

**2022
60th Regular Convention
Central Illinois District
Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
PROCEEDINGS
(minutes)**



Springfield, Illinois
Crowne Plaza Hotel and Convention Center
July 17-19, 2022

1 **MINUTES**
2 Central Illinois District Convention
3 July 17-18, 2022

4
5 **Sunday, July 17, 2022**
6

7 Opening service for the Convention was held at 7:00pm at Trinity Lutheran Church in
8 Springfield on Sunday, July 17, 2022. Sermon was preached by Synod President. Rev. Matthew
9 Harrison.

10
11 **Monday, July 18, 2022 – Session 1**
12

13 Prior to the opening of the convention videos covering prison ministry and campus ministry were shown.
14 Rev. President Miller called the Convention to order at 8:00am at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in
15 Springfield. Pres. Miller led the convention in an opening devotion, based on I Peter 3: 18-22.

16
17 Rev. Jeff Gross presented the report of the Registration and Credentials Committee: 166 pastoral and lay
18 voting delegates are registered (at this point). A quorum was declared present, and the Convention was
19 declared open in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
20

21 Moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote to ratify the agenda.

22
23 President Miller read the proposed standing rules. Moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote
24 to adopt the standing rules.
25

26 Parliamentarian Dr. Steven Parry was introduced. Dr. Parry currently serves as the principal of St. John
27 Lutheran School in Buckley.
28

29 Rev. Chad Lueck, chair of the Resolutions Committee, was called to the dais. As he
30 made his way up, the list of congregations whose constitutions or bylaws were approved during the last
31 four years was presented. (List on B-55 in the Convention Workbook) Moved and seconded to approve
32 the congregations listed. Motion passed.
33

34 The Resolutions Committee was excused, and Synod Pres. Matthew Harrison was called to the dais to
35 welcome workers new to the District during the past four years. Pres. Harrison encouraged them to make
36 a bold confession for the Gospel.
37

38 District Secretary Stuenkel presented the nominations for District President. The District Bylaws specify
39 that the Convention consider five nominees who received more nominations than other potential
40 candidates and received at least 5% of the nominations. Seven candidates met those criteria, and four of
41 those declined nomination. Rev. Michael Mohr, Rev. Karl Eckhoff, and Rev. Mark Eddy are the
42 nominees who meet all the criteria to appear on the ballot. Rev. Stuenkel moved that the Bylaws be
43 suspended which call for five nominees, so that the election for District President could proceed with three
44 nominees. Motion seconded and passed. Voting for the office of President proceeded.
45

46 Rev. Miller provided a brief farewell address which was met with a rising chorus of cheers.
47

48 The Elections Committee announced that Rev. Mohr received 119 votes and was elected as the President
49 of the Central Illinois District. (Rev. Eddy received 36 votes, Rev. Eckhoff 34 votes).
50

1 Rev. Chad Lueck presented a resolution to commend Rev. Mark Miller’s service as District President.
2 The motion was seconded and passed, and, per the resolution, concluded with the singing of the Common
3 Doxology.
4

5 Rev. Dr. Scott Murray, 3rd Vice President of the LCMS, Senior Pastor of Memorial Lutheran, Houston,
6 Texas, presented the first installment of his Convention Essay: “Baptism, Sanctification, Resurrection.”
7 This is an introduction and paper that is based on Romans 6. (The full essay will be available on the CID
8 website following the convention.)
9

10 Rev. Bruce Scarbeary presented to the delegates the nomination procedures for Regional Vice
11 Presidents. Voting for the Eastern Region Vice President proceeded. Nomination ballots were collected to
12 be tallied as the Convention conducted other business.
13

14 Rev. Chad Lueck was called back to the dais and introduced the other members of the
15 Resolutions Committee: Rev. Dean Herberts, Mr. Scott Busboom, Mr. Robert Dalton, Ms. Berit
16 Ericson, Mrs. Robinette Flach, Rev. Mark Miller, and Rev. Dr. Ken Schurb.
17

18 R- 2022-01– *To Encourage Inviting People to Church Services* was presented to the delegates for
19 consideration. Moved and seconded to adopt R-2022-01. Motion passed.
20

21 R-2022-02– *To Instigate Church Planting Consideration* was presented to the delegates. An amendment
22 to substitute the word “Encourage” for the word “Instigate” in the title of the resolution was accepted as a
23 friendly amendment. The resolution as amended carried by voice vote.
24

25 R-2022-03 – *To Provide for 1.1.1 Giving within the Central Illinois District* was offered to the
26 Convention. The resolution passed by voice vote. Then, a short video “Dollars For Missions” describing
27 1.1.1 Giving was presented.
28

29 R2022-04 - *To Affirm the Church’s Freedom to Celebrate the Divine Service*
30 was presented to the convention for consideration. Four amendments were offered, seconded and passed
31 by voice vote.

- 32 (1) In the first line of the next to the last Resolved, the phrase “be encouraged to” be inserted between
33 the words “will” and “take.”
- 34 (2) Add the phrase “according to her own God-given authority to do so and regardless of the civil
35 government’s permission or restrictions.” at the end of the next to the last Resolved.
- 36 (3) In the fourth Resolved, delete the phrase “that did not apply elsewhere.”
- 37 (4) Add a new 10th WHEREAS. “WHEREAS the First Amendment to the United States Constitution
38 recognizes the rights of free exercise of religion and assembly, and”
39 The resolution as amended passed via voice vote.
40

41 Rev. Bruce Scarbeary reported on the Eastern Region Vice President balloting. Nominees selected were
42 Reverends Jason Braaten (26 votes), Mike Burdick (27), Michael Schuermann (8), and Paul Hemenway
43 (8). Voting for this position was taken.
44

45 While votes were being tabulated, LCMS President Rev. Harrison delivered his address and LCMS
46 Report.
47

48 Rev. Scarbeary reported the results of the balloting for Eastern Region Vice President. Rev. Jason
49 Braaten received 63 votes, Rev. Mike Burdick 64, Rev. Michael Schuermann 41, and Rev. Paul
50 Hemenway 21. Hemenway receiving the fewest vote was removed from the next ballot.

