:30 PM. Attendees will get a look at the making of the film before it premieres at 7:00 PM. Refreshments and fellowship will follow afterwards and the Bible study and film will be available for purchase for churches and individuals. To God Alone Be the Glory!



ST PAUL'S CHAPEL Iowa City

We've been very busy at St Paul's Chapel. The fall semester ended with our students blowing off steam prior to finals with the Annual Nerf Battle. They ended the semester with a Christmas Party hosted by Pastor and Christine Mons.

The Chapel welcomed students back from break with a "Welcome Back Supper". Winter activities have included ice skating at Coral Ridge Mall, a super Super Bowl Party, and a Roughrider hockey game in Cedar Rapids. Midweek Wednesday Night Services are held at 7 PM followed by 7:30 PM Table Talk. There are many more activities planned for everyone's growth in the Word and fellowship for the rest of the semester.

Recently we started working on upgrading our website. A whole new look is coming. We are hoping to make it more user friendly and provide more information about the Chapel and its activities.



ST JOHN Wellsburg

On Sunday January 28, St John Lutheran Church in Wellsburg began several weeks of fundraising for a Mission Support team going to South Sudan. This spring, several Lutheran pastors will travel to Uganda to train and educate about 50 local Sudanese, as well as 13 Bishops, in intensive courses on Luther's Small Catechism and the Reformation. The million member Anglican Church of South Sudan is seeking to become Lutheran and to affiliate with the LCMS. St John congregation also sent clergy vestments to Sudan late last year.

St John member, Andrew Peters, has befriended Sudanese refugee Gatbel Chamjock and his family. Gatbel, now a P.A. in emergency medicine, was 12 when his village was bombed; he ran for his life ending up in the refugee camps of Ethiopia, one of the "lost boys" forced to survive alone. Through the grace of God, a charity chose him to come to America because he spoke English. His father had taught him English hoping he would one day translate the Bible into his native Nuer language. This sincere witness of his faith, and his encouragement to help his fellow Sudanese, was a blessing to the congregation who gave generously to the Lord's work in Sudan.

The congregation also celebrated Andrew and Ashley Peters whom the Lord blessed with the gift of a son just hours before the service began!



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH Hiawatha

Zion designated January 28 as LIFE Sunday, and observed the month of January as LIFE Month. Linn Area Lutherans For Life, Chapter 72, invited the members of Zion to have a "baby shower" for needy newborn babies in the Cedar Rapids area. Members brought quilts (11), sleepers (26), onesies (18), plus hundreds of diapers, bath products, bottles, and more to be distributed by Bridgehaven Pregnancy Support Center in Cedar Rapids.

The event concluded with a worship service and Bible study in which the Rev. Daniel Krueger, pastor of Zion, helped members focus on the HOPE that we have in Christ through all stages of LIFE. He urged members not to seek hope in things other than Jesus Christ, to not see death as a solution to problems, but to fix our eyes on LIFE in Christ, the author and giver of LIFE.



IMMANUEL St Ansgar

Installation of Rev. Mark Squire on February 11 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Ansgar.



L to R: Rev. Michael Parris, Riceville (retired); Rev. Clarke Frederick, Mason City; Rev. Bruce Kaltwasser, Osage; Rev. Mark Squire, St Ansgar; David Renfro, Cedar Rapids; Rev. Christopher Gorshe, Riceville; Mark Koschmann, St. Paul, MN

DAVENPORT LUTHERAN HOME

Pictured below are DLH Chaplain Pastor Neuendorf with DLH Town Home Tenants Clarence and Marian Pannier.

The Panniers have a long relationship with DLH. Clarence Pannier is a retired LCMS Pastor and was the DLH Chaplain from 1987-2009. Clarence and Marian will celebrate 69 years of marriage in May!



OUR REDEEMER Cedar Falls

30th Ordination Anniversary, Pastor Michael Knox

On Sunday, November 26, members of Our Redeemer, Cedar Falls gathered as a family in Christ to give thanks to Our Father for the work that He has done through His faithful servant, Rev. Michael Knox. After Divine Service, Greg Gerjerts began this special occasion by reading remarks from mentors and others who have been important in the life of Rev. Knox, both before and after he became a pastor. Greg read remarks from the Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders on the brotherhood that he and Rev. Knox share within the Office of the Holy Ministry. Rev. Dr. Saunders also commented on the special relationship that they share as grandfathers of their granddaughter, Paisley Knox.

Perhaps the most notable remarks came from Rev. Walter D. Otten, retired pastor of the St Paul parish, Brookfield, Illinois. Rev. Otten reminisced, with some humor, about Rev. Knox's life in the St Paul parish and parochial school. Following these remarks, Greg presented a gift from the Our Redeemer parish to Rev. Knox and wife Tammy. This gift is intended to be used by the Knox family for a trip to Germany.

