



May 2013

Pastor's



Zion Lutheran
Church
110 East Grand Avenue
Chippewa Falls, WI
54790

“That’s Not Lutheran”

If there is one phrase that I as pastor have heard often from members of LCMS churches it is this, “That’s not Lutheran.” And, if they are referring to ELCA Lutherans or other erring synods, they are usually 100% correct. But, how do we determine what makes someone or thing truly Lutheran? Simply calling yourself a Lutheran doesn’t make you Lutheran anymore than calling yourself a Marine makes you a Marine.

We heard the simple answer to this question last month in our Youth Confirmation service: “Do you hold all the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God? Do you confess the doctrine of the *Evangelical Lutheran Church*, drawn from the Scriptures, as you have learned to know it from the *Small Catechism*, to be faithful and true?” If you answer, “I do” to the above questions, and live out that doctrine in your life—you are a true Lutheran. This is also what LCMS pastors promise in the *Rite of Ordination*—that everything we teach will come from the Bible alone, in accordance with our Lutheran Confessions (*The Book of Concord 1580*). So, when an ELCA pastor teaches that homosexuality is not sinful, we rightly conclude—that isn’t Lutheran, because the Bible teaches otherwise. To say it a different way—true Lutherans believe, teach, and confess what Christians have always believed, taught, and confessed; the Bible has not changed.

However, while I have noticed many LCMS Lutherans rightly conclude that a teaching in the ELCA church, for example, isn’t Lutheran based on the above definition—I have notice some disconnect when applying that standard to themselves as LCMS Lutherans. I’ll explain: The logic is usually presented in one of these ways: “I was raised LCMS or in this church and therefore everything I think and believe is Lutheran, and if I don’t believe it or haven’t experienced it—it’s not Lutheran.” “I know lots of Lutheran pastors, have been to many Lutheran churches, served as president and on the board of elders, therefore, I know what is Lutheran—so if I don’t believe it—it’s not Lutheran.” “I am a Lutheran and I have never sung that hymn, therefore it must not be Lutheran.” I think you get the idea. Calling a Methodist hymn Lutheran doesn’t make it so, even if you are a Marine.

If a pastor or LCMS church is teaching something that an LCMS member doesn’t think/feel is very Lutheran—simply appealing to other pastors or congregations that one is familiar with isn’t the way to solve the tension—going to Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions is the only way. It is possible that the LCMS churches or pastors you have known were teaching the same thing, but you just don’t remember. It is also possible that, even though you are LCMS through and through, there are some things you have never heard or learned. And, there are many reasons for this: maybe you didn’t attend Bible class or read the newsletters. On the other hand, maybe the pastors and congregations you are familiar with weren’t teaching everything they are supposed to. Sadly, some LCMS pastors/congregations teach a “Lutheran-light” version. They may not be teaching anything wrong, but they are avoiding certain topics and not teaching on them, i.e. closed communion, role of men and women, or church discipline. Maybe they have chosen hymns that all American denominations are familiar with and have avoided certain truly Lutheran hymns (hymns are for teaching The Bible, not for entertainment). Pastors are held accountable not only for what they do teach, but for what they don’t teach.

As we continue to walk together at Zion as pastor and people, may we all keep in our minds the true definition of Lutheranism and hold each other accountable to our *Confirmation* and *Ordination* vows. If we allow certain teachings to fall away over time through neglect, we will find ourselves in the ELCA boat—we call ourselves Lutheran, but we really are not.

