

# **CHURCH LEADER'S HANDBOOK**



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For the  
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(Malawi)

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For General Use

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# Lesson 1

## The Work of a Christian Congregation and its Leaders

What is the purpose of a Christian congregation?  
Who may be a leader in a Christian congregation?  
What does God tell leaders to do?

Let's study God's Word to find the answers to these questions.

### **Question 1 - What does God want Christian congregations to do?**

The Apostle Paul started many Christian congregations. One of them was in the city of Ephesus. When he left that congregation he told the leaders of that congregation:

***Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard*** (Acts 20:28-31)!

About what dangers does Paul warn these leaders?

*He warns that people will try to "distort the truth" in order to destroy the faith of Christians.*

What does Paul tell these leaders to do because of these dangers?

*Paul tells them to "keep watch," to "be shepherds" and to "be on guard."*

Thus, in this passage Paul tells us the most important thing that he wants leaders in congregations to do:

- **Take care of those who already believe.**

Because the Jews in Jerusalem tried to kill Christians after Jesus' resurrection, many fled. Some of them began a congregation at the city of Antioch. In the book of Acts, we hear about something that happened at this congregation one Sunday.

***While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabus and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues*** (Acts 13:2-5).

This congregation at Antioch had many leaders who took care of the believers. But in this passage someone else told the congregation what to do. Who was that?

*It was the Holy Spirit.*

What did the Holy Spirit tell them to do?

*To send out Paul (Saul) and Barnabus as missionaries.*

What did Paul and Barnabus do?

*They told the good news of Jesus Christ to those who had not heard it.*

In this passage we see a second thing which God wants Christian congregations to do which is to

- **Tell the good news of Jesus to those who have not heard it.**

## **Question 2 - What names does the Bible give to leaders in the Christian congregations?**

The Bible uses different names to describe leaders in congregations. In Ephesians chapter four, Paul talks about four different types of leaders:

***It was [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:11,12).***

What four types of leaders does Paul speak about?

*Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.*

- **Apostles** are those sent out by Jesus
- **Prophets** are those who speak or preach the good news
- **Evangelists** are those who bring the good news to those who have not heard it.
- **Pastors and teachers** teach God's Word to people.

Who called these people to lead?

*Christ called them to lead.*

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul speaks about three other types of leaders:

***If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer (in other translations "bishop"), he desires a noble task***  
(1 Timothy 3:1).

***Deacons, likewise are to be men worthy of respect*** (1 Timothy 3:8).

***The elders who direct the affairs of the church are worthy of double honor*** (1 Timothy 5:17).

What are the names of other leaders that Paul mentions in 1 Timothy?

*They are overseers or bishops, deacons and elders.*

- **overseers or bishops** were those who "oversaw" all the work done in a congregation, similar to what a pastor does today.
- **deacons** took care of the "business" of the congregations such as money and buildings.
- **elders** helped members of the congregation with their spiritual needs.

There is no law that Christian congregations today must give their leaders the same names. However, it is interesting to see the work that they did. Of the seven different types of leaders mentioned in these passages, six used the word of God in some manner. Only one type, the deacons, dealt with "business" matters.

### **Question 3 - Who may be a leader in a Christian congregation?**

1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 tell us what kind of people can be leaders in Christian congregations. As we study them, we will see that these are things that God wants in all Christians. But God wants them abundantly in his leaders. Please read **1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9**.

- **God wants leaders who are**

- **Blameless, above reproach** (Titus 1:6 and 1 Timothy 3:2)

This does not mean that leaders must be sinless. Rather it means that a leader must have ***“a good reputation with outsiders so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap”*** (1 Timothy 3:7). When a leader does not have a good reputation, or a good name, people will not listen to his words, even though he may be speaking the truth of God’s Word. A bad reputation hinders people from listening to God’s Word.

A ***“large”*** (in people’s eyes) or ***repeated sin*** may ruin a person’s reputation. If a person’s reputation has been damaged in this way, he cannot be, or continue, as a leader. It may be possible for a leader who has committed a ***“small”*** (in people’s eyes) or ***one-time sin*** to continue in the ministry in a far off location.

There can be no “rule book” for these situations. The general principle, or rule, is that each leader must have a good reputation and if a person does not have a good reputation, he cannot be a leader. However, it is possible for a person to ***regain a good reputation***. In order to do this, a person needs to live a good life for a long time. For example, the Apostle Paul received his first call from the Lord many years after he was converted from being a persecutor of the Christian Church.

- **Temperate, self-controlled, respectable, disciplined** (1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8)

All four of these qualifications are related. A servant of the Lord must think before he acts. He must be in control of his emotions so that he can resist the temptations of the devil.

- **Gentle, hospitable, upright, one who loves what is good** (1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:8)

These qualifications tell how a leader lives with other people. He must show love to all by being friendly (gentle, hospitable). Yet, at the same time, the leader must stay away both from evil places and evil people (upright, one who loves what is good). Being in evil places and being close to evil people not only tempt a leader to do evil, but may damage his reputation as well. A proverb says, “Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you what you are like.”

- **Able to teach** (1 Timothy 3:2)

A leader must not only know the truths of God’s Word, he must be able to teach them and apply them for his people.

### **The husband of but one wife** (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6)

Here and in other places, the Lord shows that he wants men to be the leaders in the congregations. These men must either have one wife or no wife. Those who have more than one wife may not serve as leaders.

- **God does NOT want a leader who is**

### **A lover of money, pursuing dishonest gain** (1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7)

If the leader is not careful with the church's money, or if the leader goes into debt, he may also receive a bad reputation with everyone who lives around him.

### **given to much wine** (1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7)

Controlled drinking of alcohol is not forbidden. But if a leader is unable to control his drinking, or if any drinking damages his reputation with other people, he should avoid it. Public drunkenness and addiction to alcohol damages a person's reputation and thus disqualifies him from being a leader.

### **quarrelsome, quick-tempered, violent** (1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7)

Note that anger is not forbidden. Jesus himself became angry with people during his ministry. But, starting fights, not being in control of your emotions and hurting people brings dishonor to the word, the congregation and the leader.

### **What do you remember?**

What are the two "jobs" that the Lord asks congregations to do?  
What are the leaders of this congregation called?  
Do we use these names in the same way that the Bible does?  
What things does God want to see in the lives of congregation leaders?  
What things does God not want to see in the lives of congregation leaders?

### **What do you think?**

1. What is this congregation doing to take care of those who already believe?
2. What is this congregation doing to take the good news to those who have not heard or believed it?
3. What does this congregation need to improve in these two "jobs?"
4. Do the members of this congregation know what kind of leaders God wants?
5. How can we teach the people what kind of leaders God wants?
6. What sins damage a person's reputation so that he cannot be a leader in a congregation?





## Lesson 2

# Called Workers, Congregation Officers And Meetings

What should pastors and called workers do in their congregations?  
What leaders do congregations need?  
What meetings do congregations need?

Let's see what other Lutheran congregations are doing.

### **Question 1 - What are the goals of every Christian congregation?**

In our last lesson, we learned from God's Word that God wants his congregations to do two things:

- **To share the good news with those who do not yet know or believe it,**  
and
- **To help believers to grow in their faith and Christian life.**

### **Question 2 - What is the purpose of a pastor or other called worker?**

Congregations call pastors or other called workers (evangelists, pre-seminary students and vicars) so that these men take care of the souls of the congregation's members with the word of God. It is helpful to remember that the word "pastor" means "shepherd." The members of the congregation are his "sheep."

Most members of the congregation will not know God's Word as well as their called worker, and will not have as much time as the pastor to use God's Word.

Thus, a pastor (or other called worker) will

- **Use God's Word**

By preparing and preaching sermons and preparing and teaching classes which explain and apply God's Word, and

By bringing the Word of God to

- unbelievers,
- sick and old members,
- members who have sinned but not repented, and
- those who have troubles.

In addition, the pastor (or other called worker) will also want to

- **Train others to use God's Word**

By studying sermons and lessons with lay teachers and preachers, and

By training church leaders about their responsibilities and helping them to carry out those responsibilities.

### **Question 3 - What leaders does a congregation need?**

Most congregations have officers and elders. But in most congregations these officers and elders may not realize what they should be doing.

- **Chairman** - His main role is organizing others.

1. He faithfully attends worship services.
2. He leads church meetings.
3. He examines all aspects of the congregation's program.
4. He brings problems to the church council or congregation.
5. He makes sure that all decisions of the church council are carried out.

**Main Qualification - He is able to organize and encourage people.**

- **Vice-Chairman** - He helps the chairman to do his work and does the work of the chairman when he is gone.

- **Secretary** - His main job is keeping records.

1. He keeps the congregational records:

Worship Attendance,  
Class Attendance, and  
Membership Records.

2. He keeps written records of congregational meetings:

Church Council Meetings and  
Congregational Meetings.

**Main Qualification - He is always at worship services (like the chairman) and he is able to write clearly and neatly.**

- **Treasurer** - His main role is to keep the congregation's money and use it as the congregation directs.

1. He collects, counts, records and announces the offerings every Sunday.
2. He guards the money of the congregation.
3. He uses the money of the congregation only as the congregation or church council determines.
4. He writes and makes monthly reports to the congregation of income and expenditures.

**Main Qualification - He regularly attends worship services, is honest and is able to work with numbers.**

(Sometimes congregations want a woman to guard the money of the congregation. This is possible if all realize that she is acting as a servant rather than a leader. It is, however, rather sad if no honest man can be found in the congregation.)

- **Other Officers**

The following officers should be chosen by the pastor together with the church council, rather than elected:

**Deacon** - one or more men who take care of a congregation's property including the church building, the house, books, etc.

**Preaching Elder** - he preaches at the congregation when the pastor or other called worker cannot preach the sermon there. He does this only after studying the sermon with the pastor or called worker.

**Teaching Elder** - he assists the leader or called worker with teaching Sunday school or other classes. Again, he should always study the lesson with the leader or called worker before teaching it.

**Visitation Elder** - one or more men who assist the leader or called worker in visiting the sick, making evangelism visits or in warning unrepentant members.

## **Question 4 - What meetings should a Christian congregation have?**

- **Congregational Meetings**

Every congregation should have a meeting once a year at which the officers are elected. Special meetings may be held to discuss big issues such as a call or building project. At these meetings men only should vote.

In 1 Timothy 2:11,12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34, the Apostle Paul says that it is God's will that women should not have authority over men. By voting, women could have authority over men. Therefore, in order to avoid this, women should not vote in congregational meetings. They may, however, speak.

- **Church Council Meetings**

The four elected officers of the church council (chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer) should meet at least once a month. The pastor or called worker will give a report at this meeting. In this meeting they should discuss all parts of the congregation's work. This would include:

Worship services  
Confirmation and Bible Classes  
Sunday School  
Offerings and Church Treasury  
Church Property

Evangelism  
Church Discipline Cases  
Choir  
Sick and Old Members  
Funerals and Weddings

They will also discuss any special problems and plan for the future. The church council should report all decisions from its meeting to the entire congregation.