1
2 A second ballot was in order and proceeded.

3
4 While votes were being counted, the Resolutions Committee brought forth Resolution R-2022-05 – *To*
5 *Amend District Bylaw on Human Care Committee*. The motion passed

6
7 Resolution R2022-06 – *To Give More District Attention to the CID Archives and its Function of*
8 *Maintaining an Accurate History of the District* was presented to the Convention. The motion passed.

9
10 President Miller announced that a combined total of \$8,840 in donations were collected at the Sunday
11 worship service and at the Convention itself on the occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the LCMS and
12 would be forwarded to the Synod.

13
14 Resolution R2022-07 – *To Expand Circuit C-WOWs to Include Laity* was brought forth for
15 consideration. The motion passed

16
17 Resolution R2022-08 – *To Reject the Practice of So-Called “Internet Communion”* was presented to the
18 Convention for consideration. An amendment was offered and seconded to end the last Resolved after
19 the word “Confessions” and delete the balance of the Resolved as presented. The amendment was
20 adopted. A second amendment was proposed and seconded to delete the words “and condemn” in the
21 next to the last and the last Resolveds. This motion was not approved. The question was called on the
22 amended resolution and the amended resolution was approved.

23
24 Rev. Scarbeary reported the results of the second ballot for Eastern Region Vice President. Rev. Jason
25 Braaten received 64 votes, Rev. Mike Burdick 70, and Rev. Michael Schuermann 50. A third ballot was
26 needed, Schuermann’s name was removed from the ballot, and the vote commenced.

27
28 While ballots were being counted, the Convention was paused for Lunch. When it reconvened at 1:30
29 P.M., it did so as the 6th Regular Convention of the Central Illinois District Church Extension Fund. The
30 CID-CEF Convention’s business having been expeditiously conducted; the CID Convention resumed at
31 2:00 P.M.

32 **Monday, July 18, 2022 – Session 2**

33
34 Pres. Miller opened Session II with prayer

35
36 Rev. Scarbeary reported that Rev. Mike Burdick was elected Eastern Region Vice President with 100
37 votes (Rev. Jason Braaten received 86 votes). Instructions were given and balloting for the Western
38 Region Vice President commenced.

39
40 Rev. Dr. Ken Schurb was called to present his report as CID Administrative Assistant to the President
41 for Evangelism, Missions, Stewardship and Human Care.

42
43 Mr. Trip Rogers was called to present his report as CID Assistant to the President for Education and
44 Congregational Life. He asked for prayers for LuHi Springfield dealing with mine subsidence.

45
46 Resolution R2022-09 – *To Amend and Update Selected Bylaws of the CID* was offered to the convention
47 for consideration. An amendment to strike “no more” in Section 2.22 Membership, newly redesignated
48 subsection “d.” was made and seconded. The amendment passed. Then the amended motion was
49 adopted.

1 Resolution R2022-10 – *To Encourage Congregations and Circuits To Support Local Life Ministries* was
2 offered and passed.

3
4 Resolution R2022-11 – *To Address Scriptural Errors in Fellowship with the JLC* was presented. Motion
5 passed.

6
7 Resolution R2022-12 – *To Affirm the God-given Distinctions between the Two Sexes* was presented. An
8 amendment was made and seconded to add the phrase “and school” between the words “congregation”
9 and “to” in the first line of the third Resolved. The amendment passed. The amended motion then was
10 approved.

11
12 Rev. Bruce Scarbeary reported on the Western Region Vice President balloting. Nominees selected
13 were Reverends Mark Eddy (42votes), Karl Eckhoff (21), Dan Bishop (13) and Brian Lesemann (9).
14 Voting on another ballot progressed with Lesemann being dropped having received the least number of
15 votes in the previous ballot.

16
17 While those votes were being counted, Pres. Harrison presented Part II of his synodical update and
18 responded to questions from the floor.

19
20 Rev. Scarbeary reported the results of the balloting for Western Region Vice President. Rev. Mark Eddy
21 received 82 votes, Rev. Karl Eckhoff 53, and Rev. Dan Bishop 46.

22
23 A second ballot for Western Region Vice President proceeded after Bishop’s name was dropped.
24 While tabulation of that ballot was in progress, Resolution R2022-13 – *To Decline Overture 02022 - 10*
25 was presented. A motion to offer Overture 02022-10 as a substitute motion was made and seconded.
26 President Miller invoked the “Behnken Rule.” The chair called the question on whether the convention
27 would consider the substitute motion.

28
29 Because of the closeness of the voice vote, President Miller called for a division of the house. The
30 motion failed. The original motion was brought forward and passed via voice vote.

31
32 Resolution R2022-14 – *To Decline Overture 02022-11* was presented. Motion passed.

33 Rev. Scarbeary reported that Rev. Mark Eddy was elected Western Region Vice President with 115
34 votes (Rev. Karl Eckhoff received 64 votes). Balloting then commenced on deciding which Vice
35 President would be 1st Vice President and which 2nd Vice President.

36
37 Rev. Dr. Scott Murray presented Part II of his essay, “The Sanctified Life.”

38
39 Rev. Scarbeary reported the results of the Vice-Presidential ranking ballot, Rev. Mark Eddy garnered 94
40 votes and Rev. Mike Burdick 86. So, 1st Vice President is Rev. Mark Eddy and 2nd Vice President Rev.
41 Mike Burdick.

42
43 CID President-Elect Rev. Michael Mohr addressed the convention and offered an encouraging word.

44
45 LWML-CID President Laura Strattman was welcomed to the Convention and brought greetings from the
46 LWML-CID.

47
48 CID LLL President Danny Magelitz was welcomed to the convention and brought greetings from the
49 LLL.