Rev. Knox and Tammy expressed their humility and gratitude to the congregation for the gift. He especially expressed gratitude to his parents, who were in attendance, for their commitment to keeping the Church at the center of their family life. He hoped that he had done the same for his own family.



After this moving occasion, the congregation enjoyed a delicious brunch in the Parish Hall, where we gathered to give thanks for the blessings that God gives us.

What Marriage Can Teach Us About Jesus

Rev. Christopher Neuendorf

Most of our Lutheran Home residents have experienced for themselves God's good gift of marriage—and many have had beloved spouses taken from them. They have seen how marriage can be a blessing, and how marriage can be an occasion for bitter trials and grievous tribulations. But I'm sure that if you asked them, most would say that, whatever the troubles it brings, marriage to the right person is always worth it.

Certainly marriage is worth it for the earthly blessings it brings: children (and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren), companionship, mutual support, and all the rest. But there is another blessing that marriage brings of which many of us may not even be aware. Marriage teaches us about Jesus.

How so? St Paul writes in Ephesians 5:32 that marriage is a "mystery." When he says that, he doesn't mean that marriage is impossible to figure out. He means that it signifies something else. "It refers to Christ and the Church," St Paul says. It does so by showing us how the Church submits to Christ, even as a bride (ideally) submits to her husband, and how Christ loves His Church, even as a husband (ideally) loves his wife. By behaving within marriage the way God commands them to behave, godly spouses project an image of Christ's relationship with His Church.

Martin Luther expands upon this image of the Church as the Bride of Christ in his writing *On the Freedom of a Christian*. There, Luther speaks of faith as the wedding ring that unites the believer to Christ. In a good marriage, because man and wife become one flesh, their property becomes common to the both of them. I remember talking with my then-fiancée about how when we married, we would combine our libraries. My

books would be hers, and hers would be mine (and we would have a lot of duplicates!) But when Christ betroths the Church to Himself, a very different sort of exchange takes place. What does the Church bring to the union? Sin, death, and Hell. What does Christ bring? Righteousness, life, and salvation. By faith, Christ and the believer exchange property: Christ takes our sin, death, and Hell for His own, suffering for it on the cross, and in their place He gives us His righteousness, life, and salvation. As St Paul writes, "*Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich*" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Marriage also teaches us that this exchange of goods—our sin for Christ's righteousness—is not a temporary arrangement, but permanent. When man and wife are joined in holy matrimony, they vow to remain faithful to one another until parted by bodily death. No power but death itself can separate a couple that is determined to remain true to their promises. But even death cannot separate the believer from Christ! Because death no longer has any power over Christ, and because He gives life everlasting to the believer, our union is to be eternal! Death may separate man and wife for a time, until their reunion with all the saints in the life to come, but death will never separate us from our Savior.

Marriage is certainly worth celebrating for its own sake. It is among the greatest gifts that God can give in this life, as many of our residents can attest to. But it is made even more precious when we reflect on what God wants to teach us through marriage: that by faith we are eternally united to His Son, who "*loved the Church and gave Himself up for her*" (Ephesians 5:25), taking her sin for Himself and giving her His righteousness unto life everlasting.



Rev. Christopher Neuendorf pastors Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Davenport and is Chaplain at Davenport Lutheran Home.

Created Male and Female

From *Christian Citizenship*, by Linda Bartlett (February 14, 2018)

Submitted by IDE Life Coordinator Rev. Alex Post

LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison and the Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, executive director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, are among 20 religious leaders who have signed an open letter affirming their “commitment to marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and as the foundation of society.”

The letter, “Created Male and Female: An Open Letter from Religious Leaders,” was released December 15. Among the signers are representatives of the North American Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church in North America, the Orthodox Church in America, the Church of God in Christ, the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

The letter, promoting “natural marriage”, acknowledges that “all human beings are created by God and thereby have an inherent dignity,” and that because “God created each person male or female... sexual difference is not an accident or flaw—it is a gift from God that helps draw us closer to each other and to God. What God created is good.”

The letter notes that “a person’s discomfort with his or her sex, or the desire to be identified as the other sex, is a complicated reality that needs to be addressed with sensitivity and truth,” and recognizes that “each person deserves to be heard and treated with respect; it is our responsibility to respond to their concerns with compassion, mercy and honesty.”

Warning that “children especially are harmed when they are told that they can ‘change’ their sex” or are “given hormones that will affect their development,” the letter calls “false” and “deeply troubling” the notion “that a man can be or become a woman or vice versa...” It compels people to either go against reason—that is, to agree with something that is not true—or face

ridicule, marginalization, and other forms of retaliation.