- **Parish Union Meetings**

A parish union is two or more congregations which share and support a pastor or other called worker. A parish union council, made up of the chairman and vice-chairman of each congregation, should meet regularly to discuss:

Worker salary  
Worker housing  
Organization of called worker's work  
Work the parish union can do together

**What do you remember?**

What are the two main "jobs" of every Christian congregation?  
What two things does a pastor or other called worker have that most congregational members do not have?  
What two things do pastors and other called workers do for congregations?  
What four officers does every congregation need?  
What are the main jobs that these officers do?  
How often should these officers meet?  
What three kinds of elders are needed?  
How should elders be chosen?  
What does a congregation do each year in a meeting?  
Why don't women vote in Lutheran congregations?  
What is the purpose of parish unions?

**What do you think?**

1. Do the officers in our congregation do all the things suggested in the lesson? If not, why not?
2. Do the elders in our congregation do all the things suggested in the lesson? If not, why not?
3. How often does the church council meet and what does it discuss at its meetings?
4. Does the church council discuss all the things suggested in the lesson? If not, why not?

## Lesson 3

# Congregational Activities

In the last two lessons, we have seen that one of the important jobs that God has given to Christian congregations is to **take care of those who already believe**.

We can only take care of those who already believe with one thing - the Word of God. In this lesson we want to look at how we can use the Word of God with different groups of people

### **Activity 1 - With Children**

The first way that a congregation can use the Word of God with children is in Holy Baptism. Baptism is water connected with God's Word. The Word gives power to Baptism so that it is able to create faith in the hearts of children and even tiny babies. (The subject of Baptism is part of Lesson 7 - The Sacraments.) Church leaders must remind parents of their responsibility to bring their children to Baptism.

The congregation can also use the Word of God with children in Sunday School. But a good Sunday School takes much hard work:

- Choosing teachers
- Training teachers
- Meeting with teachers before every class
- Meeting with parents
- Purchasing materials
- Storing materials

### **Activity 2 - With Young People**

The congregation needs to care for young people, generally those between 12 and 18 years of age. These young people need:

- Confirmation classes
- Classes about choosing a spouse
- Classes about being a good husband/wife
- Classes about resisting temptations from "friends"

Young people also need a choir that studies God's Word and sings songs that give glory to God rather than songs that sound nice or impress people. The pastor, or called worker of a congregation should review all songs before the choir sings in church. Choir practices should begin with a brief devotion or Bible class.

Finally, many young people stop coming to church. They need to be warned about what they are doing and encouraged to hear God's Word and receive the sacraments.

### **Activity 3 - With Women**

Women need Bible classes that teach them how the Lord wants to use their gifts and abilities at home and in the congregation. For instance women can help the congregation by visiting sick and old people, and by helping others who are in need.

#### **Activity 4 - With Needy, Sick and Old**

Many of these people cannot come to worship service or Bible class. The congregation needs to take God's Word and the Lord's Supper to them in their homes.

Members of the congregation (possibly the choir or young people) can help these people in many physical ways as well.

#### **Activity 5 - With All**

So far, we have seen how a congregation can serve groups of people with the Word of God. This was done, because people sometimes forget that all people are not alike.

However, there are a number of things that the congregation can do which will help all its people:

Regular worship services

Regular Bible classes on

- Books of the Bible
- Doctrines
- Topics of interest
- The teachings of other churches

Regular confirmation classes

Warning sinners who do not repent (adultery, witchcraft or superstitions, neglecting the Word of God, etc.)

Comforting those who are troubled by a problem

Helping the family of a member who has died and performing a Christian funeral

Teaching people about God's plan for marriage

Sharing the gospel with others

#### **Activity 6 - Care of Church Property**

But there is even more work that the congregation must do that is not connected with God's Word. They must care for

- its church building,
- its house,
- the worker's transportation needs,
- the congregation's books,
- their offerings, and
- their worker's salary.

#### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this lesson is to show that each congregation has much work to do if it wants to take care of its believers in a good way. Try to discuss all of the work above. Is

it being done in this congregation? Does it need to be done? How can it be done? Who can do it?

### What do you remember?

What "job" has God given to every congregation?

How can a congregation take care of its children's spiritual needs?

How can a congregation take care of its young people's spiritual needs?

How can a congregation take care of its women's spiritual needs?

What activities help all the people spiritually?

What other things does the congregation need to take care of?

### What do you think?

1. Consider what this congregations is doing in the following areas:

- Worship services
- Bible classes
- Visiting
- Sunday School
- Choir
- Women's group

Are these meeting the spiritual needs of our members?

What are the weaknesses?

What can we do better?



# GUIDELINES FOR LUTHERAN CHOIRS

## **1. What is the purpose of a choir?**

The purpose of the choir is to

- Praise and Glorify God (**not themselves**)
- Teach People

## **2. Who may be members of the congregation's choir?**

Since this is the choir of a Lutheran congregation, the choir members will either be

- Confirmed Members, or
- Those In Confirmation Class

## **3. Who chooses the director of the congregation's choir?**

Since the choir is part of the congregation's program,  
The church council:

- Will choose the director
- Will supervise all the activities of the choir

## **4. What does the choir do?**

Obviously the choir will practice and sing at worship services. But a good choir will also

- Pray and study the Bible at its practices
- Sing at funerals
- Visit sick and old members
- Look for other opportunities to serve their Lord

## **5. What does the pastor or called worker do with the choir?**

- He will meet regularly with and advise the choir director
- He will study all songs with the choir director
- He will lead the Bible study at the practices

## Lesson 4

*(Write Lesson 4 to fit your country or mission field.)*

### The Lutheran Church Of Central Africa

#### History

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), a church body in the United States of America, sent missionaries to Africa in 1953. They began work around Lusaka. From 1953 to 1963, the Lutheran Church only existed in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia and was called the Rhodesian Lutheran Church. The WELS mission began work in Nyasaland, now Malawi, in 1963 and the name of the church was changed to the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA). The LCCA was called a "synod," literally a group of congregations "walking together." The same administration took care of matters for both Malawian congregations and Zambian congregations.

During the 1980's the differences between Zambia and Malawi, as well as the difficulties in bringing people from two countries together for meetings became apparent. These problems led the LCCA convention of 1992 to vote overwhelmingly to divide the LCCA into two conferences, each of would operate independently. The pastors from the two conferences meet together each year. And the two conferences train workers together, first at the Lutheran Bible Institute (LBI) in Lilongwe and then at the Lutheran Seminary in Lusaka.

#### Conference Administration

At the present time the organization of each conference of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa is as follows:

There are four officers:

<u>Chairman</u> :	Carries out decisions of the LCCA Organizes meetings Fills vacancies on boards and committees Receives requests for calls and prepares call lists Suspends called workers who have lost their reputation through some sin.
<u>Vice-Chairman</u>	Assistant to the Chairman
<u>Secretary</u>	Keeps and publishes minutes of all meetings Keeps statistics of the synod
<u>Treasurer</u>	Receives and spends money as approved by the synod Makes financial reports

These four men make up the Chairman's Advisory Council which decides on emergency LCCA business.

A conference convention takes place every two years. Delegates to the convention include:

- all pastors,
- officers of the conference, and
- one layman for every five congregations or 500 communicant members

The main job of each convention is to elect officers and members for the conference boards and committees. They hear reports from the Boards and Committees, and make suggestions for the future.

The conference has boards and committees which do work for the conference:

Board for Missions helps new congregations to develop and existing congregations to become independent. When congregations want help in doing something, they must first ask the Board for Missions. The Board for Missions in Malawi has a handbook which tells congregations about the work that it does.

Committee on Finances and Stewardship (Cofas) oversees the financial stewardship of the LCCA and helps congregations to grow in the grace of giving and supporting their worker.

The LBI Board of Control supervises the school in its country according to a curriculum established by the LCCA.

Education Committee oversees the production of educational materials.

Publications Committee oversees the publication and distribution of educational materials.

### **Districts**

The congregations in an area make up a district. At present the districts in Malawi are:

Blantyre Urban  
Central Region  
Chiradzulu  
Mulanje  
Northern Region  
Thyolo  
Zomba Region

The workers and congregations of these areas try to meet together for Bible study, to solve problems that they all have and to encourage each other.

### **The WELS Mission**

The WELS has missionaries in more than thirty countries throughout the world. The WELS Board for World Mission oversees the work of all of these missions. The Administrative Committee for Africa (ACA) is a part of the WELS Board for World Missions. The ACA calls and sends missionaries to Malawi.

The WELS Board for World Missions wants to develop churches which are strong and will not always need help from the WELS. When the WELS began work in Malawi the

missionaries did almost all of the work in congregations. Now both missionaries and national pastors serve congregations. In the future, the WELS hopes that national pastors will be able to serve all the congregations in Malawi. The WELS recognizes that it will be necessary to help the LCCA with money for schools, books and buildings. But the WELS hopes that the congregations of the LCCA will help themselves more and more so that eventually they will not need money from America or anywhere else.

The Administrative Committee for Africa asks the missionaries to do three jobs:

Do work that the LCCA is not able to do by itself (serving congregations when the LCCA cannot with its own leaders, teaching, writing, etc.),  
Oversee the use of WELS money and report on that use to the WELS and  
Help LCCA pastors and leaders by working together with them.

### **What do you remember?**

1. When did the LCCA begin?
2. What is a "synod?"
3. What do the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer of the LCCA do?
4. What jobs do the different boards and committees do?
5. What does the WELS want the LCCA to become?
6. What work do missionaries do?

### **What do you think?**

### **Review and Discussion Questions**

What does the LCCA do for you?  
What do you do for the LCCA?

## Lesson 5

# The Christian Congregation And Its Called Worker

Many congregations have a pastor or called worker who lives with them. Unfortunately, many do not understand the relationship between the members of the congregation and the called worker. In this lesson we will study what the Bible says about the relationship between Christians and their called worker.

### Question 1 - What are KEYS and the UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS?

In Matthew 16:19, Jesus told Peter,

***I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you (singular in Greek) bind on earth has been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth has been loosed in heaven.***

In this passage, the Lord Jesus was talking to his disciple Peter. He gave him the “keys of the kingdom of heaven.” “What do keys do?

*They lock and unlock doors.*

What do the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” do?

*Lock and unlock the doors to heaven.*

In this passage, to whom did Jesus give the keys?

*To Peter.*

In Matthew 18:18 Jesus gives the same thing, but this time to all of his disciples when he says,

***Whatever you (plural in Greek) bind on earth has been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth has been loosed in heaven.***

In this passage, to whom did Jesus give the keys of heaven?