1 Gary Ireland brought greetings from Concordia University Chicago (The originally scheduled presenter
2 Dr. Dawn had jury duty and so was unable to attend the Convention).
3 Rev. Michael Koschmann was called to the dais as Chairman of the Nominations Committee. He
4 thanked the other members of the committee.
5

6 Nominees for the remaining elected offices were presented. Nominations from the floor were requested.
7 As no nominations from the floor were received, it was moved, seconded, and adopted by voice vote,
8 each in its own turn, to close the nominations for Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer [Phillip
9 Muehl, the original and only nominee for CID treasurer dropped his name from consideration in the
10 week prior to the convention, and the nominations committee offered two new candidates: Andrew
11 Jones and John Myers, Jr.], Financial Secretary, Clergy members of the Board of Directors, Teachers to
12 serve on the Board of Directors, Laymen to serve on the Board of Directors, Clergy on the
13 Congregational Constitution and District Handbook Committee, Lay Lawyer on the Congregational
14 Constitution and District Handbook Committee, Teachers for the Nominations Committee for the 2025
15 District Convention, Lay members of the Nominations Committee for the 2025 District Convention and
16 Lay Member of the Nominations Committee for the 2023 Synodical Convention. A nomination was
17 made from the floor to add Rev. Michael Schuermann to Clergy members of the Nominations
18 Committee for the 2025 District Convention. Since no further nominations were forthcoming for that
19 office, nominations were closed.
20

21 In addition, nominations from the floor for the CID Endowment Fund Board of Directors were opened.
22 (The nominees to date are listed on page F-4 of the Convention Workbook.) No additional nominations
23 occurred, and nominations were closed.
24

25 The CID District Convention paused and began sitting as the 6th Regular Convention of the Central
26 Illinois District Endowment Fund, Inc.
27

28 The Endowment Fund Convention's business having been concluded and seeing no need for the CID
29 Convention to meet following dinner, Pres. Miller suspended the evening session. The convention will
30 reconvene at 8 am on the morning of Tuesday, July 19, 2022.
31

32 **Tuesday, July 19, 2022**

33

34 President Miller called the morning session, Tuesday July 19, to order and opened with prayer.
35

36 Rev. Bruce Scarbeary noted that the persons to be voted on for district positions are all listed on a sheet
37 placed on the table before each of the delegates. He moved that those positions for which there were
38 only as many nominees as positions to be filed be elected by acclamation. The motion was seconded
39 and passed by voice vote. Accordingly, Rev. Marcus Manley was elected to the position of Board of
40 Directors - Assistant Secretary, Greg Townsend as Lay Attorney of the Congregational Constitution and
41 District Handbook Committee, Lisa Dipple and Robinette Flach to be Commissioned members of the
42 Nominations Committee for the 2025 District Convention, and Dan Block and Raymond Stuckemeyer as
43 Lay members of the Nominations Committee for the 2025 District Convention.
44

45 Voting proceeded for the remaining positions as noted on the ballot sheet.
46

47 Rev. Dr. Scott Murray, convention essayist, delivered Part III of his essay, "The Resurrection."
48

49 As a housekeeping measure, President Miller reminded all to return their name tags to the registration
50 desk.

1
2 A motion to allow the District Board of Directors to approve the minutes of the convention was made
3 and seconded. The motion passed.
4

5 The following slate of Circuit Visitors was moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

6	Altamont	Ryan Meyer
7	Bloomington North	Jonathon Boehne
8	Bloomington South	Chad Lueck
9	Champaign	Michael Schuermann
10	Decatur	David Bueltmann
11	Effingham	Stephen Rutherford
12	Iroquois	H. Douglas Minton
13	Jacksonville	Brian Lesemann
14	Lincoln	David Dunlop
15	Mattoon	Matthew Montgomery
16	Peoria	Karl Eckhoff
17	Quincy	Michael Grieve
18	Rock Island	Kent Umbarger
19	Shelby	Nathan Woolery
20	Springfield East	<i>(to be appointed)</i>
21	Springfield West	Martin Kaufmann
22	Tazewell	Jeffrey Anderson

23
24 Guests were welcomed.

25
26 Mrs. Debbie Miller was honored as a blessing to our district.

27
28 An LCMS video was presented to the delegates.

29
30 It was moved and seconded to ratify the election of advisory delegates to the LCMS Convention.
31 Those delegates are Ordained Minister advisory: Rev. Richard Harre, Commissioned Minister advisory:
32 Berit Ericson and Dr. Larry Wooster. The motion passed.
33

34 Dr. Ken Schurb spoke about 1.1.1 Giving and DFM (Dollar for Missions) funding noting that materials
35 were available on the CID website. Matt Deverman (lay delegate from Trinity, Pekin) was
36 acknowledged as being very helpful in producing the CID videos. The two summer evangelism Interns
37 were introduced and thanked.
38

39 The sequence of elections proceeded as follows. The bold vote count in any succession of ballots
40 indicates that that individual had been elected at that point in the elections process.
41
42
43
44
45
46
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49
50

SECRETARY Ballot
1st

Rev. Kent Umbarger

Rev. Jonathan Huehn

TREASURER

Andrew Jones

John Myers, Jr.

**FINANCIAL
SECRETARY**

Robert Dalton

James Frazee

BOD -CLERGY (4)

**Rev. Jeffrey
Caithamer**

Rev. Peter Glock

Rev. Ryan Meyer

**Rev. Bruce
Scarbeary**

Rev. Kevin Wendorf

**BOD -TEACHERS
(2)**

Brian Carr

Robinette Flach

LaJean Harkins

John Jacob

	Ballot 1 st	2 nd	3 rd
BOD -LAY (4)			
Tom Blessman	103		
Steve Carls	66		
Robert Dalton	73	99	
Roger Garlich	83	58	82
Bill Gray	75	58	
Danny Magelitz	80	59	81
Aaron Schroeder	69	48	
Larry Wachtel	108		

CONGREGATIONAL CONSTITUTIONS AND DISTRICT
HANDBOOK COMMITTEE

CLER
GY (2)

Rev. Daniel Bishop	136
Rev. Kent Tibben	116
Rev. Barry Long	82

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2023 SYNOD
CONVENTION

LAY
(1)

Bill Denham	49	67	74
George Perkins	23		
Matt Putnam	56	76	95
Don James	32	26	

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2025 DISTRICT		1
CONVENTION		2
	Ballot	3
CLERGY	1st	4
(2)		5
		6
Rev. Joshua	132	7
Theilen		8
		9
Rev. Josh Traxel	81	10
		11
		12
Rev. Michael	119	13
Schuermann		14

