

President's Piece for Peace

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders
District President

September 2019

“Back to School” is on every billboard and supermarket sign across the nation. It is less a reminder than it is a beckon to enter their store and purchase their products. At the same time it is a reality that a new academic year has fallen upon us once again, even as time marches on. Education is important not only for the elementary through college-aged students. It is an ever ongoing effort in the life of all our vocations. In particular I emphasize the need to further our theological and confessional acumen.

The other day I was at the ENT for sinus allergy problems. I couldn't help but notice all the continuing education certificates mounted on his wall. I inquired about them and he said they were mandatory in order to retain his Iowa Medical License. We in church work have no such mandates other than our educators who need to keep their Iowa Teaching License up to date. In the Office of the Ministry we can only encourage continued growth in our field of God's Call.

So to that extent I encourage you as fellow Office Brothers to join your members returning to the classroom. Monthly Winkels area wonderful assembly where study and discussion of the Word is beneficial and helpful. I certainly encourage attendance at the Winkels. Along with that your classroom will be your own study without teacher or professor. You can gain much by reading good material. Certainly and of most importance is the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. A daily diet of these fine cuisine nurture the soul and give rest to the mind. At the same time there is a plethora of fine reading for the application of our most blessed theology in your Office.

I offer a few books for you to consider that I have found interesting, well written, and help in many ways.

1. “Marriage is Like Dancing” by Richard C. Eyer published by CPH. This book has been around for a while but is filled with excellent, down to earth, solid theological applications for the doctrine of marriage. Dr. Eyer has keen insights into relationships and the struggles they entail. His biblical knowledge is of great assistance when working with couples planning to marry. He is also very helpful when working with couples who are experiencing challenges in their home. I do recommend it to you.
2. “The Care of Souls” by Harold L. Senkbeil published by Lexham Press. This is a brand new book that I received only this last summer. I have known Dr. Senkbeil for many years and always found him to be gifted when presenting on pastoral theology. This book is written from the perspective of a man who served many years in the parish and a few years teaching future pastors at the seminary. It is a very good, thought provoking, and contemplative read. It isn't going to say anything you have not already studied, but it is most helpful in measuring what you already know and the application of what you know for the hands and feet of your ministry. I do recommend it to you.
3. “Christian Concepts for Care” (Understanding and Helping People with Mental Health Issues) by David J. Ludwig and Mary R. Jacob published by CPH. I found this book to be insightful in an area which I am not well-versed. Mental illness is a real issue in the membership of our congregations, to one degree or another. This book is helpful for you to gain an understanding of what it is and how those who struggle with it are affected. It is not so much a book of theology but a resource of information on a topic pastors do well to be informed of. Your theology will guide you in application as this book helps you to recognize mental health issues in your parish.

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These are only but a few books you may want to take a look at, or you may be on your own course of study at the moment. Either way I do encourage you to be a constant student of the Word or God, its correct exhibition in the Lutheran Confessions, and other books by respected and learned authors. God bless you all in your service of Christ and His Kingdom.

President Saunders