*Lord, Keep us Steadfast in Thy Word,
Pastor*



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL
ACTIVE MEMBERS WHO
HAVE MAY BIRTHDAYS!!**

]	Blayde Bowe	5/1
]	Lawrence Gale, Jr.	5/1
]	Linda Murillo	5/1
]	Traci Hunt	5/2
]	Phyllis Pangborn	5/3
]	Doreen Szedlak	5/4
]	Joe Hakes	5/5
]	Juanita Taylor	5/8
]	Greg Welke	5/10
]	Clark Benson	5/15
]	Robert Jacobson	5/15
]	Rev. Erno Szedlak	5/16
]	Karl Rose	5/18
]	Robbie Sahr	5/22
]	Regina Arndt	5/27
-	Jim La Nou	5/28

♥ HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO: ♥

Ralph & Vicki Bellore	5/17/1969
Verlyn & Joann Ehlers	5/19/1951
Joe & Barbara Calkins	5/22/1976

**† WE ASK YOU TO REMEMBER IN
OUR PRAYERS THE HOMEBOUND**

MEMBERS:

Lila Pahl
Erna Welke
Jan Rothbauer



MISS A BIBLE CLASS OR SERMON?

Audio of the most recent Bible classes and sermons are on our website. Click the "Education" tab for Bible class or the tab for "Sermons."

CD'S OF SERMONS & BIBLE STUDIES

CD's of Sermons and Bible Studies will be made available for those who request them. Contact Brian Schweisthal with any requests. Brian's cell phone is 715-529-8342 and his email address is brians8881@gmail.com.

CONFIRMATIONS:

Eric Benson - April 7th, 2013
Blayde Bowe - April 7th, 2013

FUNERALS:

Melvin Dommer - April 8th, 2013

BOARD OF EDUCATION NEWS:

Sunday School: The final session of Sunday School will be Sunday, May 19th. The children will sing in the Worship Service that morning. Sunday School will resume on Sunday, September 8th, 2013. We are hoping to have enough teachers to hold four class levels. On behalf of Zion Lutheran Church, the Board of Education thanks those teachers and substitutes who help make this another year of spiritual growth for our Zion youth.

Vacation Bible School will be held Sunday, July 28th - Thursday, August 1st from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. The evenings will again begin with a light supper. The curriculum, entitled "From Above" will be purchased from Higher Things.

Youth Kwik Trip Script may be purchased most Sunday mornings in the back entrance from Kathy Michels or Tuesday - Friday during office hours from Tricia.

Youth collection of aluminum beverage cans: You may bring the aluminum cans to the green plastic can in the church garage.

All fundraising money which we get from recycling the cans and the 10% from the Kwik Trip Script sold will go into the Youth Scholarship Fund to be used to assist youth in attending district or national retreats and conventions

A MESSAGE FROM THE FELLOWSHIP BOARD:

February and March were busy months for the Fellowship board with the Lenten season and Easter. We greatly appreciated all who participated in the fellowship opportunities during this special time. A huge thanks to those that provided the food for the Wednesday suppers and the Easter breakfast and to those that helped in any other way. None of this would be possible without the congregation being involved. In April we hosted a reception for our newly confirmed youth. May will bring our second time to serve a supper before the Ascension Day service. Once again we will be treated to Brian Schweisthal's super delicious pizzas. If you missed out on this last year be sure to attend this time. The date is Thursday, May 9th. Serving will be from 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. with a free will offering being taken. The church service will follow at 6:30 p.m.

WOMEN'S SOCIETY NEWS:

The Women's Society meeting for April was cancelled due to bad weather. Our next meeting will be Thursday, May 9th, beginning at 1:00 p.m. All ladies are welcome to join us.

RADIO & FLOWERS:

If you would like to furnish altar flowers or sponsor a radio broadcast for a special occasion please call the office. **Altar flowers** are **\$30.00** at Gordys if **you pick up** yourself or **\$40.00** if you would like them **delivered** to the church. You also may bring your own flowers. **The radio broadcast is \$76.00.**

THANK YOU

The family of Ken Blake thank Pastor Stark and Pastor Rose for their pastor care, the Women's Society for their cards, all who sent cards, called and those who kept Ken in their prayers during the last 3 months. A special thank you to Barb Berthiaume for her homemade chicken soup. We thank and praise God for helping us through this stressful time. Ken is in rehab and should be home soon.