15
16 So, the summary of the election results are:

17
18 President – Rev. Michael Mohr

19 1st Vice President – Rev. Mark Eddy

20 2nd Vice President – Rev. Michael Burdick

21 Board of Directors –

22 Secretary – Rev. Kent Umbarger

23 Assistant Secretary – Rev. Marcus Manley

24 Treasurer – John Myers, Jr.

25 Financial Secretary – James Frazee

26 Clergy (4) – Reverends Jeffrey Caithamer, Peter Glock, Bruce Scarbeary, Kevin Wendorf

27 Teachers (2) – Brian Carr, John Jacob

28 Layman (4) – Tom Blessman, Larry Wachtel, Robert Dalton, Roger Garlisch

29 Congregational Constitutions and District Handbook Committee

30 Clergy (2) – Reverends Daniel Bishop, Kent Tibben

31 Lay Attorney (1) – Greg Townsend

32 Nominations Committee 2025 CID Convention

33 Clergy (2) – Reverends Joshua Theilen, Michael Schuermann

34 Teachers (2) – Lisa Dipple, Robinette Flach

35 Lay (2) – Dan Block, Raymond Stuckemeyer

36 Nominations Committee 2023 LCMS Convention

37 Lay (1) – Matt Putman

38
39 As voting is completed, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to destroy the ballots.

40
41 Pres. Miller thanked those who served.

42
43 While waiting for elections results, we were entertained by a traveling banjo player, who doubles as an
44 itinerant mendicant preacher AKA Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison. CID videos were shown regarding
45 prison ministry, Dollars For Missions, and CID campus ministries. Rev. Joshua Theilen spoke about Camp
46 CILCA.

47 Final registration numbers from the Credentials Committee: 102 lay delegates, 97 pastoral delegates (199
48 total voting delegates), 14 advisory delegates, 15 exhibitors, 29 guests, 7 staff — 264 total registered.

49
50 LCMS President Harrison installed Rev. Michael Mohr as CID District President.

1
2 Pres. Mohr installed Rev. Mark Eddy and Rev. Michael Burdick as vice-presidents of the CID, also
3 installed were the District's Circuit Visitors. Pres. Mohr installed the newly elected officers and
4 members of the CID Board of Directors, and other elected committee members.

5
6 It was moved to adjourn. Closing devotion.

7
8 Respectfully submitted,

9
10 In HIS Service,
11 Rev. James Stuenkel
12 Central Illinois District Secretary
13

1 **2022 RESOLUTIONS**

2
3 **Resolution R2022-01**

4 **Inviting People to Church Services**

5
6
7 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

8
9 **RATIONALE:**

10 In some ways, it may seem that the days are over in which inviting people to church services can serve
11 as a prime method for evangelistic outreach. The Synod’s *re: Vitality* module called “Connect to Disciple”
12 operates on the premise that a congregation should have a variety of “low pressure” opportunities, besides
13 church services, to which new people can be invited.

14 Yet exceptions exist. A previously unchurched lady started attending the services of Immanuel Lutheran
15 Chapel in Springfield during May of 2021 after someone simply placed a packet of materials on her doorknob.
16 How much more might at least some people respond to a personal invitation from a friend! Do not
17 underestimate the loneliness that has set in as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

18 In the past, our Synod used to produce special “Friendship Sunday” materials. However helpful such
19 tools may have been, they are not necessary. There need not be anything unusual about a church service on a
20 Sunday that a congregation designates as an “Invite a Friend” day. As it is, Christ offers poor sinners
21 forgiveness and life there through Word and Sacrament, which is the most remarkable thing of all. Still, it
22 would be good for a congregation to consider ways to extend itself to visitors on such an occasion.

23 Some churches designate two “Invite a Friend” Sundays a year, one shortly before Christmas (when
24 visitors can be invited back for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year’s services), and the other shortly
25 before Holy Week (when visitors can be invited back for Holy Week and Easter services). Other churches set
26 aside an entire month, such as September, for an “Invite a Friend” emphasis.

27 There is still a group of people who would come to church – or come back to church – if someone
28 invited them. It’s not everyone you know, but quite possibly someone you know; therefore be it
29

30 *Resolved*, That Central Illinois District (CID) congregations be urged strategically to schedule Sundays
31 and other occasions when they will encourage their members to invite and bring friends to church services; and
32 be it further

33
34 *Resolved*, That these churches be encouraged to devote time and attention to reminding their members
35 about upcoming “Invite a Friend” days well in advance; and be it further

36
37 *Resolved*, That these churches be urged to receive the unchurched warmly on such occasions and follow
38 up on them promptly thereafter; and be it further

39
40 *Resolved*, That at these services churches be urged to provide assistance for visitors who may be
41 unfamiliar with the liturgy (e.g., “helpers” who can sit with visitors and guide them through the service; written
42 descriptions of the components of the liturgy; narrated services);
43 and be it finally

44
45 *Resolved*, That CID congregations be urged to post on their websites’ pages offering resources to help
46 members invite others to church (e.g., facts about the church and its confession of Christ, or samples of e-mail
47 or social media messages that members may use in extending or reinforcing invitations).
48
49
50

1 **Resolution R2022-02**

2
3 **To ~~Instigate~~ Encourage Church Planting Considerations**

4
5 Amended Resolution (Amendments noted) Passed (Voice Vote)

6
7 WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ told His church to “make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the
8 Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded
9 you” (Matthew 28:19-20 ESV); and

10
11 WHEREAS, Planting new churches forms an important step in this direction since
12 • new congregations are frequently quite attuned to bringing in unchurched people;
13 • a new church may get the attention of unchurched people more readily than an existing one;
14 • there is a need to bring the Gospel to inner cities and across ethnic lines;
15 • the church does well to be physically close to unchurched people; and
16 starting new churches can help existing churches in a variety of ways (e.g., focusing on reaching out with the
17 Gospel); and