*To all of his disciples.*

The Lord tells us more about the keys, and those terms “binding” and “loosing.” Shortly after he rose from the dead, he appeared to all of his disciples and said,

***“If you (plural in Greek) forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven”*** (John 20:23).

In this passage, what words are used in place of “binding” and “loosing?”

*Forgiving and not forgiving.*

If we put together what these three passages say, we see that Jesus has given the power to open the doors of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ . They do that when they \_\_\_\_\_ sins or refuse to \_\_\_\_\_ sins of other people.

But that does not mean that people can forgive whomever they like and refuse to forgive those they do not like. Read the first Matthew 16 again and you will see that God is the one who first forgives or refuses to forgive someone. So, who is forgiven? Jesus tells us in Mark:

***Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.***

Mark 16:16.

According to this passage, who is saved, or forgiven?

*Those who repent and believe.*

And who is not forgiven?

*Those who do not repent and believe.*

From these three passages we learn what

### **The Bible's teaching about the KEYS is:**

- **In heaven, God forgives sins to those who repent and refuses to forgive those who do not repent.**
- **On earth, God asks people to do exactly what he has already done in heaven: forgive those who repent and refuse to forgive those who do not repent. God calls this the keys.**
- **God gave the Keys first to Peter (in Matthew 16), then to the rest of his disciples (in Matthew 18) and finally to all believers (in John 20).**

In the Old Testament, God chose the Levites to be his special helpers and the descendants of Aaron to be priests. But in the New Testament, all believers have the right to use the keys, that is to proclaim what both the law and the gospel say. Peter, to whom the keys were first given, writes to believers and tells them,

***You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light*** (1 Peter 2:9).

- **This teaching that all believers have the right to use God's Word is called the Universal Priesthood of All Believers.**

### **Question 2 - If all believers have the keys and are priests, why do we need called workers?**

It is true that all believers have the keys and are priests in God's eyes. It is also true that God wants much work to be done in congregations. Not all believers have the abilities, the training and the time to do this work. Therefore, a congregation may often call a person who has the abilities and training to do much of the work that God wants to be

done in congregations. Usually these men do not have other jobs, so they have the time to do this work.

- **Congregations need called workers because not all the members of a congregation have the abilities, training and time to do the work that needs to be done.**

### **Question 3 - Who calls a called worker?**

The Bible clearly says that it is God who calls a called worker. That truth is expressed in Acts 20:28 where Paul says,

***Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.***

According to this passage, who made these people overseers?  
*God the Holy Spirit.*

However, God does not call people directly. God calls people through groups or gatherings of believers. Acts 1:12-26 describes how the church at Jerusalem chose Judas' replacement, Matthias. Acts 6:1-6 tells how the congregation in Jerusalem later called deacons. In Titus 1:5, Paul tells Titus,

***The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you (1:5).***

What did Paul want Titus to do?  
*To appoint elders or pastors.*

In the first passage above we see that God calls pastors and other called workers. In the other passages we see that the members of Christian congregations call them as well. Thus we see that

- **God calls pastors and other called workers through Christian congregations.**

### **Question 4 - How does a congregation call a called worker?**

So that everything is done in a fitting and proper way, the Lutheran Church has decided that calling of pastors and other called workers be done in the following ways:

#### **When a group of believers wishes to call an EXPERIENCED PASTOR**

1. They will inform their conference chairman of their desire.
2. The chairman, or a representative of the chairman, will then meet with that group of believers and discuss the responsibilities which the pastor will have and the responsibilities of the group which extends the call.
3. The chairman of the conference will then prepare a call list, containing the names of men whom he believes will be able to take care of the responsibilities of that group of believers.
4. In a call meeting, the group of believers may call a pastor from that list or any other pastor of the church.

5. The group of believers will send that call directly to the pastor and notify the conference chairman of their decision.
6. In the event that the call is returned, steps four and five will be repeated.

Note: When a group of believers calls a public minister, that call should be the unanimous will of all the congregation's voting members who are present. If it were not, the congregation would be divided. Ordinarily, after an election has chosen the person the group wishes to call, another vote will make that choice a unanimous decision.

#### **When a group of believers wishes to call a PASTOR WHO IS FINISHING HIS TRAINING**

1. They will inform the chairman of the conference they belong to of their desire.
2. The chairman or a representative of the chairman will then meet with that group of believers and discuss the responsibilities which the pastor will have and the responsibilities of the group which extends the call.
3. The chairman of the conference will submit the group's request to the Assignment Committee.
4. The Assignment Committee will assign a pastoral candidate if possible.

#### **When a group of believers wishes to call an EVANGELIST, PRE-SEMINARY STUDENT OR VICAR**

1. They will inform the chairman of the conference they belong to of their desire.
2. The chairman or a representative of the chairman will then meet with that group of believers and discuss the limited nature of work that the called worker will be able to perform and the responsibilities of the group which extends the call. (The work of an evangelist and pre-seminary student is limited because they have not received a full theological education. The work of a vicar is limited because he will be called as a pastor after one year.)
3. The chairman of the conference will submit the group's request to the Assignment Committee.
4. The Assignment Committee will assign an evangelist, pre-seminary student or vicar if possible.

Note: Since pre-seminary students wish to attend the seminary and vicars wish to enter the pastoral ministry, these are not permanent calls. Because these calls are of a "limited nature," the Assignment Committee has the right to reassign evangelists, pre-seminary students and vicars.

#### **Question 5 - What are the responsibilities of a called worker?**

Congregations should expect the following things from their called worker:

He will have the qualifications explained in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.  
 He will live a righteous life.  
 He will love all the members of his congregation.  
 He will work "full time" for the congregation.  
 He will preach and teach what God says in the Bible.

The congregation should ask for the visiting pastor of the region to come if their called worker:



Has committed a sin which has hurt his reputation,  
Is being lazy,  
Is teaching false doctrine, or  
Is no longer able to do everything that the congregation wants to be done.

In this connection, Paul offers advice,

***Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly so that the other may take warning*** (1 Timothy 5:19,20).

According to Paul, how many people must bring an accusation against an elder?  
*Two or three.*

If two or three witnesses do not bring an accusation, what should happen?  
*Nothing.*

### **Question 6 - What are the responsibilities of a congregation?**

Just as God asks called workers to love the members of their congregations, so also he wants the members of congregations to love, honor and respect their workers. The writer to the Hebrews says,

***Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith...Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account*** (13:7,17).

What two things does the Bible tell people to do with their leaders?  
*Remember them and obey them.*

The Apostle Paul speaks of another responsibility that congregations have. God wants them to support their worker financially.

***Anyone who receives instructions in the word must share all good things with his instructor*** (Galatians 6:6).

What does Paul tell Christians to do for their instructors?  
*Share all their good things with them.*

***The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel*** (1 Corinthians 9:14).

***The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain.' And 'The worker deserves his wages'*** (1 Timothy 5:17,18).

What does Scripture tell Christians about their elders?  
*They deserve their wages.*

### **What do you remember?**

1. What are the keys?
2. Who has the keys?
3. In God's eyes, what are all believers?
4. If all believers have the keys and are priests in God's eyes, why do congregations need pastors?
5. How does a congregation call a pastor in the Lutheran church?
6. What are the responsibilities of a pastor or other called worker?
7. When should a congregation ask the visiting pastor to come?
8. What are the responsibilities of a congregation toward their worker?

### **What do you think?**

1. Are we doing everything that we promised to do for our called worker? If not, what can we do to solve this problem?
2. Is our called worker doing everything he promised to do for us? If not, what can we do so solve the problem?

## **Lesson 6**

### **Warning Unrepentant Sinners**

Believers still sin every day of their lives. Most often, believers sin and then receive God's forgiveness through repentance. However, sometimes believers sin but do not repent. When this happens, what should the congregation do? This lesson will show us how the Bible answers that question.

### **Question 1 - Why do unrepentant sinners need to be warned?**

All people, including Christians, sin every day. They sin when they do what God commands them not to do. They sin when they do not do what God commands them to do. They sin not only with their actions, but with their words, and even in their thoughts.

When Christians sin, they are sorry for what they have done and ask God for his forgiveness, in other words, repent. God, of course, gives that forgiveness. He does not forgive people because they are sorry and ask for forgiveness. He forgives them because his Son, Jesus, died in their place on the cross.

However, when Christians do not feel sorry for their sin and when they do not ask God to forgive them, they build a wall which keeps God's forgiveness from reaching them. And without forgiveness they are on the road to hell. Thus,

- **When Christians sin and do not repent, they need to be warned that they are in danger of going to hell.**

### **Question 2 - What do Christians need to remember when they warn unrepentant sinners?**

It is the duty of every believer to warn a Christian who sins but does not repent. It is not just the job of the called workers, the elders or the church council.

We should only warn a person when we know for certain that he or she has sinned. We should not act if we have only heard a rumor. In fact, telling such rumors is a sin against the Eighth Commandment.

We do not warn a person because we are angry. Quite the opposite. We warn a person because we love them and do not want them to go to hell because they have not repented of a sin.

We warn a person in order to lead him/her to repentance.

We warn people with the Word of God.

### **Question 3 - When should we warn a person privately?**

*If your brother sins, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.* Matthew 18:15.

In this verse, Jesus describes what a Christian should do when he sees another Christian commit some private sin and appears to be unrepentant. What does Jesus tell Christians to do in such a situation?

*Go to the person privately and show him/her their sin.*

The Christian should not tell the sin to others. Rather, because the Gospel has led him to love his brother or sister, and because he realizes that unrepentance shuts out God's forgiveness, he goes to warn the other Christian alone.

He warns him by using the Law. With the Law he tries to show his brother or sister that he/she has broken God's commands. With the Law he tries to show his brother or sister that God will eternally punish those who do not repent of their sins. In this action, the Christian should use good judgment, avoiding anything that might hinder the person from repenting.

If the person repents of his/her sin, the warning Christian will assure the repentant sinner that his/her sins are forgiven. That will be the end of the matter. He/she will not mention the matter to anyone else.

If the person does not repent, the Christian may warn him again and again. Each time that he refuses to repent, the Christian will tell him clearly that his/her sins are not forgiven. When the Christian believes that the sinner is no longer listening to him, he should use the second step that Jesus describes. (See next section.)

#### **Question 4 - When do two or three Christians warn another person?**

***But if he will not listen, take one or two others along so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."*** Matthew 18:16.

If the sinner does not repent when he or she has been warned privately, the Christian who witnessed the sin should ask one or two other mature and respected Christians to go with him to warn the sinner yet again. It is not necessary that these persons saw the sin committed. They are witnesses to the fact that the warning was carried out in a proper Christian way. They also will use the Law to encourage the sinner to repent of his/her sin. If there is repentance, they will forgive. If there is no repentance, they may visit the person more and warn him again. When they finally believe that the sinner is no longer listening to them, they will tell the matter to the congregation. (See next section.)