How to Witness to Jesus' Love

All Christians say that they love Jesus. The problem is in the execution. How is that love shown? Is every opportunity to share Jesus' name good and appropriate? Jesus ate and drank with sinners and tax collectors, the worst people of His day. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' " (Matthew 11:19). He was not afraid to associate with low-lives and the people rejected by the world. We too should not be afraid of what others might say about our witness.

Did Jesus get drunk with "sinners" or encourage their lifestyles and beliefs? To promote sin is sin itself, which our holy Lord never did. Witnessing about Jesus is good, but not if it denies the Jesus we claim to love. We must be careful not to contradict His truth with our actions or words. To give the impression that sin and false teaching are fine and have our approval, confesses that Jesus is a liar and we don't take ourselves seriously. Jesus was not actually a "glutton and a drunkard," that was merely his reputation for being faithful and loving. If He had been really a sinner, we would still be in our sins and witnessing about Jesus would be worthless.

Jesus went to those who did not claim to be religious and did not mind associating with them, because they were lost. But to the religious leaders, He was not so kind. The pharisees were not ignorant of the truth. They rejected Jesus as the Son of God. They were sinners, but they did not admit it. The question is not whether we confess, but how. Everyone confesses something, the question is: "What are we confessing?" It is not merely mouthing Jesus' name or repeating a Bible verse that confesses the truth. Witnessing often requires correction of error. How would parents raise faithful children if they never forbid anything or said no to their kids' wishes? We, as a scriptural church body, are only allowed in the public arena when a positive message is expected, not the whole truth, which does reject error and unbelief.

Our confession is important, but we will not save the world or change hearts. Jesus has already redeemed mankind from sin and the Holy Spirit calls people through the proclamation of grace *and* sin (not just love and acceptance). We confess because it pleases our Father: "everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

A good witness will not win us friends. That is because we confess on the Father's terms, not the world's. The world wants us to love by doing what they want—to really be a "sinner" like them. By making a truly godly confession, we should expect to be persecuted like Jesus, not praised:

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame (I Peter 3).

While we are concerned with what others think about us as a church, we are not to accept beliefs against Scripture. Faithfulness to Christ's Word determines what is a good confession. That is shown not when it is easy and everyone else is doing it, but in difficult circumstances. Jesus confessed the Father when dying

and being rejected by the men He made in love. The fear of death and the world's mocking did not cause our God to cave into the demands of unbelief: "save yourself, and come down from the cross!" (Mark 15:30).

We must respect President Obama and pray for him as our leader, since government is instituted by God Himself. However, we should not agree with his personal actions or beliefs when they contradict God's Word. At our President's inauguration this year, a pastor was set to say a prayer. Then it came up that he made a negative statement about homosexuality in the past. Rev. Louie Giglio, over 15 years ago, "invoked a biblical passage often interpreted to require gay people to be executed and argued that homosexuals choose to be gay." For that "sin" he was removed, to find someone more in-line with the president's personal beliefs (in the actual prayer by Episcopalian Pastor Luis León, "gay" people were mentioned, but not Christ).

Since our president publicly approves of sexual relations between those of the same sex, his idea of "fellowship" required someone whose presence would not contradict his sexual rights agenda. Why does the world take fellowship so seriously, but Christians do not? Of course, practicing homosexuality is an abomination before God. Rev. Giglio was removed for quoting a Bible passage and saying it still applied. That was a good confession to God (to not cave in and approve of sin just to get his face on TV), but not according to the world. Unfortunately, if the world sets the stage and terms of our public confession, sin will never be confronted and Christ will not be confessed as the Savior from sin.