18
19 WHEREAS, One of the reasons why Circuit Forums exist is “considering and recommending new work”
20 (LCMS Bylaw 5.3.1; see 5.3.1b.2); and

21
22 WHEREAS, The Synod’s very first word in stating the first of its mission priorities is “plant”; and

23
24 WHEREAS, The Synod’s last convention resolved that “congregations and circuits be encouraged and
25 supported by their respective districts to investigate and identify new mission plants”; and

26
27 WHEREAS, The Synod added that “congregations, circuits, and district leaders be encouraged to think
28 strategically and plan collaboratively when establishing these new mission plants. . .” (quotes are from LCMS
29 2019 Res. 1-02); therefore be it

30
31 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District (CID) encourage its member congregations to give
32 consideration to church planting, using tools developed by CID in cooperation with the LCMS Office of
33 National Mission; and be it further

34
35 *Resolved*, That every CID congregation be invited to think about ways in which it could be involved in
36 church planting, even if its involvement might at first seem only small or slight; and be it further

37
38 *Resolved*, That the District urge congregations to conduct candid conversations that do not turn a blind
39 eye to possible difficulties, yet that also take note of church planting’s potential for telling the Good News about
40 Jesus to the unchurched; and be it further

41
42 *Resolved*, That congregations and small groups of congregations be invited and encouraged to call upon
43 CID personnel for consultation regarding church planting; and be it further

44
45 *Resolved*, That Circuits be instructed to devote time to the subject of church planting at their various
46 meetings, also calling upon CID personnel for consultation regarding this topic; and be it finally

47
48 *Resolved*, That Circuits consider appointing Circuit Mission Councils, which would serve as committees
49 for a specific assignment (LCMS Bylaw 5.2.1.b) – in this case, encouraging and facilitating mission activity
50 within the Circuit, including church planting.

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Resolution R2022-03

To Provide for 1.1.1 Giving within the Central Illinois District

Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

WHEREAS, Many mission opportunities lie close at hand, but at times a shortage of financial resources limits the church’s mission efforts; and

WHEREAS, Many small monetary gifts add up to a large sum, as shown by LWML’s Mite Boxes; and

WHEREAS, The Synod’s last convention called attention to a mission funding model pioneered by the English District “whereby congregations gather significant gifts above and beyond regular offerings to be used for specifically designated mission endeavors (namely, the \$1 per member per week initiative, hereafter ‘1.1.1’); and

WHEREAS, The Synod resolved that “each district set before the member congregations the defined mission outcomes that all congregations can see and help achieve through their extra designated funds received via the 1.1.1 mission funding model . . .” (quotes are from LCMS 2019 Res. 8-02); and

WHEREAS, If such a 1.1.1 funding model were implemented in CID at only 25% efficiency, it would yield more than three-quarters of a million dollars (\$750,000) a year in mission funding; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Central Illinois District (CID) implement the Synod’s resolution by adopting 1.1.1 mission funding with the name a *Dollar for Missions* (“DFM”); and be it further

Resolved, That funds generated through DFM be designated for well-conceived projects in the following order of priority: first, brand-new church plants; second, mission-focused augmentations to existing ministries (e.g., adding a new ethnic ministry to a present congregation); third, established CID missions including maintenance and upgrades to facilities (e.g., Ministry in Spanish, Campus Ministry, Deaf Ministry, Prison Ministry); and be it further

Resolved, That on an annual basis, CID’s Board of Directors (BOD) establish – mindful of any proposals submitted by congregations, groups of congregations, and/or Circuits – a list of projects to receive funds contributed through DFM; and be it further

Resolved, That the projects on the list be funded in succession, one at a time, up to BOD-designated dollar amounts (e.g., \$40,000 to assist a new church plant in Kosmos, Illinois); and be it further

Resolved, That CID congregations be asked to begin gathering DFM funds at the beginning of calendar year 2023, keeping them distinct from regular church offerings and the congregation’s usual remittances to Synod and District; and be it further

Resolved, That CID congregations be encouraged to send their DFM funds to the District office on a quarterly basis beginning March 31, 2023; and be it further

Resolved, That the Central Illinois District instruct Circuit Forums within the District, at their next meetings, either a.) to schedule (an)other Circuit Forum meeting(s) to discuss and, if possible, propose projects for DFM funding or b.) to form a Circuit Mission Council that can identify and engage in ongoing work with

1 such projects; and be it finally

2
3 *Resolved*, That the CID office notify the District’s congregations of the specific mission projects that can
4 be funded and are being funded via DFM contributions.

5
6 **Resolution R2022-04**

7
8 **To Affirm the Church’s Freedom to Celebrate the Divine Service**

9
10 **Amended Resolution (Amendments Noted) Passed (Voice Vote)**

11
12 WHEREAS, To obtain saving faith God has given the Word and Sacraments and instituted the Office of
13 the Ministry to administer these gifts (Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:21-23; AC V 1-3; AC XIV); and

14
15 WHEREAS, The church is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is purely preached and
16 the holy sacraments are administered according the Gospel (AC VII.1), and God has commanded his people to
17 gather to hear his Word and receive His Sacraments (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians
18 11:24-25), just as the Lutheran Confessions say that the Sacrament of the Altar is celebrated every Lord’s day
19 (Ap. XXIV 1); and

20
21 WHEREAS, God has designed His creation with three estates – the family, the church, and the
22 government; and

23
24 WHEREAS, These three estates remain (and continue their defining functions) until the end of time, even
25 during pandemic, famine, war, etc.; and

26
27 WHEREAS, The authority of the government in relation to the Fourth Commandment is derived from the
28 estate of the family, “For all other authority is derived and developed out of the authority of parents” (LC I
29 141); and

30
31 WHEREAS, The government is given by God to reward good and punish evil and maintain order as
32 defined by God’s holy will (Romans 13; AC XVI.1-2), and deals with bodies and goods, not spiritual matters
33 (AC XXVIII 11); and

34
35 WHEREAS, The church rightfully operates in God’s right hand rule through the Gospel as she seeks to
36 bring forgiveness and salvation through Christ’s means of grace; and

37
38 WHEREAS, The government rightfully operates in God’s left hand rule, as it works through the Law to
39 maintain order and restrain sin; and