When a sin is known to many or all Christians in the congregation, these two steps are not absolutely necessary. In Galatians 2:11 Paul says that he warned Peter in front of the congregation because he sinned in front of the congregation. In 1 Timothy 5:20 Paul also declares,

***Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that others may take warning.***  
(The adverb "publicly" actually describes both the sin and the rebuke, i.e. "Those who sin publicly are to be rebuked publicly.")

But it should be remembered that this public rebuke is also carried out in love.

#### **Question 5 - When does a congregation warn another person?**

***If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*** Matthew 18:17.

Normally the matter is brought to the church council of the congregation or to the elders. They will then choose respected members of the congregation to accompany the pastor or called worker in order to warn the repentant brother or sister again. Members may not want to do such difficult work, but the pastor or called worker must remind members that if it is not done, a brother or sister may go to hell because of it. Bible passages such as 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 and 13, 2 Thessalonians 3:14,15 and Revelation 2:14,15 and 20 indicate how important this work is.

The congregation members who visit the sinners do nothing that the other Christians have not done. They use the Law of God to warn the sinner and to encourage repentance. If there is repentance, they assure the sinner of forgiveness. If there is no repentance, the member will be suspended from receiving the Lord's Supper. The congregation must then consider excommunication which is described in the next lesson.

At times a congregation will refuse to deal with a "case." This may happen when the sinner has not been privately warned first. It may also happen if the "sin" is actually not a sin in God's eyes.

### **Question 6 - What should a person do when he repents?**

If there is true repentance, there will also be "***fruit in keeping with repentance***" (Matthew 3:8) In other words, the repentant sinner will want to "make right" the wrong thing that he has done. And he will be willing to accept the consequences of his actions. In some cases it is easy to see what these kinds of fruits are. For example, if a person stole money, he will repay it. In other cases, e.g. murder, the evil deed cannot be changed. If a person repents of his sin, but does not want to bring fruits of repentance, then his repentance is not genuine.

Another thing to be remembered in this connection is that "public offense (public sins) must be publicly removed." For example, if the chairman of the congregation came to the worship service drunk and then repents, his sin should be pointed out and then forgiven at another worship service. Example -- "*Most of us saw our congregation chairman, drunk last Sunday. This is a terrible sin. God hates it. But we thank the Lord that he has led him to repent of his sin and seek forgiveness. And in the name of the congregation, I want to assure him that both the Lord and we forgive him for his sin. (He has agreed to step down as chairman of the congregation so that this sin does not hinder the work of our congregation.)*"

### **Question 7 - What is excommunication?**

Excommunication is when a congregation of believers declares that a person who has sinned is no longer their member because he/she has refused to repent of their sin. In other words, the congregation is declaring that this person is no longer a child of God. Such a person is like a "***pagan and a tax collector***" (Matthew 18:17), the way unbelievers were described in Jesus' day. Excommunication is the final preaching of the law to an unrepentant sinner.

### **Question 8 - When do we excommunicate?**

A congregation does NOT excommunicate a member because of the sin which he or she has done. Rather, the congregation excommunicates because the person REFUSES TO REPENT of his or her sin. Even the smallest sin in the eyes of people may lead to excommunication if the sinner does not repent of it.

Under normal circumstances, the congregation to which the unrepentant sinner belonged is the group that excommunicates. When one congregation excommunicates a person, every other congregation should respect that excommunication. Even if a congregation in another church body excommunicated a person for not repenting of a sin, that excommunication should be respected. It is obvious in such instances that congregations must be ready to explain the reason for their excommunications to other congregations.

The congregation has the duty to notify the individual about the congregational meeting which will consider his or her case.

In many situations, unrepentant sinners will leave the congregation before the congregation has an opportunity to do any of the steps described in Matthew 18. When the sinner announces this, he should be reminded that he is not a child of God as long as he does not repent of his sin. After that announcement, the sinner is no longer the responsibility of the congregation.

Excommunication is simply the public announcement of something that has already taken place -- namely that the individual by his repentance is no longer a child of God.

When a congregation votes to excommunicate a person, that vote should be unanimous. Sometimes one or more members of the congregation will feel that the individual should be warned more before he is excommunicated. If this is the case, these members should warn the person before he is excommunicated by the congregation. If the man does repent, he will, of course, be forgiven. If he does not, the excommunication should be reconsidered at a future meeting. In some instances, members may vote against excommunication because they do not understand it properly, or because they are in the family, or friends, of the unrepentant sinner. In such instances, the pastor will try to teach his congregation about what God's Word says on the subject.

It is important that the congregation keep careful records of excommunications. They will be considered if the individual appeals his excommunication. After a long time and change of pastors, they may be the only accurate record of what happened if the individual wishes to become a member again.

### **Question 9 - What are the consequences of excommunication?**

1. The excommunicated person is free to attend worship services.
2. He may NOT receive the Lord's Supper.
3. He may NOT serve as a sponsor for Baptism. Even serving as a witness might cause confusion.
4. He may NOT vote in the congregational meetings, or be an office holder.
5. He may NOT, unless repentance is seen, receive a Christian burial.

On the one hand the members of the congregation must show the unrepentant sinner that his unrepentance is a serious issue. On the other hand, the congregation members should not treat him as an enemy, which would make it more difficult for him to repent.

### **What do you remember?**

Why do Christians warn other Christians who have sinned but not repented?  
When should a Christian warn another person privately?  
When should a Christian take one or two others to warn a person?  
When should a Christian report a matter to the congregation?  
What does a Christian use to warn?  
What do Christians do when others repent?

What does a Christian do when he repents?

What is excommunication?

Why do we excommunicate?

What may an excommunicated person not do in the congregation?

### **What do you think?**

1. Who has the responsibility to warn unrepentant people in this congregation?
2. Who votes to excommunicate persons in this congregation?
3. Has this congregation always warned or excommunicated people properly? If not, what can be done to solve the problem?

# Lesson 7

## The Sacraments

### Question 1 - What are the sacraments?

Sacraments are things that a church does which

- Were **commanded by God**
- **Use something which people can see** and
- **Forgive sins.**

Sacraments forgive sins because they either **create or strengthen faith.**

The Bible tells us that there are only two things which were commanded by God and forgive sins.

- **The two sacraments are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.**

### Question 2 - What is baptism?

Martin Luther answers that question in his Small Catechism:

***Baptism is not simple water, but water used by God's command and connected with God's Word.***

The word "baptize" means "to wash with water." A person can wash something by wiping it with water, pouring water on it, or putting it in water. We can baptize in the same ways. But baptism is not just water. It is water joined with God's Word. And that Word of God gives power to baptism. The Bible tells us what baptism does in these passages:

***Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven.*** Acts 2:38.

In this passage Peter tells people to be baptized. What does he say will happen when they are baptized?

*Their sins will be forgiven.*

***Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away.*** Acts 22:16.

According to this passage what happens when a person is baptized?

*His sins are forgiven.*

***Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*** Mark 16:16.

What does Jesus say will happen to people who believe and are baptized?

*They will be saved.*

***Baptism now saves you also.*** Peter 3:21.

According to Peter, what does Baptism do?

*It saves.*



- **Baptism is a sacrament which saves, washes away and forgives sins.**

The Bible also says that we are saved by faith:

***By grace you have been saved.*** Ephesians 2:8.

According to this passage what also saves us?  
*Faith.*

Since the Bible says that people are saved by faith and by baptism, we believe:

- **Baptism saves because it creates or strengthens faith in a person's heart.**

### **Question 3 - What is a proper Baptism?**

Any person is able to baptize another person. However, in order to avoid confusion, normally pastors only baptize. In the case of an emergency, however, any Christian can baptize another person. The only two things that are necessary is that water be applied to the person and the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" be spoken.

### **Question 4 - What do we do if a person was baptized in another church body?**

Often people who were baptized in other churches want to join the Lutheran Church. The question is often asked, "Should they be baptized again?" If a person was properly baptized, he or she should not be baptized again. But what is a proper baptism? In order to be properly baptized, both the heavenly element -- the Word of God, and the earthly element -- water must be used. That means that two other questions need to be asked:

Are you sure that you were baptized with water?

Were you baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a congregation that believes and confesses what the Bible teaches about the Trinity?

In some church bodies, it may be difficult to determine whether the congregation really believes in the Trinity or not. Finally, if there is any doubt about whether a person was baptized with water, or baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by a congregation that believes and confesses the Trinity, the person should be re-baptized. For the purpose of Baptism is to remove doubt and to make people sure that they are God's children.

### **Question 5 - When should adults be baptized?**

Because of the example of the Apostles, we instruct adults in the truths of God's Word before we baptize them. It would be wrong for a pastor to baptize a person if that person did not know anything about God's Word or the teachings of the Lutheran Church. That leads to the question, "How much instruction is necessary for a person to be baptized?" In an absolute emergency, the person would need to be instructed about 1) the Law of

God, 2) the Gospel of Jesus Christ and 3) Holy Baptism. Under normal circumstances the pastor would teach the same things:

- 1) The Law of God by studying the Ten Commandments,
- 2) The Gospel of Jesus Christ by studying the Apostles Creed and
- 3) Holy Baptism by studying it's institution, its elements, its power and its meaning for daily life.

It quickly becomes evident that the course outlined above is an outline of a complete confirmation instruction class. Thus under normal circumstances, we in the Lutheran Church baptize an adult at the same time as we confirm an adult.

### **Question 6 - Why do we baptize babies and little children?**

It is true that the Bible does not command us to baptize children and babies. On the other hand, it does not command us to baptize adults either.

Adults and children alike are part of the "all nations" that Jesus command to be baptized (Matthew 28:19). The Bible contains examples of adults being baptized. It also says that entire households were baptized (see 1 Corinthians 1:16) which almost certainly contained children.

In addition, Peter tells us that the promise of Baptism is meant for children (Acts 2:39).

And finally, the Apostle Paul tells us that Baptism is the New Testament equivalent of circumcision which was performed on eight-day-old baby boys (Colossians 2:11,12). History also shows that the early Christian church baptized children and babies.

Many churches today do not baptize children. Besides overlooking what the Bible says above, these churches deny one or both of the following Scripture truths:

All people are born with sin (Psalm 51:5, John 3:5).

Little children can believe (Matthew 18:6, Mark 10:13-16).

Therefore in the Lutheran church we baptize babies and little children. Generally, one or both of the parents asks that the child be baptized. (The called worker will encourage parents with unbaptized children to have them baptized quickly.) Even if both parents are confirmed members, the called worker should meet with them and study the nature of Baptism so that they understand it fully. *A Lesson About Baptism For Parents Who Wish To Have Their Children Baptized* is found at the end of this lesson.

### **Question 7 - What is the Lord's Supper?**

The Lord's Supper is the true body and blood of Jesus together with bread and wine. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper he said that it was "for the forgiveness of sins."