If Rev. Morris, the LCMS pastor who prayed at the Newtown joint prayer service, had wanted to pray at the inauguration, would he have been allowed? No, because the pagans of this world would have been outraged, since they hate the truth of God we publicly confess. Why should we be beholden to the world's idea of love? At the Newtown prayer service, the mood was different than the inauguration—showing unity was more important to the world than making a confession about beliefs. However, it was a false unity, a sham. Other gods and false gospels were being promoted in the joint "confession" that day—not the truth we stand for (note that Rev. Morris participated as an official minister of our Synod, not as an attendee, which does not mark complete agreement.). His confession was accepted by the world, but it was not a good or clear confession of what we as a church stand for. The people sharing the pulpit that day could not even agree on who is the true God.

We know it was a poor confession, because there was no outrage or blow-back from the world. Only when the LCMS pastor was criticized and questioned by his church, did the world raise a fuss. To question the unity the world so desperately desires in its civil prayer services, is to be a "sinner," like Jesus. We failed to dance according to their tune, even though our beliefs are ridiculed and excluded from the public spotlight the rest of the time.

We don't like to be on the sideline and ignored. Does that mean we should confess only when we are loved by the world? No, we must confess all the time. Refraining from fake shows of unity is a better and much more difficult confession. If invited to an orgy, a party intended for debauchery and sexual immorality, should we go to confess Jesus' name? What if we take a Bible and just watch and pray? By no means, we are to abstain from sin and not promote it by our presence. We are to "hate even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh" (Jude 23). Our absence actually can in certain circumstances be a far better confession than merely saying the syllables "Je-sus."

A witness or confession should always be made, but it will not always be positive or accepted. Jesus did not die to let us do whatever our sinful nature pleases. If a friend chooses to sin, he must be warned. But by our witness, we cannot participate in the sin itself—that would be a poor confession. We are not called to confess only when the TV cameras are rolling and the world expects us to say what they want. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

We should be prepared to "suffer for righteousness' sake." We will be labeled a "sinner" and suffer, like Jesus, for a faithful witness. But to sin or give assent to false teaching is to contradict God's will. Jesus, right before saying He ate and drank with sinners, said: "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' " The world's tune changes. At times they want our presence and positive confession (the joint prayer service), while mostly they don't (the inauguration). A good and true confession will cut across the grain of the world and be difficult, just as Jesus' confession of the Father earned Him death in this world, but resurrection from the Father.

Our calling is to being faithful to Jesus, not to save the world. Your concern is your neighbor, friends, spouse, children, and grandchildren. Do they know and love Jesus' Word? Are they denying God in word or deed? Are they receiving forgiveness in preaching and the Lord's Supper regularly? Do we speak up when activities of this world take precedent over God's Word? Do we fear to speak against sin before God, because the world says it is not sin? That is when our confession is needed.

Do we confess only when it easy or also when we will be ridiculed and called a "sinner"? Who would even dare to offend the world by saying that God's Word is more important than a sporting event, or by making our children attend church rather than play a game that the world expects us at? The truth is that we are scared and we secretly want the world's love and attention. We long to fit in with everyone else and not rock the boat. We desire attention in the public square and to witness proudly to Jesus, but we do not want to suffer for it or face rejection. So we silently take opinion polls in our minds, rather than listen to the clear Word of God and act on it. Our love for the true God is lacking and we must repent of this. We fear the world too much to confess the truth at all times.

Thankfully, Jesus came and confessed with His life and blood for you. We are accepted on account of His holy deeds in the face of death. This good life by God's Son is our only hope of escape from this world and our sin. It confesses us righteous by faith.

Speaking the full truth that Jesus came to save real sinners and wants repentance will never be accepted by the world. Having no other gods before the true God will not win you popularity, but by it you will be saved. While we must confess, we are to do so by the eternal, loving Father's terms, not the terms of the world, which change like a jukebox. May the only true God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, give us the faith and courage to confess before Him, when it is inconvenient to the world and our own sinful flesh.

Pastor Philip Hale

St. Paul, Bancroft; St. John, Lyons, NE