40
41 WHEREAS, The church is not entirely independent of the government’s left hand rule as she deals with
42 non-spiritual matters of operation (zoning laws, building permits, occupancy permits, etc.); and

43
44 WHEREAS, The First Amendment to the United States Constitution recognizes the rights of free exercise
45 of religion and assembly, and

46
47 WHEREAS, The government has no God given authority over the spiritual matters of the church’s
48 administration of the Means of Grace as they take place in the Divine Service; therefore be it

49
50 *Resolved*, That we affirm the church’s essential nature, purpose, and ongoing function in this world until

1 Christ comes again in His glory; and be it further

2
3 *Resolved*, That we affirm the church's and family's status as having their God-given role in caring for
4 both body and soul; and be it further

5
6 *Resolved*, That we confess that the government has no God given authority to place restrictions on the
7 church's ability to celebrate the Divine Service; and be it further

8
9 *Resolved*, That we hold the government to have exceeded its God given authority in placing restrictions
10 on the church that did not apply elsewhere; and be it further

11
12 *Resolved*, That we affirm that in time of pandemic or public crisis the church in Christian freedom
13 should seek to implement measures that serve the public good while continuing to carry out her essential role of
14 offering the Word and the Sacraments in the Divine Service; and be it further

15
16 *Resolved*, That we exhort and encourage one another to confess boldly the essential nature and function
17 of the church, especially in the event of future government mandated shut downs or restrictions to the
18 celebration of the Divine Service; and be it further

19
20 *Resolved*, That we confess to the world that only the Gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord
21 Jesus Christ can provide final victory over sin, sickness, and death; and be it further

22
23 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the CID will be encouraged to take notice of all government actions
24 regarding public health and while "seeking to live at peace with all men" the church will implement those
25 actions that in her own judgment do not interfere with her God-given functions, while respectfully choosing not
26 to observe any government decree, mandate, executive action, law, or court order which does so interfere,
27 according to her own God-given authority to do so and regardless of the civil government's permission or
28 restrictions, and be it finally

29
30 *Resolved*, That the CID in convention memorialize the 2023 LCMS convention to affirm the church's
31 freedom to celebrate the Divine Service.

32
33 **Resolution R2022-05**

34
35 **To Amend District Bylaw on Human Care Committee**

36
37 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

38
39 WHEREAS, Church workers are gifts from the Lord to His church; and

40
41 WHEREAS, Our Synod is concerned with the continued growth, protection, and welfare of church
42 workers (LCMS Constitution, Article III); and

43
44 WHEREAS, The Central Illinois District would do well explicitly to encourage and support the personal
45 and vocational growth and well-being of the church's workers; therefore be it

46
47 *Resolved*, That District Bylaw 2.34 be amended as follows:

1 2.34 The ~~Human-Care~~ Committee for Human Care and Church Worker Support and Wellness

2 a. Membership: The Board of Directors shall appoint a ~~Human-Care~~ Committee
3 for Human Care and Church Worker Support and Wellness consisting of two ordained
4 ministers, one commissioned church worker from the Synod roster, one layman who is
5 voting member of a congregation of the District, and a fifth member of a District
6 congregation who is not an ordained minister.

7 b. The Duties of the ~~Human-Care~~ Committee for Human Care and Church
8 Worker Support and Wellness:

- 9
- 10 i. Provide ~~advisory~~ services which will ~~cultivate~~ *deepen* congregation members' ~~in-~~
11 ~~their~~ concern for human care, ~~and shall participate in social education~~ and
12 endeavors to remove or alleviate human suffering;
 - 13 ii. Promote and participate in human care activities from the *Synod's* Offices of
14 National ~~Mission~~ and the ~~Office~~ of International Mission;
 - 15 iii. *Encourage and support the personal and vocational growth and well-being of the*
16 *church's workers.*
 - 17 iv. Recommend to the Board of Directors the granting of assistance to congregations,
18 or through them to their members or others, in dire emergencies or disaster
19 situations;
 - 20 v. Assist the Commission on Mission Services, upon request, in the institutional
21 ministries of the District.
- 22

23 **Resolution R2022-06**

24 **To Give More Direct Attention to the CID Archives**
25 **and its Function of Maintaining an Accurate History of the District**

26
27 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

28
29
30 WHEREAS, The Central Illinois District is the result of the dissolution of the Illinois District-LCMS in
31 1909 resulting in the creation of the Northern, Central and Southern Illinois Districts, each with its own
32 Archives and functioning under generally accepted archival practices. The CID Archives has existed in one
33 form or another since its creation and has been administered by various clergy and laymen, The current archivist
34 is Ralph Woehrmann, appointed by the CID Board of Directors in 2008. The archives is housed on CID
35 grounds; and

36
37 WHEREAS, The Archives consists of congregational files, active and closed or released from the LCMS,
38 files of CID Board of Directors activities, special files on other Lutheran groups, Lutheran High School, Youth
39 and Women's work, Christian Education, Inner City Board of Directors, Archival Newsletters, CID History,
40 Lutheran Retirement Center/ Concordia Village, Dispute Resolution matters, LWML activities, and collections
41 from various estates; and

42
43 WHEREAS, The archives is governed by the archivist along with a volunteer Board of Directors which
44 meets four times per year and which has produced in the past 13 years a quarterly Archivist publication, a
45 permanent marker about the former Seminary on its former grounds at 13th and Carpenter, Springfield, Illinois,
46 several items translated from the German including a History of the Fort Wayne Sem from 1846-1896, and an
47 updated history of CID; and

48
49 WHEREAS, The CID has generally shown only a passive interest in the Archives, viewing it as a
50 generally valuable asset but not being all that essential; therefore be it

1 Lutheran Confessions, and let it be further

2
3 *Resolved*, that the Central Illinois District memorialize the 2023 LCMS convention to reject and condemn
4 the practice of so-called “Internet Communion” as contrary to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions
5 and adopt the CTCR opinions “*Communion and COVID-19*” and “*One Little Word Can Fell Him: Addendum to*
6 *Communion and COVID-19*”.