- **The Lord's Supper is a sacrament which forgives sins by strengthening faith in the hearts of believers.**

When the Lord instituted the Lord's Supper, he did not command his disciples to give it to "all nations" as he did when he instituted Holy Baptism. The only people present at the first Lord's Supper were only Jesus' disciples. Through the Apostle Paul, the Lord tells us who should, and who should not, receive the Lord's Supper.

***Therefore, whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself*** (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

From this passage we see who the Lord wants to receive his supper:

- Those who can examine themselves and
- Those who can recognize the Lord's body.

From this passage we also see who the Lord does not want to receive his supper:

- Those who cannot examine themselves,
- Those who cannot recognize the Lord's body and
- Those who receive the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.

Paul tells us another thing about the people who receive the Lord's Supper:

***Because there is one loaf (bread), we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf (bread).*** 1 Corinthians 10:17.

In this passage, St. Paul shows us that when we receive the Lord's Supper with another person, we become one with them. In other words, we declare that we are united in faith.

- Thus, we should only receive the Lord's Supper together with those who believe as we do.

In summary,

- **Only those who have been confirmed in our congregation (or in a church that is in fellowship with us) should receive the Lord's Supper in our congregation.**

### **Question 8 - How often should people receive the Lord's Supper?**

The called worker and church council will encourage all confirmed members to receive the Lord's Supper often. To do this, he will show that sin continues in every Christian and thus the need for forgiveness also continues. He will point out the great blessings which the Lord promises in the Lord's Supper -- the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of faith.

When a person does not receive the Lord's Supper often, that is a sign that his faith is weak. If a person does not receive the Lord's Supper for three months in a row, the elders of that congregation should visit him and warn him. If he does not come for many months, the congregation will consider this a case when the congregation needs to warn another Christian.

Each congregation should have a list containing the names of each confirmed member of the congregation. When people are confirmed, their names should be added to the list. When people die, move away or leave the congregation, their names should be removed from the list. The communion record will show when and how often each member has received the Lord's Supper. An accurate, up-to-date record will help a called worker to see which members are weak and need his help. The record may be kept in a variety of ways: tickets with a number on them, an elder marking down each person (in a small congregation) or by calling out each name.

### **What do you remember?**

What does a sacrament do?  
What is baptism?  
How does baptism save people?  
What two things make up a proper baptism?  
Who can baptize?  
What is the Lord's Supper?  
How does the Lord's Supper forgive sins?  
Who should not receive the Lord's Supper?  
Who should receive the Lord's Supper in a Lutheran congregation?  
What should be done when confirmed members do not receive the Lord's Supper regularly?

### **What do you think?**

1. How can we encourage parents to bring their children for Baptism?
2. How can we encourage our members to receive the Lord's Supper more often?
3. What should we do when members do not receive the Lord's Supper regularly?

## **A Lesson About Baptism For Parents Who Wish To Have Their Children Baptized**

### **1. What is Baptism?**

*The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing (Greek word is "wash"), holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the market place they do not eat unless they wash (Greek word is "baptize"). And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing (Greek word is "baptize") of cups, pitchers and kettles. Mark 7:3,4.*

1. The Greek Word "Baptism" means to "wash with water."

*Jesus came to them and said, "All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."  
Matthew 28:19.*

2. Baptism is something that Jesus commanded his disciples to do in order to make disciples of all nations.
  3. Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize “in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
- Baptism is not just plain water, but it is water used by God’s command and connected with God’s Word. Luther’s Small Catechism.

## 2. What Does Baptism Do?

*Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven.* Acts 2:38.

*Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away.* Acts 22:16.

*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.* Mark 16:16.

*Baptism now saves you also.* Peter 3:21.

- The Bible says that Baptism forgives sins and saves people.

*We maintain that a man is justified by faith.* Romans 3:28.

- The Bible also says that people are saved by faith.

*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* Acts 2:38,29.

*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.* Ephesians 5:25,26.

- Baptism saves people and forgives sins because it creates and strengthens faith. The Holy Spirit does this through the power of God’s Word in Baptism.

## 3. Why should little children and babies be baptized?

*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.* Matthew 28:19.

### A. Little children and babies are part of “all nations.”

*Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.* Psalm 51:5

**B. Children are born with sin and need forgiveness.**

*If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Matthew 18:6.*

**C. The Bible says that little children and babies can believe.**

- Little children and babies should be baptized because they are part of “all nations,” they are sinful and need forgiveness, and they can believe.

**4. What responsibilities do parents have after Baptism?**

- Trusting in God’s promises they avoid every kind of witchcraft or superstition to protect their children.
- Parents teach their children the truths of God’s Word at home by word and deed.
- Parents send their children to Sunday school and confirmation classes.

## Lesson 8 Marriage

Many Christians do not follow God's will for marriage. Either they don't know what he wants, or their faith is too weak to do what he wants. This lesson will show what God's will is, and hopefully give members the strength to do that will.

### Question 1 - What does the Bible say about marriage?

***God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number' (Genesis 1:27,28).***

According to this passage, when did God establish the first marriage?  
*When he created Adam and Eve on earth.*

What blessing did God give to the first married people?  
*Children.*

In this passage we see that

**God instituted the first marriage when he brought one man and one woman together.**

**God blessed married people with children.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'...So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh (Genesis 2:18, 21-24).***

Why did God make woman?  
*He wanted to give man a "helper suitable for him."*

From the very first marriage, how many people did God want to be in each marriage?  
*One man and one woman.*

In this passage we see that:

**God intends a wife to be a special blessing for a man.**

**God's plan for marriage from the beginning was for one man and one woman to make one marriage.**

**God gives the blessing of sex to married couples.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them*** (Psalm 127:4,5).

To what does the psalm writer compare children?

*To arrows.*

What does the psalm writer say about someone who has children?

*He calls such people blessed by God.*

This passage shows us that:

**Children are blessings that God gives to people through marriage.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it*** (Proverbs 22:6).

What command and responsibility does God here give to parents?

*He commands them to train their children well.*

This passage shows us that:

**God wants parents to teach their children, especially what God's Word says.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***But I [Jesus] tell you, that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery*** (Matthew 19:6).

In this passage Jesus says that divorce is always wrong except when?

*Divorce is permitted when one person in the marriage has been unfaithful.*

This passage shows us that:

**God wants marriages to last until one of the spouses dies.**

**God does permit a person to divorce his spouse if that spouse has committed adultery.**

**If a person divorces his spouse for any reason other than adultery, that person is committing adultery in God's eyes.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***By law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.*** (Romans 7:2-5).

According to this passage, when may a person who was married marry another person?



*When the spouse dies.*

This passage shows us that

**If one marriage partner dies, the other may marry again.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. (1 Corinthians 7:2-5).***

In this passage Paul shows another way in which marriage is a blessing. What is that?  
*Marriage provides sexual relations for husband and wife.*

This passage shows us that

**God blesses men and women with sexual relations in marriage.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***If the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances. (1 Corinthians 7:15).***

During the days of the Apostle Paul, unbelievers often left the Christians that they were married to. What does Paul advise the Christians to do?  
*Christians should let the unbelievers leave.*

This passage shows us that

**When one spouse leaves another, the other spouse may divorce the one who left.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.***

***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies*" (Ephesians 5:22-28).**

What does Paul tell wives to do?  
*Submit to their husbands.*

What example of submission do wives have?

*The Church submits to Christ their Lord.*

What does Paul tell husbands to do?

*Love their wives.*

What example of love do husbands have?

*Christ who loved the church and gave himself for it.*

From these passages, we see that

**God wants husbands to love their wives with the same kind of love that Jesus showed when he died on the cross.**

**God wants wives to submit to their husbands in the same way that all Christians submit to the will of their loving Savior Jesus Christ.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord*** (Ephesians 6:4)

In this passage, what does Paul tell parents to do?

*Train their children about the Lord.*

In this passage we see again that

**God wants parents to teach their children about him.**

\*\*\*\*\*

***Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life*** (1 Peter 3:7).

What does Peter ask husbands to do for their wives?

*To care for them like a precious treasure.*

In this passage we see that

**God wants husbands to love and take care of their wives.**

## **Question 2 - When does a marriage begin?**

In order for a proper marriage, one man and one woman must:

Promise to live together as husband and wife for the rest of their lives

Do all that either the government or local tradition demands (as long as these rules are not contrary to God's will).

## **Question 3 - Whom can a Lutheran member marry?**

Lutherans sometimes do marry members of other churches, or even those who are not Christians. God prohibited such marriages in the Old Testament because they could lead God's people to worship other gods. There is no such prohibition in the New Testament. Nevertheless, the danger of such marriages still exists.

Even if a Lutheran does not stumble and fall, how happy will his/her life be with someone who does not share the same beliefs? In what church will the children be raised? However, it is also possible that unbelievers or people from other churches or religions may be led to the truth through the Lutheran member (see 1 Corinthians 7:16 and 1 Peter 3:1,2).

#### **Question 4 - When may a Christian divorce?**

When Jesus lived on earth, many people, especially men, wanted divorces. Often, there were no good reasons for divorce. Jesus spoke about this problem and said,

***I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.*** Matthew 19:9.

According to Jesus' words, what is the only reason to divorce?  
*When your wife/husband has committed adultery.*

What does Jesus say about those who divorce for other reasons?  
*They are committing adultery.*

St. Paul tells Christians of another situation when they may divorce.

***If the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances.***

1 Corinthians 7:15

According to Paul's words, when may a believer also divorce?  
*When an unbelieving spouse leaves the marriage.*

#### **God only permits divorce when the other spouse commits adultery or leaves the marriage.**

#### **Question 5 - What about polygamy?**

Polygamy (a husband having more than one wife) is a traditional way of life in some parts of the world. Some try to defend what they do, but God's Word clearly prohibits this.

But what happens if a man who has more than one wife becomes a Christian? What should he do? The new believer must realize two things:

- It is a sin to continue to have two wives, and
- The man who has two wives has a responsibility to take care of both wives and their children.

After discussing this matter with the church council, the pastor and his wives, the man should:

- Publicly confess his sin of polygamy,

- Announce his intention to live with only one wife in the future, and
- Announce his intention to take care of both wives and their children.

### **Question 6 - Why are there so many problems with marriage in our congregations?**

There are many problems concerning marriage in our congregations:

Men make girls or women who are not their wives pregnant.  
 Girls and women who are not married become pregnant.  
 Men and women are in polygamous marriages.  
 Men and women commit adultery.  
 Men and women divorce each other for improper reasons.  
 Men and women who are married to members of other churches or who are not Christians at all have family problems.

There are really two reasons for all these problems.

- Men and women do not know what God's Word says about marriage.
- Men and women are too weak to do what God tells them to do.

The solution to both problems is the same - **STUDY WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE IN THE BIBLE!**

By studying God's Word, men and women will see what God says about marriage.

By studying God's Word, men and women will become stronger, more able to do what God wants them to do.

