



June

2013

## Pastor's Page



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### Thoughts on “Youth Ministry”

Two of our youth and I attended the *Higher Things* (HT) conference last year. I think I can speak for the group, that the worship was faithful, the catechesis enlightening, and the social activities fun. We are attending HT conference again next month in Indiana. We, as a congregation, can learn a lot from *Higher Things* about youth ministry. Their motto is *worship, work, play*. They observe that most Americans, “worship their work, play in their worship, and work at their play.” Therefore, they, rightly, turn that around and teach that *worship* is the place where Jesus is truly present giving His gifts, and so should be reverent (as it is here at Zion) and not *playful*. They also teach that the *work* time (that means learning in Bible class and catechesis) should be taken seriously, reverently, and is not the time to *play*. If we expect our kids to take Math Class seriously at school, how much more should we expect of them during sermon, Bible and Catechism Class, which teach the things of God that give eternal life?

I agree with the HT motto. Obviously, we all know that the *worship* and *work* part of the equation is how Jesus defines the Christian Church and why and how we exist. Youth can get the *play*, that is, social activities, anywhere. And, I believe they do. The days of *Walther League* are over--where most youth got their activities through the church. Schedules are much busier today with school activities, club sports, and the like. Sundays and Wednesdays are no longer protected church times by the world. So, there isn't the same need for activities through the church now days. Additionally, there are simply less youth around due to the explosion of preventing children through birth control (and abortion) starting in the 1960-70's. But just because there are less youth alive, and the ones that are, are much busier, that doesn't mean that we can't still offer activities for our youth. We Christians aren't against fun☺ In Christ, we can have fun without feeling like we need to mix in *worship* or *work*. Youth are smart. They can smell the bait and switch—they come for volleyball, but find themselves sitting in a long devotion. We need to keep these worship, work, and play categories separate. I thank *Higher Things* for teaching these proper distinctions.

I also want to thank all the members who have helped with our youth—doing monthly game nights, etc. These are great to offer! As long as we constantly remember why we, the Church, exist, and that *worship, work, and play* are separate categories with separate pastoral and lay responsibilities, we will be OK. My encouragement to parents is this: We want to be careful not to teach our kids that it is OK to skip *worship* and *work* if there aren't enough fun activities, or if the pastor or worship services aren't “cool” enough. How many youth have left the LCMS and went to the mega church down the road that denies Baptism saves or that Communion forgives sins, because it has brighter lights and better pizza? God is clear that it is solely the parents' responsibility that their child is learning His Word—in the home, worship, Sunday school, and Bible class. If we teach our kids that it OK that they skip *worship* and *work*, because there isn't enough *play*, we are instilling in them the wrong expectations. It really is no wonder that many 20-30 something's have left the Church and spend their time feasting on brats by the lake instead of Christ in the Church. There will come a time when our kids will leave the home and conclude that the pastor is no longer young and fun, rock concerts make them feel better than a ‘christian’ version, and that they don't desire the congregational social activities anymore (potlucks and business meetings☺). If fun, not forgiveness, is what they are taught to look for in Church, we have failed.

Parents, I promise to you with the help of God, as I did in my ordination vows, to faithfully preach and teach you and your kids. I encourage you to make sure they are present to hear Christ's Word here and in the home. I plan to model some home devotion resources in our Sunday morning Bible class soon. I also encourage all of us to visit the HT website: [www.higherthings.org](http://www.higherthings.org) HT also has daily devotions, written and video, for youth. (think about your kids, grandkids, and great grand kids).

In Christ,  
Pastor

## The Proper Use and the Inappropriate Abuse of Ecclesiastical Supervision

Properly speaking ecclesiastical (churchly) supervision happens primarily within the context of a Christian congregation. In this fundamental unit of the Church, it is the primary responsibility of the divinely called pastor to be the ecclesiastical supervisor within the congregation. It is the pastor's first responsibility to supervise himself - his doctrine and life. As a called servant of the Word, the pastor is obligated by his sacred ordination/installation vows to preach or teach nothing that is not in accord with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and to adorn his life with holy living with the help of God.

It is the called pastor's sacred responsibility to ensure that no false doctrine be presented in any venue within the congregation whether it be in his sermon, the hymns, the choir anthem, the Bible class, and especially in public worship. But what if the pastor (who is also a sinner), fails in this responsibility? Who is to provide churchly supervision for him? Primarily this must fall to the members of the congregation. This is one reason Lutherans have always thoroughly instructed catechumens prior to becoming adult members of a congregation. God's sheep must be able to know the difference between true and false doctrine and, if necessary, judge the doctrine of their shepherd if he should stray into error.