7
8 **Resolution R2022-09A**

9
10 **To Amend and Update Selected Bylaws of the CID**

11
12 Amended Resolution (Amendments Noted) Passed (Voice Vote)

13
14 WHEREAS, The CID Board of Directors and the CID Commission on Congregational Constitutions and
15 District Handbook recommended changes and updates to the present edition of the CID Handbook and received
16 prior approval from the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matters; therefore be it

17
18 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District in convention adopt the following revised bylaws to be
19 included as amended in the CID Handbook for 2022, to wit:

20
21 2.12 Regional Vice-Presidents

22 a. The District shall elect two Vice-Presidents, who shall be regional Vice-Presidents, that is, one of
23 the Vice-Presidents shall at the time of the election be in the eastern region of the District, namely, the
24 Altamont, Champaign, ~~Danville~~, Decatur, Effingham, Iroquois, Mattoon, Shelby, Springfield East, or
25 Springfield West Circuits; the other shall at the time of election be in the western region of the
26 District, namely, the Bloomington North & South, Jacksonville, Lincoln, Peoria, Quincy, Rock Island,
27 or Tazewell Circuits.

28
29 2.13 Relation to President

30 ~~The~~ Each Vice-President shall, upon request of the President, or as may be provided by the District, advise,
31 assist, or represent the President.

32
33 2.17 Duties

34 a. The Secretary shall record the proceedings during District conventions, publish the proceedings
35 after the President has approved the manuscript, sign (in conjunction with the President) all legal
36 documents and instruments, and perform such other work as the Synod or District may direct him
37 through its Bylaws, regulations, or special resolutions.

38 eb. The Secretary shall receive and cause to be preserved signed copies of constitutions of
39 congregations newly accepted into the Synod (Synod Bylaw 2.3.2), oversee selection of district
40 advisory delegates to conventions of Synod (Synod Bylaw 3.1.3.1(a)), certify delegates for synodical
41 conventions and synodical presidential elections (Synodical Bylaws 3.1.3.2 and 3.12.2.3) accredit
42 delegates from voting congregations or multi-congregation parishes to the district convention (Synod
43 Bylaw 4.2.2), and oversee the nomination process for district president (Central Illinois District
44 Bylaws 2.40 and 2.41).

45 bc. The Assistant Secretary shall assist the Secretary whenever requested to do so. In the event that
46 the Secretary becomes incapacitated or vacates his office, the Assistant Secretary shall take over the
47 office and duties of the Secretary.

48
49 2.22 Membership

50 a. The Board of Directors shall be constituted as follows: The President, the Vice-Presidents, the

1 Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary shall be members of the Board. Four parish
2 pastors, four laymen who are voting members of congregations of the District, and two ~~teachers of~~
3 ~~Lutheran elementary or secondary schools or DCEs~~ commissioned ministers actively serving
4 ~~congregations~~ shall be elected according to procedures defined in these Bylaws.

5 b. ~~The Administrative Assistant(s) to the President, the Assistant Secretary, and the Business~~
6 ~~Manager (if appointed),~~ shall be an advisory members of the Board.

7 c. The Administrative Assistant(s) to the President and the Business Manager (if appointed), while
8 not members of the Board (Synod Bylaw 1.5.1.1) shall attend open sessions of the Board, giving
9 reports and advice directly to the Board.

10 ed. Every member of the Board shall be a member of a voting congregation of the District. No ~~more-~~
11 ~~than~~ two members of the same congregation may be members of the Board. When a member of the
12 Board ceases to be a member of a voting congregation of the District or when the nature of his major
13 duties is such that he no longer is a member of the group from which he was elected, he is
14 automatically eliminated from membership on the Board.

15 16 2.25 Responsibilities, Commissions

17 e. Each commission shall be responsible for its share of the Board of Directors' ~~annual~~ triennial
18 report to the District convention.

19 f. Subcommittees:

20 Each commission, with the approval of the Board of Directors, may augment itself and/or appoint such
21 personnel and committees as are needed to carry out the overall objectives of the commission. All such
22 appointments will terminate at the close of the following district convention.

23 24 2.26 Meetings

25 b. The Secretary of the Board shall keep accurate minutes of each meeting of the Board and copies of
26 these minutes shall be sent after each meeting to all members of the Board. A summary of the actions of
27 the Board shall be sent ~~to all circuit visitors and circuit lay delegates, the Auditing Committee, the~~
28 ~~Public Relations Committee, and~~ to each congregation on a regular basis.

29 30 2.28 Financial Duties

31 d. Budgeting Procedure: ~~After the commitments for each year have been received from the~~
32 ~~congregations, one member of each of the commissions, together with the Financial Secretary and~~
33 ~~Treasurer, The Budget Committee (Central Illinois District Bylaw 9.01c) shall propose a tentative~~
34 ~~income and expenditures budget for the next fiscal year for the consideration of the Board of~~
35 ~~Directors. The Board of Directors shall establish the budget at its last meeting of the prior fiscal year~~
36 ~~or the first meeting in the new fiscal year.~~

37 e. Following the District Convention and before the beginning of the next fiscal year, the Board shall
38 appoint ~~an Auditing~~ Financial Review Committee. Such committee shall stand for three years.

39 40 2.30 Other Duties

41 b. The circuit visitors of the District shall be regularly informed of the transactions and directions of
42 the Board. In any matter affecting a particular circuit the Board shall confer with the visitor of that
43 circuit.