### **What do you remember?**

According to God's Word, what is marriage?  
 In God's eyes, when does a marriage begin?  
 When may two people have sex?  
 What blessings does God give to married people?  
 Whom does God want all husbands to imitate?  
 Whom does God want all wives to imitate?  
 When may a Christian divorce?  
 May a Lutheran marry someone from another church or an unbeliever?  
 What does God want parents to do for their children?

### **What do you think?**

1. What can our congregation do to prepare people for marriage and to help strengthen existing marriages?
2. What can we do to help when members are having marriage problems?

## Lesson 9

# Stewardship

Many believers do not understand how God wants them to use what he gives them. Others have such a weak faith that they do not do what they know God wants. This lesson will show what God's will is and help to strengthen the faith of believers to do it.

### **Question 1 - What does God want Christians to understand about ALL that they have on earth?**

*The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.* Psalm 24:1

What belongs to the Lord?  
*Everything in the world belongs to the Lord.*

*It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.* 1  
Corinthians 4:2

Even though everything in the world belongs to the Lord, he gives things to people. What does the Lord demand when he gives things to people?

*He demands that they be faithful, that they use everything properly.*

- **God wants Christians to understand that everything which they have is actually his.**
- **God wants Christians to understand that he gives things to people and wants people to use those things faithfully.**

### **Question 2 - How can Christians faithfully use what God gives them?**

*If anyone does not provide for his relatives, especially for his immediately family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.* 1 Timothy 5:8

According to this passage, what does God want us to do with what he has given us?  
*To take care of our family.*

*If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?* Matthew 5:42 (Note that "to be in need" does not mean "to want something," but rather "to not have enough to live even though they are working hard.")

In this passage, the Lord tells his children to use what they have for something else. What is that?

*To help needy people.*

*If you owe taxes, pay taxes.* Romans 13:7

Paul tells us about another way that God wants us to use what he gives us. What is that way?

*To pay taxes to the government.*

***On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income [as an offering].*** 1 Corinthians 16:2

In this passage, Paul was telling the Christians in Corinth to do something every Sunday with what God gave them. What was this?

*Give offerings to the Lord.*

- **Christians can use what God gives them faithfully when they:  
Take care of their family,  
Help those in need,  
Pay the taxes they owe and  
Give offerings to the Lord.**

### **Question 3 - What does God want Christians to realize about giving offerings?**

***Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.*** Galatians 6:6

In this passage Paul tells believers how they should treat those who teach them the Word of God? What does he encourage them to do?

*To share what they have with the teacher.*

***The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the Gospel.*** 1 Corinthians 9:14

In this passage Paul reminds Christians of another thing they need to remember about those who preach and teach the Word of God? What is that?

*They deserve to receive a salary for what they do.*

- **God wants Christians to support those who preach and teach his word full time.**

***You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might be rich.*** 2 Corinthians 8:9

Before Paul encouraged the people of Corinth to give to the Lord, he reminded them of what the Lord gave to them. What has God given you and me?

*His Son Jesus as our Savior.*

- **God wants Christians to give offerings because they love the Lord and all that he has done for them.**

***The Lord loves a cheerful giver.*** 2 Corinthians 9:7

Many people give to the Lord because they are afraid of what will happen if they do not give to him. But the Lord does not want people to give that way. How does he want people to give gifts to him?

*Cheerfully.*

- **God wants Christians to give offerings cheerfully.**

***Each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.***  
1 Corinthians 16:2

Some people think that every person should give the same gift to the Lord. However, Paul tells people something different. How should people give to the Lord?

*In keeping with their income, i.e. those who have more should give more and those who have less should give less.*

- **God does not want all people to give the same offering, but that people will give as God has blessed them (i.e. those with more money giving more than those with less money.)**

***On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.*** 1 Corinthians 16:2

According to Paul, when should people give offerings to God?

*Regularly.*

- **God wants Christians to give to him regularly, for example every Sunday and every harvest season.**

***Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first and best part of all your income. Then your barns will be filled with plenty.*** Proverbs 3:9.

When we give to the Lord, what are we doing?

*We are honoring him.*

What does the holy writer encourage believers to give to the Lord?

*The first and best that they have.*

What promise is made to those who give the first and the best to the Lord?

*Their barns will be filled, in other words, God will bless them.*

- **God wants Christians to honor him by giving first - not last, and by giving him the best - not the worst or leftovers.**
- **God promises that when Christians give to him, they will never be in need.**

#### **Question 4 - Why do Christians have difficulty giving good offerings to the Lord?**

When every person is born, he or she is born with a sinful nature. That sinful nature  
Hates God,  
Loves to do what is wrong and  
Can be weakened, but will never completely die while we are alive.

When God the Holy Spirit creates faith in the heart of a person, he also creates a holy nature, called the "new man" in the Bible. This holy nature  
Loves God,  
Loves to do what God wants,  
Always fights against the sinful nature, and  
Can be strengthened by the Gospel.

Thus when the Christian hears that God wants him to give good offerings, part of him, the holy nature, wants to give offerings. But part of him, the sinful nature, does not want to give offerings. Only when the sinful nature is weak and the holy nature is strong will the Christian give the good offerings that God wants him to give.

- **Christians have difficulty giving good offerings because they have both a sinful nature and a holy nature.**

#### **Question 5 - What can be done to weaken the sinful nature and strengthen the holy nature?**

The sinful nature gives the Christian many reasons for not giving to the Lord:  
"You are too poor."  
"The congregation doesn't need your money."  
"No one else gives."  
"The money will only be eaten by the leaders."

The law of God must be used to show the sinful nature that there is no excuse for giving good offerings to the Lord. (Of course, if there are problems in the congregation, like the leaders eating the money, then they must be fixed too.)

- **Only the law of God will weaken the sinful nature.**

The holy nature, on the other hand, wants to give good offerings. So it does not need the law. Rather, when the holy nature hears again and again all that God has done for it - the gospel - it becomes stronger and stronger.

- **Only the gospel of God will strengthen the holy nature.**

#### **Question 6 - What should (A) we do and (B) not do to help our people to give good offerings.**

Some churches simply make a law, "Give so much or a required amount per month, or you can't receive the Lord's Supper, have your children baptized or be buried." And very



often this law does make people give large offerings. But why do they give those offerings? Do they give those offerings out of love and thanksgiving? Do they give those offerings with joy? Of course not. They give those offerings out of fear.

- **God is not pleased when people give offerings because they are afraid.**

As we saw above, the law must weaken the sinful nature and the gospel must strengthen the holy nature. Thus,

- **Studying God's Word is the first step toward good stewardship.**

But the elders of the congregation can do other things too:

1. The people need to know what the needs of the congregation are.
2. There should be regular financial reports so that the people know that their offerings are being used properly.
3. The people should be encouraged to give when they have money, e.g. harvest offerings.
4. The elders of the congregation need to set good examples by giving good offerings.

### **What do you remember?**

1. What must all Christians realize about all that they have?
2. What are God-pleasing ways to use what God gives you?
3. What financial needs does this congregation have?
  - Church body
  - Buildings
  - Books
  - Worker
4. Why is it difficult for Christians to give good offerings?
5. What only can weaken the sinful nature?
6. What only can strengthen the holy nature?

### **What do you think?**

1. What's wrong with making a law telling people to give so much or a required amount per month?
2. What can we do in this congregation to help people give better offerings to the Lord?

# Lesson 10

## Believers Bring Others To Christ

In this lesson we will study why and how to bring others to Christ.

### Question 1 - Why do believers bring others to Christ?

All congregations want to grow, that is, all congregations want to have more and more members. However, sometimes congregations want to grow in order that they will have more respect. Sometimes congregations want to grow so that the new members will help to support the church with their offerings. It is not a sin to want respect or more offerings. But God does not want believers to bring others to Christ for those reasons. Believers need to realize that there are far more important reasons to bring others to Christ.

***Jesus came to them [his disciples] and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations [by] baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and [by] teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”*** Matthew 28:18,19

Who was Jesus speaking to in this verse?

*His disciples.*

What did Jesus tell them to do?

*To go and make disciples.*

By what two things were Jesus' disciples to make other disciples?

*By baptizing and teaching others.*

What does Jesus still want his disciples to do today?

*To make more disciples.*

What two things can today's disciples use to make disciples?

*They can use baptism and preaching God's Word.*

***[Jesus] said to them [the disciples], “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation”*** Mark 16:15

Who was Jesus talking to?

*His disciples.*

What did Jesus command his disciples to do?

*Preach the good news to all creation.*

What does Jesus want his disciples to do today?

*Preach the good news to all creation.*

- **Believers bring others to Christ because Jesus commanded them to do so.**

***This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear Friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*** 1 John 4:10,11

In this passage, the Apostle John is talking about love. How did God show his love for us?

*He sent Jesus as our Savior.*

What does God's love lead believers to do?

*To love others.*

If we love others who do not believe in Christ, what is the most important thing that we can do for them?

*Lead them to Christ.*

- **Believers bring others to Christ because they love them and want them to be saved.**

## **Question 2 - How can believers bring others to Christ?**

Some people think that they will go to heaven because they call themselves Christians. Other people think that they will go to heaven because they are members of some congregation. But calling yourself a Christian or going to church will not save anyone. The jailor at Philippi asked Paul and Silas:

***"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."*** Acts 16:30,31

What did the jailor at Philippi want to know?

*How to be saved.*

What was Paul's answer to his question?

*Believe (have faith) in Jesus.*

Through what only can a person be saved?

*Through faith.*

So, when believers bring others to Christ, they want them to believe, or have faith, in Jesus. But where does faith come from?

***Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*** Romans 10:17

Paul tells his readers where faith comes from in this passage. What brings people to faith?

*Hearing the word.*

What teaching of the Bible must people hear first?

***The wages of sin is death.*** Romans 6:23a

In this passage Paul tells his readers bad news. What is this bad news?  
*The wages of sin is death.*

Explain this passage in your own words.  
*Those who sin will die because of sin.*

- **They must first hear that they have sinned and deserve eternal death.**

***The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*** Romans 6:23b

In this passage Paul tells his readers good news. What is this good news?  
*The gift of God is eternal life.*

In whom does eternal life come to people?  
*It comes to people in Jesus.*

- **They must also hear that God gives them eternal life through Jesus.**

Not everyone is able to explain that message clearly to other people. But all the members of a congregation can do something.

***Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathaniel asked. "Come and see," said Philip.*** John 1:45,46

In this passage we hear about one of Jesus' first disciples telling another person about Jesus. Why do you think Philip went to Nathanael?  
*He was excited about Jesus.*

What did Philip do when Nathanael asked questions that he could not answer?  
*He invited Nathanael to come with him.*

In what two ways should each Christian be like Philip?  
*Be excited about Jesus and invite others to come with them to worship.*

- **Every Christian can invite others to hear about Jesus.**

Through the powerful Word of God, the Holy Spirit creates faith in the hearts of people. And through faith those children are children of God. But the Lord does not want people to remain "baby" Christians.