“We desire the health and happiness of all men, women, and children. Therefore, we call for policies that uphold the truth of a person’s sexual identity as male or female, and the privacy and safety of all,” reads the letter.

Seltz points out that “heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual... are our culture’s terms. Male and female... are God’s terms, even nature’s terms. To start with our created identity as people of God—male and female—this is the beginning of being able to honor each other, to love each other and yes, even to be tolerant of one another. In this day of confusion, this letter helps guide us in this wonderful endeavor of being truly human for others.”ⁱ

What can we do? Read God’s Word. Trust the Creator rather than the feelings and opinions of the created. Read the stories of Rosaria Butterfield, Christopher Yuan, and Walt Heyer. Each left a lesbian, homosexual, or transgender lifestyle when they recognized how they had been deceived and why their identity defined by God matters most. Visit www.christopheryuan.com, www.rosariabutterfield.com, and www.SexChangeRegret.com or WaltHeyer.com.

Please pray for an encouraged and courageous Body of Christ, that we might speak truth in love and... in Jesus’ name.

i. blogs.lcms.org, February 5, 2018



Rev. Alex Post pastors Redeemer Lutheran Church in Marshalltown, and serves as IDE’s District Life Coordinator.

Servant Leadership

Rev. Todd Kollbaum

Director, LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

"And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together." (Acts 16:13)

Much can be said of the servant leadership role of the pastor in a rural and small-town congregation. To be sure, he must often, as Paul puts it, *"become all things to all people, that by all means [he] might save some"* (1 Cor. 9:22).

However, one must balance all of the things he is called to do and still maintain his own health and sanity. Congregations and their leaders must also be aware of this and "get on board" as it were so that all might work together for the benefit of the Kingdom!

In a recent class on missionary leadership, the instructor stated, "Leadership is not about how you handle people but how you handle yourself." How can we as pastors and congregational leaders best handle ourselves in order to make an impact in the community to which we have been called? Dr. J. Robert Clinton of Fuller Theological Seminary defined leadership as:

- a God-given capacity and
- a God-given responsibility
- to *influence* specific groups
- towards *God's purposes*.

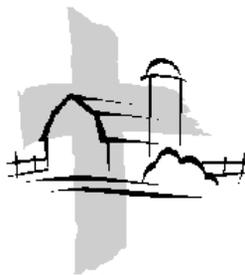
So, perhaps a better question would be how can we use the talents and abilities that God has given us to influence the groups within which He places us, for His purpose of sharing the Good News of salvation in Christ?

Practically speaking, a good leader in the church must be where the people are. The ever-increasing demands for the time of our pastors, leaders and church members make this a difficult situation. So, for a difficult situation, perhaps the best answer is a simple one: Make the best use of the time and situations that are already a part of your life, and add in those things which make the most sense for the season in which you find yourself. This simply can't happen only behind a desk and a closed study door or in front of a computer screen. There certainly must be some of that, but that cannot make up the sum total of your ministry. Perhaps more simply put, the people by and large will not just come to you. You must go to where the people are to be found, as St. Paul tells us in Acts 16. Here, we have an opportunity to set the stage, engage the culture and reach the people.

Perhaps there is a ministerial alliance or the possibility to partner with other Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregations in your area to engage in acts of mercy or charity. Food and clothing pantries, indigent assistance, MEALS ON WHEELS and other philanthropic endeavors are excellent ways to engage your community without sacrificing the mission and ministry of the congregation.

Another great opportunity is to involve yourself with local service organizations. Events such as community cleanup days and local celebrations are often simple ways we can have a presence in the community, in order to make and foster relationships through which the Gospel might be shared.

A third option, and perhaps one of the best, is to have a connection with the local school or schools. Students are so often drawn away from church by so many activities. Being a part of the system helps your voice to be heard, not to mention the great sense of community pride rural and small towns often have for their schools. Supporting this in a healthy way allows you to model the Christian life for others.



Reaching Rural
America for Christ

While this list is just a start and is certainly not exhaustive, I encourage you to be bold and creative. And while it is true that Paul said he became all things to all people, he didn't do that all at once. Even St Paul engaged people where they were based on the time and place in which he found himself. Furthermore, remember that a little goes a long way. Sometimes just a quick visit or drop-in is enough.

At times, a note, a call or even a text (social media isn't all bad), is just the thing we need to do to connect at critical times, in order to be the leaders we are called to be.

Finally, brothers, none of this is possible without consistently being in God's Word and prayer. Apart from these things, the others are simply activities which anyone can endeavor to do. The more time with God becomes a part of our daily lives, the more God's Word will become a part of everything about us, and those ways in which we demonstrate our servant leadership will have that Word as their very character.



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