But doesn't all this talk about "supervision" and "judging" sound legalistic, loveless, or intolerant? First, there is absolutely nothing loving about error! False doctrine or teaching is simply the most loveless thing that can occur within a congregation. Why? Because false teaching always "profanes the name of God among us" (1st Petition meaning, LP, SC), diminishes the believers' assurance of his salvation, and always points to something or someone other than Christ crucified and risen for the confidence that our sins are fully forgiven. That is the nature of false teaching (heterodoxy). Therefore, it is the most loving thing to do to help a fellow Christian understand the truth of the Gospel of Christ and to avoid the false teaching that diminishes Christ's teaching. There is really no virtue in error! There is no benefit to false teaching and it does not deserve to be tolerated within the Church.

As St. Paul says in I Corinthians 13:4-6: "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth."

A phenomenon that is far too often seen within our beloved Synod is that some folks falsely pit the retention of pure doctrine against Christian "love". This is a false division. Christian love rejoices and insists in the truth of God's Word being preserved. Christian love helps a brother or sister see their error clearly so that they may rejoice in the truth and preserve the unity of the one, true faith and the unity of the Church. In reality, false teaching/doctrine divides us and erodes our assurance of forgiveness and salvation. Love rejoices in the truth, and does ***not*** rejoice in error!

So, what about ecclesiastical supervision within The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod?

While Synodical ecclesiastical supervision on paper has the very same goal spoken about by St. Paul in the text

cited above: Loving correction to prevent losing the assurance of forgiveness and eternal life so as to preserve the unity of the Church; in our day ecclesiastical supervision has evolved into being primarily concerned with maintaining or forfeiting membership in the Synod.

Perhaps it would be well to remember the very first objective of the Synod in our Constitution: "The Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall - 1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Ephesians 4:3-6; I Cor. 1:10)...and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy..." (Constitution of the LCMS, Article III - Objectives)

The first objective of the Synod is the first objective because it is the most important objective. After all, a Synod is formed so that those of like mind might gather together to retain and promote biblical, Confessional theology purely so that the fullness of the Gospel is not hindered by error. Therefore, ecclesiastical supervision is most grievously abused when it is not done!

Those who have been elected to serve our Synod as ecclesiastical supervisors have demonstrated rather consistently, that they frequently make their judgments based on the Constitution and Bylaws. The problem with this is that Churchly (ecclesiastical) supervision must be based primarily on Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and if the Constitution – and if the Bylaws do not conform to Scripture and the Confessions, then no judgment contrary to them is to be considered. Time and again we have witnessed our elected ecclesiastical supervisors make determinations on the basis of the best interest of the institution of the Synod, rather than be primarily guided by Holy Scripture and our Confessions. Therefore, ecclesiastical supervision is grievously abused when the institution is given precedence over Scripture and the Confessions.

**Case in point:** Rev. Dr. Matthew Becker. Rev. Becker is a rostered LCMS clergyman who is also a professor at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana. Dr. Becker is also an outspoken promoter of the ordination of women into the pastoral office and a staunch defender of evolution as an adequate explanation of God's creative activity. Both these positions are patently unbiblical and at odds with the Lutheran Confessions. Despite repeated publications by Dr. Becker respecting both these errors, inadequate ecclesiastical supervision has left him on our Synod's clergy roster and eligible for a call to any congregation, university, or seminary of our Synod. Thus, his loveless errors continue to do damage within our Synod by dividing us, lessening our Christian unity, and promoting a "theology" which erodes the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

**Case in point:** The toleration of open communion in many of our Synodical congregations. In accord with Holy Scripture our Synod officially holds to the practice of Closed Communion in which those who celebrate the Lord's Supper are in agreement in every article of Christian doctrine and that this agreement is the standard of admission to the Lord's Table.

**Case in point:** The continuing practice of using laymen to perform Word and Sacrament ministry within LCMS congregations which is a direct contradiction of Augsburg Confession, Article XIV which says: "Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call." (Dau/Bente, second edition, p. 39.) Despite clear directions from our Confessions, multiple districts still train and

place laymen into Word and Sacrament ministries within their own districts, and our Synod still retains laymen who also serve in these capacities.

The examples noted above are just a few illustrations of the many failures of proper ecclesiastical supervision which are more thoroughly listed out in the ACELC's ["Evidence of Errors" Documents](#)..

Ecclesiastical supervision is essential to maintaining the theological integrity of our congregations and Synod. If not done, or if done based on "Institutional" concerns rather than Holy Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions, then our Synod suffers and is in terrible trouble. If such abuses of ecclesiastical supervision continue unabated, then the only Lutheran Synod still in existence since 1840's will either crumble or become a church body that has lost its Lutheran character altogether. There is no virtue to being Lutheran in name only.