***From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. 2***  
Timothy 3:15,16

In this passage Paul reminds Timothy of the importance of the Holy Scriptures. When did Timothy begin to hear the Scriptures?  
*When he was an infant.*

What are the Scriptures able to do?  
*Make people wise for salvation.*

How much of the Scriptures are important?

*All Scripture is important.*

What do you think God wants every believer to do?  
*Learn as much of the Scriptures as possible.*

How can a congregation help Christians to learn more of the Scriptures?  
*Through Bible classes.*

- **Congregations must teach both new and old believers all of what the Scriptures say.**

People can join most churches with no, or very few classes. But the Lutheran Church is different. The Lutheran Church is a teaching church. Because it believes that only those who know and believe God's Word will go to heaven it wants all its members to know and believe what the Bible says.

One more thing is helpful when bringing people to Christ. Very often new believers do not feel like they are a part of the congregation. Each member of the congregation must work hard to make new members feel that they are part of the family of believers.

- **Congregations must make new believers feel like they are part of the family of believers.**

### **Question 3 - What else must believers remember about bringing others to Christ?**

Sometimes it seems that people are eager to join the congregation. These people want to join the congregation for many different reasons:

1. Perhaps they want a good funeral when they die,
2. Perhaps they like the choir,
3. Perhaps they want to be a teacher, preacher, elder or other leader, or
4. Perhaps their friends or relatives are members of the church.

God wants people to join a congregation for a far more important reason - because

1. They love him,
2. They want to worship him, and
3. They want to learn about the Bible.

But who is able to love God? The Bible says,

***No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.*** 1 Corinthians 12:3.

In this passage we hear about what people cannot do by their own power, but only by the power of the Holy Spirit. What can people not do by their own power?

*They cannot say, "Jesus is Lord."*

How only can people say that Jesus is their Lord?

*The Holy Spirit must create faith in their hearts.*

Yes, the Holy Spirit alone can make people love God. But he only does that through the Word of God. And people only hear the Word of God when we speak it to others.

- **Believers need to remember that no one can love God without the Holy Spirit working in his heart through the word.**

Yes, it is the power of the Holy Spirit alone - not ours - which causes people to believe in Jesus as their Savior. However, Christians can do some things which hinder the power of the Spirit:

1. If believers live sinful lives, no one will listen to them when they tell others about Jesus.
2. If the people of the congregation argue a lot, no one will want to join it.
3. If the people of the congregation do not welcome others, no one will want to join it.
4. If the people of the congregation do not take care of their church building, everyone will think that they are lazy and do not love the Lord.

- **Believers need to make the congregation as nice as possible so that they do not hinder the Holy Spirit.**

Up to this point, we have only spoken about bringing unbelievers to Christ. But what about bringing people from other churches to our congregation?

There are really three different kinds of churches:

1. Christian churches which teach the truth - like our Lutheran church
2. Christian churches which teach some truth and some false things - like Baptist or Roman Catholic, etc.
3. Non-Christian churches - like the Jehovah's Witness, Mormons or Muslims

Because non-Christian churches deny important truths of the Bible, no one who believes what they teach will go to heaven. Thus the members of these churches are not Christians. We have a responsibility to tell them the good news of Jesus Christ.

Even though Christian churches like the Baptists and the Roman Catholics deny parts of the Bible, their members are still Christian. It would be wrong for us to try to "steal" members from these churches. However, it is proper for us to point out what the Bible actually says when we have the opportunity.

- **Believers need to realize that members of Non-Christian churches are unbelievers while the members of false-teaching Christian churches are believers.**

### **What do you remember?**

1. What are some wrong reasons to bring new people to our congregations?
2. What are the two God-pleasing reasons for bringing others to our congregations?
3. What two things do all unbelievers need to hear?
4. What can every believer do to bring others to Christ?
5. How is the Lutheran Church different from most other churches?
6. Why do many people want to join a congregation?

7. Why does God want people to join a congregation?
8. What three types of churches are there?
9. What should we remember about people from non-Christian churches?
10. What should we remember about people from false-teaching Christian churches?

**What do you think?**

1. What things about this congregation would lead people not to join it?
2. What are we doing to lead others to Christ?
3. What can we do to lead more people to Christ?

# An Adaptation of the Law-Gospel Evangelism Presentation *God's Great Exchange*

## Introduction

God created all people.  
In this way, all people are really God's children.

But are you a friend of God?  
To be a friend of God you must understand

## 1. What God Wants

In the Bible God says, "***Be holy because I the Lord your God am holy***" (Leviticus 19:2).

This passage shows us that God wants his friends to be holy, that is, without sin.

But the Bible also says, "***Do this [love the God and all other people perfectly] and you will live***" (Luke 10:28).

So if a person is holy, that is, he has no sin, he will have eternal life.

We can draw that like this:

<b>God wants</b>	<b>+ Holiness</b>
	<b>-- <u>Sin</u></b>
	<b>= <u>Life</u></b>

That's what God wants from his friends. But that is not

## 2. What God Sees

In the Bible God says, "***All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God***" (Romans 3:23).

This passage shows us that when God looks at all people he sees no holiness, only sin.

Then the Bible also tells us, "***The wages of sin is death***" (Romans 6:23).

So when God looks at people he sees no holiness and much sin.  
And that means that all people deserve death.

We can draw that like this:

<b>God sees</b>	<b>-- Holiness</b>
	<b>+ <u>Sin</u></b>
	<b>= <u>Death</u></b>

Thus no one is a friend of God.



### 3. People's Answers

Some say, "I have sinned, but many people have sinned much more."

Others say, "I have sinned in the past, but I will try to do better in the future."

Still others say, "I have sinned, but I've also done many good things."

But everyone must start out by saying, "I have sinned."

And since God demands holiness and not even one sin, no one can be God's friend.

### 4. God's Answer

None of people's answers can make anyone a friend of God.

But God has an answer:

God sent his Son to be our Savior.

He was holy. He had no sin. Therefore he deserved life.

But he died. Why? The Bible says that **[God] laid on him the iniquity of us all** (Isaiah 53:6).

The Bible goes on to explain, "**God made him who had no sin [Jesus] to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God**" (2 Corinthians 5:21). In other words,

God took our sin and gave it to Jesus. That is why he died.

But God took Jesus' holy life and gave it to you and me.

We can draw that like this:

<i>Christ</i>	<i>+ Holiness</i>	<i>-- Holiness</i>	<i>Us</i>
	<i>- Sin</i>	<i>+ Sin</i>	
	<i>= Life</i>	<i>= Death</i>	

### 5. God's Promise

So what do you have to do to become God's friend?

Nothing. Jesus did it all.

God gives it to you as a free gift. "**The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus**" (Romans 6:23).

Now God invites you to believe his wonderful promise. "**Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved**" (Acts 16:31).

## **6. Commitment**

Do you believe this, that God has given you eternal life through what Jesus has done for you?

That's wonderful.

God wants you to

Worship him - We have worship services at

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Learn more about him - We have Bible classes at

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# Lesson 11

## Good Record Keeping

### Question 1 - Why do we need good records?

Some people enjoy keeping records and like to organize great amounts of information. They set up complicated records which may be impossible for others to keep up. Others keep very few records.

Records are important for the following reasons:

- **Good records help the called worker and the leaders of a congregation to know their members.**
- **Good records help the called worker and the leaders of a congregation to see weaknesses and problems that need work.**
- **Good records help a new called worker when he comes to a new congregation.**

### Question 2 - What is good advice for all record keeping?

- **Print, don't write.**
- **Use capital letters.**
- **Protect the records with a file folder or plastic bag.**
- **Don't get behind.**

### Question 3 - How do we use "The Monthly Report"

Two (2) copies of the monthly report should be prepared each month. One is kept by the congregation's secretary, the other by the pastor (or supervising pastor).

The secretary of the congregation prepares part of the report:

He counts the number of adults and children in church each Sunday and writes it down. At the end of the month, he adds up the total number of adults and children who came to worship services each month and writes that down.

He counts the number of people who receive the Lord's Supper and writes that down.

The **called worker** informs the secretary of other information

The number of people in different classes.

The number of children in Sunday School.

The number of people baptized and confirmed.

The number of weddings, burials and visits.

The **treasurer** of the congregation adds information to the monthly report form as well:

The offerings given each week and total for the month.

The amount in the congregation treasury at the beginning of the month.

The money paid out by the congregation (including salary to called worker).

The amount of money in the treasury at the end of the month.

The **pastor or supervising pastor** puts all of the information from the monthly reports on the cumulative report. The cumulative report allows the pastor to fill out the annual report. The annual report helps the pastor to see how healthy his congregation is spiritually.

- If worship attendance is up from the previous year, that is a good sign. If it is down, what is the problem? (The number of people who attend each worship service should be at least half the number of communicant members.)
- If the number in classes and the number baptized and confirmed is up from the previous year, that is a good sign. If it is down, what is the problem?
- If the offerings are better than the previous year, that is a good sign. If they are down, what is the problem?

#### **Question 4 - How do we keep Lord's Supper Records?**

Each congregation should have a **list of current communicant members**. When members die or move away, they should be removed from the list. (If possible, those members who move, should be transferred to another of our congregations.) When members leave the church or are excommunicated they should also be removed from the list of current communicant members. On the list of current communicant members, a number is assigned to each member. That number is also put on that member's **communicant member card**. It is helpful if the current communicant member list also has:

1. the date of birth for each member (at least the year)
2. the date of baptism and confirmation and
3. notes on that member's family (who he or she is married to, who his or her children or parents are, etc.)

When the member receives the Lord's Supper, he or she brings the card to the front and gives it to the church secretary. The church secretary then makes an "X" on the card under the proper year and month and an "X" on the current communicant member list under the proper month and year.

With this information, the pastor, called worker and elders of a congregation can see who is and is not receiving the Lord's Supper regularly. Normally, if a person does not receive the Lord's Supper for three months in a row, an elder or the called worker should visit him or her to see what the problem is. The situation may call for church discipline in the future since rejecting the means of grace is a sin.

### **Question 5 - How do we keep Baptism and Confirmation Records?**

When a person is baptized or confirmed, the called worker should prepare **A Baptism Information Sheet** or **A Confirmation Information Sheet** which lists:

1. the name of the person
2. the date of baptism and/or confirmation
3. the place of baptism or confirmation
4. the name of the person's parents.

The pastor will receive these information sheets and enter the information on the congregation's **permanent record book**. The main section of this book contains blanks for all the above information for both baptisms and confirmations. The book also contains space for weddings, funerals and congregational events.

### **Question 6 - How do we keep records of instruction class attendance?**

Those who teach confirmation class should keep **a class attendance record** for the class. In this class the teacher places an "X" by each person's name when he or she attends a class. If the person does not attend the class, the person must attend that class at a later time.

### **Question 7 - What other records need to be kept?**

The pastor or called worker should always have a **list of current officers and elders of the congregation**.