Please join the [congregations of the ACELC](#) in continually praying for those who have been elected as our Synod's ecclesiastical supervisors: The President of the Synod, Matthew Harrison; our five Synodical Vice Presidents, the 35 District Presidents, and the Circuit Counselors who serve under them. Pray that each of these men may steadfastly prize our doctrine and its practice over the "peace" of the institution – for institutional unity secured with the price of the inclusion of error is simply an illusion of unity. Pray that they will let Holy Scripture speak and that they will act accordingly. And if you share the concerns cited here, please consider joining our cause by [becoming a member](#) of the [ACELC](#). [www.acelc.net](http://www.acelc.net)

Let the words of C.F.W. Walther in the Fourth Evening Lecture of his great work, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, serve as guidance for us all:

"When a theologian is asked to yield and make concessions in order that peace may at last be established in the Church, but refuses to do so even in a single point of doctrine, such an action looks to human reason like intolerable stubbornness, yea, like down-right malice. That is the reason why such theologians are loved and praised by few men during their lifetime. Most men rather revile them as disturbers of the peace, yea, as destroyers of the kingdom of God. They are regarded as men worthy of contempt. But in the end it becomes manifest that this very determined, inexorable tenacity in clinging to the pure teaching of the divine Word by no means tears down the Church; on the contrary, it is just this which, in the midst of greatest dissension, builds up the Church and ultimately brings about genuine peace. Therefore, woe to the Church which has no men of this stripe, men who stand as watchmen on the walls of Zion, sound the alarm whenever a foe threatens to rush the walls, and rally to the banner of Jesus Christ for a holy war!" ...Let us, then, my friends, likewise hold fast the treasure of the pure doctrine. Do not consider it strange if on that account you must bear reproach the same as they did. Consider that the word of Sirach, chap. 4,33: 'even unto death fight for justice, and God will overthrow thy enemies for thee,' will come true in our case too. Let this be your slogan: Fight unto death in behalf of the truth, and the Lord will fight for you!" (*The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, C. F. W. Walther, page 28.)

Rev. Richard A. Bolland

Assistant Pastor - Emeritus

Gloria Christi Lutheran Church

Greeley, Colorado

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**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL  
THE ACTIVE MEMBERS WHO  
HAVE JUNE BIRTHDAYS!!**

Karen Ewings	6/1
Rita La Nou	6/2
Linda Woll	6/5
Dean Verch	6/6
Arlene Potts	6/9
Jenna Welke	6/9
Briar Schoelzel	6/11
Dale Potts	6/14
Karles Blake	6/15
Anamae Verch	6/19
Tony Welke	6/21

♥ **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:** ♥

Roderick & Laurie Hurt	6/10/1972
Jeff & Regina Arndt	6/11/1994
Russ & Jan Blair	6/12/1964
Greg & Beth Welke	6/12/1993
Joe & Arlene Hakes	6/22/1957

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

Mavis Berry	Emma Bollom
Loretta Erickson	Helen Hempelman

**PRAYER REQUEST**

If you would like a prayer on Sunday morning, please contact the secretary during the week. If it is last minute, you can also catch pastor before service.

**WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:**

Each Wednesday at 9:30am 14-17 men and women meet in the Fireside Room to go over the upcoming Sunday's scripture lessons. Lively discussions prevail and there is always room for more participants.

**WOMEN'S SOCIETY NEWS:**

Women's Society met on Thursday, May 9, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. Eleven members, three guests and Pastor attended. After the table prayer, Arlene Hakes and Rosa Blake served cake and ice cream. Pastor led us in devotions based on "No Exception to the Rule". We all will die but there is certainty of life beyond death for all who believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. For just as surely as we die, so surely shall we in Christ all be made alive. A short business meeting was held. The Society thanks Ed and Kathy Heidtke for purchasing and installing the new faucet over the large sinks. We will meet at the Fill Inn Restaurant for lunch on Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. All ladies of the congregation are most welcome to join us. Please call the church office or Rosa Blake (715-723-1039) by noon on Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> if you plan to attend.

**THE FELLOWSHIP BOARD**

The Fellowship Board extends a huge "Thank you" to Brian Schweisthal and his crew for preparing the super pizza supper held on Ascension Day. Thanks also to those who helped with the set up, the clean up and to the members who attended this special fellowship opportunity. Please mark Sunday August 4<sup>th</sup> on your calendars. This is the date for our annual *Worship in the Park* and potluck picnic. Watch for more information in the July Parish Life and future Sunday bulletins.

**NEWS FROM LWML - "MISSION IN MOTION" PLEDGE WALK:**

Dianne Schroeder and Carol Gale will be attending the National Convention in Pittsburgh, PA June 27-30. Both ladies are planning to go on the Mission Walk and are accepting donations of money. The money collected will help fund mission grants throughout our nation and the world. They are also hoping to bring with them lots of gifts from the heart. If you would like to contribute diapers or a "kit" they will add it to their luggage for the bus ride. All items need to be New but bargains can be had at the dollar stores.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION NEWS:**

**Vacation Bible School:** This year the theme will be >>> "*FROM ABOVE*" presented by "*Higher Things*". **Sun., July 28<sup>th</sup> thru Thurs. Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> 5p.m. to 7:30p.m.** Beginning with a light supper, followed by Devotions, Lesson, Music, and Craft times. Mark your calendars. Pray for us, and about who you might invite to come to VBS and learn more of the gift of our Baptism into Christ Jesus.

**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