The secretary of the congregation should have a **notebook** in which he records official decisions which are made by the congregation or church council. For example, if the congregation excommunicates a member, it should record that act and the reason so that there is no confusion in the future. All these notebooks should be kept safe by the secretary of the congregation.

### **Review and Discussion Questions**

1. Why does our congregation need good records?
2. What are some general rules for keeping good records?
3. Who contributes information to the monthly report?
4. What does the annual report for this congregation say?
  - a. What are the good things?
  - b. What are the bad things?
5. What Lord's Supper records do we keep?
  - a. Do we know when someone doesn't come?
  - b. Who keeps the communion cards?
6. Who keeps the congregation's permanent record?
7. What does this congregation need to do better in record keeping?

## Lesson 12

### Funerals

A great many people die in the world and thus there are many, many funerals. But many people do not understand what death is and consequently there are many un-Christian funeral customs. In this lesson we will study what the Bible says about death and see how that applies to Christian funerals.

#### Question 1 - What does the Bible teach about death?

Deaths are very common in the world. As a result there are many funerals. Unfortunately, many people - even many Lutherans - do not understand what death is. And that leads to many bad things happening at funerals.

It is necessary for the called worker to remind Christians again and again of what the Bible teaches about death in sermons and Bible classes. It is also necessary for the congregation's leaders to understand the Bible's teachings about death so that they can support what he tells the members of the congregations.

#### The cause of death

When a person dies, it is very common for many to think that the death happened because of witchcraft or superstition. The Bible teaches us that people do kill people (e.g. Cain killed Abel). The Bible also teaches that people die because of disease (e.g. King Herod in Acts 12:23) and even old age (e.g. Moses says that the average life is seventy or eighty years in Psalm 90:10). But the Bible nowhere tells us that one person can cause another person to die by using witchcraft or superstition. Rather the Bible encourages Christians to remember what causes all deaths.

***The wages of sin is death.*** Romans 6:23b.

In this passage Paul tells us about death. What does he say that the cause of death is?  
*Sin.*

***All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*** Romans 3:23.

In this passage Paul tells us about sin. Who has sinned, according to Paul?  
*All have sinned.*

Let's review. According to this passage, who has sinned?  
*All have sinned.*

And according to the first passage, what do all sinners deserve?  
*Death.*

So, if all have sinned and all sinners deserve to die, who deserves to die?  
*All people.*

So who deserves to die?  
*All people.*

- **All people have sinned and deserve to die because of their sins.**

Yes, all people die. Babies, who appear to be sinless, are in fact sinners who deserve to die. Even Christians, who have had their sins forgiven, die. If Christians are forgiven, why do they die?

***[Sinful] flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*** 1 Corinthians 15:50.

In this passage, Paul tells us something about our human bodies. We all know that when God created the world, the bodies of Adam and Eve were perfect. What changed Adam and Eve's perfect bodies?

*Sin.*

Yes, our bodies are "stained" by sin just like a shirt is stained by blood. It doesn't matter how much you wash it, the blood will not come out completely. In the same way, sin is now a part of every human body. If Adam and Eve did not sin, they would still be alive today. What happened to Adam and Eve's bodies because they sinned?

*Their bodies became old and died.*

What does sin do to every body?

*It makes it grow old and die.*

- **People whose sins are forgiven still die because sin destroys their bodies.**

#### After Death

Many people believe that the spirits of those who have died still live in this world. The Bible teaches that the spirits or souls of all people do not remain here on earth.

When one of the criminals who was crucified with Jesus repented and believed in him, Jesus told him, perhaps only minutes before his death,

***I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.*** Luke 23:43

In this passage, Jesus told this man what would happen to him the same day that he died. What did Jesus say would happen to him when he die.

*He would go to paradise.*

What does "paradise" mean?

*Heaven.*

So what will happen to the spirits (souls) of believers when they die?

*They will go to heaven.*

The account of the Rich Man and Lazarus leads us to the same conclusion.

***The time came when the beggar [Lazarus] died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side.***

***The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment he looked up and saw... Luke 16:22,23.***



In this story Jesus shows what happens to believers and unbelievers after they die. The account shows that this is before Judgment Day, because the rich man is concerned about his brothers who are still alive. Where did Lazarus go when he died?

*To Abraham's side.*

What do you think "Abraham's side" means?

*Heaven.*

Where did the rich man go when he died?

*To hell.*

So what happens to the spirits (souls) of all people when they die?

*The spirits of believers go to heaven and the spirits of unbelievers go to hell.*

- **When believers die, their souls immediately go to heaven. When the souls of unbelievers die, their souls immediately go to hell.**

### Eternity

When many people die, they do not know what will happen to them. The Bible, however, clearly tells believers what will happen to them. The Bible says that Jesus will return to this earth in the future. When he does, all who have died, both believers and unbelievers, will rise from the dead.

***When the Son of Man [Jesus] comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world"...Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."*** Matthew 25:31-34, 41.

This shows us what will happen when Jesus returns.

*All people will appear before Jesus.*

What will Jesus do with all people?

*He will judge them.*

What will happen to those whom Jesus says are "righteous?"

*They will go to heaven with him.*

What will happen to those whom Jesus says are "wicked?"

*They will go to hell.*

- **In the future, the bodies of believers will rise from the dead and they will go to live with Jesus forever in heaven. The bodies of unbelievers will also rise, but they will go to everlasting punishment in hell.**

## **Question 2 - How do these truths about death change what Christians think and do?**

Believers know from the Bible that sin is the cause of every death. Therefore

- **Christians do not blame deaths on witchcraft.**

Believers know from the Bible that the spirits of all who die go to either heaven or hell. Therefore

- **Christians do not worry about spirits, or participate in ceremonies which believe that the spirits of people still live on earth.**

Believers know that when other believers die, their souls are in heaven with Jesus. They also know that these believers will rise again and join all other believers in heaven for eternity. The Apostle Paul writes to the believers in Thessalonica:

***Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep [die], or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.*** 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

In this passage Paul does not tell the believers not to grieve. Rather he tells them not to grieve like whom?

*Like people who have no hope.*

Therefore

- **When Christians mourn at a funeral, they do not mourn the way that other people do, for they have hope.**
- **Therefore Christian funerals are very different from the funerals of unbelievers.**

## **Question 3 - What happens at a Christian funeral?**

In some parts of the world, it is tradition for people to come to grieve at the house of the person who died. Christians will also come to the house of a believer who has died. But they come for a different reason. They do not come to grieve and to mourn uncontrollably. Christians come to comfort family with the good news of forgiveness, resurrection and eternal life. Women from the congregation can comfort the women of the family. Men can comfort the men. The congregation choir can sing Christian songs. The pastor or called worker will take this opportunity to have a short devotion with the family (and possibly others) which talks about forgiveness, the resurrection and eternal life. Members of the congregation may also help in other ways: preparing meals, digging the grave, buying the coffin, etc., if the family asks.

- **At a Christian funeral the members of the congregation will try to comfort and help the family of the dead person.**

A Christian funeral will also contain a worship service. This service may be held at the church, the family home or at the grave. The readings, sermon, hymns and prayers will all seek to comfort the family. In the sermon, the pastor will focus attention on:

1. God's purpose in allowing death,
2. The souls of dead believers are with the Lord in heaven,
3. The certain hope of the resurrection,
4. Assurance of God's continued care.

Pastors, will usually write their own sermons for these occasions. In general familiar texts serve best. Sermons should be short, about ten minutes.

Many funeral worship services in other churches contain a eulogy. The eulogy is a speech which praises the person who has died. While a sermon may speak about the good deeds of believer who has died, the main focus of the sermon will be on what God has done, not on what the person has done. Because many people attend funerals, funeral sermons are wonderful opportunities to preach the good news to people who do not know it fully.

The final part of a funeral worship service takes place when the coffin is placed into the grave and covered with dirt. Often, however, the Lord's Prayer may be all that is needed.

- **The main part of the funeral is the Christian worship service.**

As soon as a called worker hears of the death of a member, he should go together with members of the church council to help plan the funeral.

1. They can see what help is needed and organize members of the congregation to do those things.
2. Since non-Lutherans - family members and important people from the area - often speak at funerals, the called worker and church council members should speak to the family so that
  - These people don't speak during the worship service, but before or after it.
  - These people know what will be said in the worship service.
3. Since even many Lutherans do not understand all of the Bible's teachings about death and may have some wrong ideas about funerals, the called worker and the church council should discuss all aspects of the funeral with the family of the dead person.

Many people come to funerals. They come "face-to-face" with death at funerals. For these reasons, funerals are not only an opportunity to comfort the family of a dead person, they are an opportunity to tell many people the true way to heaven through faith in Christ Jesus.

- **Funerals are an opportunity to preach the good news to people who don't know it.**

The work of the called worker and church council is not finished after the body is put in the grave and the people leave for their homes. The family of the dead person will need the comfort of God's Word far into the future.

- **The families of dead persons need the comfort of God's Word long after the funeral is finished.**

#### **Question 4 - Who may receive a Lutheran funeral?**

Under normal circumstances, a pastor or called worker will perform a Christian funeral for the members of his congregation. This will include baptized and confirmed members. It will also include persons who are studying for baptism and confirmation who have shown that they have faith in the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes a pastor or called worker will perform a Christian funeral for others:

- Unbaptized infants, especially if the parents are Christians who have not neglected Holy Baptism,
- Other people who have asked the pastor to help them when sick and he is sure that they believe.

If there is no evidence that the person who has died was a believer, it is impossible for the pastor or called worker to preach a sermon which talks about forgiveness, resurrection and eternal life. For such, a sermon is the essence of a Christian funeral.

On occasion, a congregation member who is under church discipline may die and the question is asked, "May he/she receive a Christian funeral?" In general, if the church discipline has not yet gone all the way to excommunication, the person should receive a Christian funeral. However, if the person has been excommunicated and there is no evidence of repentance, he/she may not receive a Christian funeral.

Sometimes a congregation member may commit suicide, or die while committing some terrible sin (e.g. robbery). If there is evidence of faith, the pastor or called worker may still perform a Christian funeral. In the funeral he will speak of the sin, but also speak of forgiveness. In general such funerals should be small ones.

#### **What do you remember?**

1. What is the cause of every death?
2. What is not the cause of death?
3. What happens to the bodies of all people when they die?
4. What happens to the souls of believers when they die?
5. What happens to the souls of unbelievers when they die?
6. What two things does a Christian funeral do?
7. What is a "eulogy?"
8. Why don't we have eulogies in Lutheran funerals?
9. Who may receive a Lutheran funeral?
10. Who may not receive a Lutheran funeral?
11. Why are Christian funerals different from those of non-Christians?

#### **What do you think?**

1. What things have you seen at other funerals that should not be part of a Lutheran funeral?
2. How can the congregation members help the family of the dead person at this time?
3. How can this congregation teach its members more about death?