44 45 2.31 Administrative Assistant(s) to the President

46 e. Duties of the Administrative Assistant(s):

47 ii. Carry out the decisions of the Board as it may direct ~~and shall be a(n) advisory member(s) of~~
48 ~~the Board;~~

1
2
3 **Resolution R2022-10**

4 **To Encourage Congregations and Circuits to Support Local Life Ministries**

5
6
7 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

8
9 WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ says in John 10: 10 (ESV), “I came that they may have life and have it
10 abundantly”; and

11
12 WHEREAS, God has knitted together every person in the womb, as David says in Psalm 139: 13-14
13 (ESV), “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am
14 fearfully and wonderfully made”; and

15
16 WHEREAS, We are called to love our neighbor according to the apostle John, “We love because he first
17 loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother
18 whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever
19 loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:19-21 ESV); and

20
21 WHEREAS, The laws of the state of Illinois are hostile to the unborn child due to actions of the state
22 legislature and various governors, specifically public funding of abortions (HB40, 2017), the Reproductive
23 Health Act of 2019, and the repeal of parental notification for abortion in 2021; and

24
25 WHEREAS, Our Lord calls us to be the light of the world in His Sermon on the Mount, teaching, “You
26 are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a
27 basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others,
28 so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16 ESV);
29 and

30
31 WHEREAS, The LCMS has established the Life Ministry Million Dollar Life Match
32 (<https://www.lcms.org/serve/grants/life-grant>) to fund life activities by congregations and circuits; therefore be
33 it

34
35 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Central Illinois District individually or collectively with other
36 congregations in their circuit be encouraged by the delegates to apply for the Life Ministry Million Dollar Life
37 Match grant to minister to mothers, children, and families in their community through local organizations and
38 pregnancy resource centers.

39
40 **Resolution R2022-11**

41
42 **To Address Scriptural Errors in Fellowship with the JLC**

43
44 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

45
46 WHEREAS, The Japan Lutheran Church (JLC) grew out of LCMS mission work in Japan
47 beginning in 1948. It was organized as an autonomous church body in 1968 and became an
48 LCMS partner church in 1971; and

49
50 WHEREAS, In April 2021, the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC) held its convention online. During that

1 meeting, the church body made two decisions contrary to Scripture:

2
3 First, the JLC amended its bylaws to remove the word “male” from the section on
4 requirements of called pastors;

5
6 Second, the JLC elected as its vice-president an “ordained deaconess” who now publicly
7 describes herself as a “pastor,” is currently given this same title by the JLC, and regularly and openly
8 carries out the distinctive functions of the pastoral office; and
9

10 WHEREAS, These decisions have destroyed the scriptural basis for the longstanding relationship of altar
11 and pulpit fellowship between The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the JLC; and
12

13 WHEREAS, LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison has written to the leadership of the JLC to
14 explain the import of these decisions and to seek the JLC’s repentance and return to the true and clear
15 teaching of Scripture on the Office of the Holy Ministry: “The LCMS has, throughout its history,
16 consistently held and ‘declare[d] clearly and unequivocally... that the Scriptures teach that only men may
17 hold the pastoral office’ (1998 Res. 3-25A); and
18

19 WHEREAS, This is a matter of sacred truth and we have a conscience-bound commitment as a
20 confessional orthodox Lutheran church body to confess this truth and to remain faithful to it; therefore be it
21

22 *Resolved*, That the 2022 Central Illinois District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod pray and
23 urge the Japan Lutheran Church to repent and return to the biblical and confessional Lutheran teaching
24 regarding the Office of the Public Ministry; and be it finally
25

26 *Resolved*, that the Central Illinois District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod memorialize the
27 Lutheran Church Missouri Synod 2023 convention to revoke/dissolve partnership with the JLC, which
28 was adopted in 1971, if it still remains in these errors at the time of the 2023 Convention of the Synod.
29

30 **Resolution R2022-12**

31 **To Affirm the God-given Distinctions between the Two Sexes**

32 Amended Resolution (Amendments Noted) Passed (Voice Vote)
33
34
35

36 WHEREAS, God created human beings (as well as animals, Gen. 6:19; 7:3,9,16) in two sexes, as stated in
37 Genesis 1:26-28 (ESV):

38 God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish
39 of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every
40 creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he
41 created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be
42 fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.”; and
43

44 WHEREAS, The Lord Jesus and His apostle St. Paul re-affirmed God’s original intent for marriage, as
45 stated in Matthew 19:4-6 (ESV, see also Mark 10:6-9; Ephesians 5:31):

46 “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said,
47 ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall
48 become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let
49 not man separate.”; and
50

1 WHEREAS, The two sexes by God’s design have differing body parts for procreation and urination,
2 differing hormone levels, and, as a result, differing secondary sex characteristics which include relative size,
3 muscle mass, etc.; and
4

5 WHEREAS, Biological sciences and genetics have discovered that every somatic cell which has a nucleus
6 in a male has a Y chromosome, and that every somatic cell which has a nucleus in a female has only X
7 chromosomes, and that in a very small percentage of individuals chromosomal abnormalities lead to the unusual
8 development of body parts and/or to infertility; and
9

10 WHEREAS, Surgically removing or adding sexual organs does not change a person’s DNA, which
11 remains the same as it was since conception, and altering the level of sex hormones in a person may produces
12 secondary sex characteristics of the opposite sex but also does not change the person’s DNA; and
13

14 WHEREAS, Until most recent times, it has always been understood that castrated males are still male, and
15 “neutered” females are still female, though maturation and fertility are changed by those procedures; and
16

17 WHEREAS, Deuteronomy 23:1 shows that genital mutilation is contrary to God’s will, when it states:
18 “No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD”
19 (ESV); and
20

21 WHEREAS, God forbids what is sometimes called “cross-dressing,” stating in Deuteronomy 22:5: “A
22 woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things
23 is an abomination to the LORD your God” (ESV); and
24

25 WHEREAS, In recent years there has been a deliberate attempt to confuse the meaning of the words “sex”
26 (which refers to the biological reality of being “male” or “female,” or is a short way of referring to sexual
27 intercourse) and “gender” (which historically is a grammatical term designating words as “masculine” or
28 “feminine” or “neuter”), and this confusion has subsequently been used to imagine new so-called “gender
29 identities” for human beings; and
30

31 WHEREAS, The desire to be a sex or “gender” other than the one which God made us is covetous and a
32 form of rebellion against our Creator; and
33

34 WHEREAS, Christ’s apostles taught, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit
35 within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own for you were bought with a price. So glorify God
36 in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20 ESV), and “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its
37 passions” (Rom 6:12 ESV), and “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29 ESV), as our Lord’s apostles
38 did when they were ordered to do the opposite of what Jesus commanded; therefore be it
39

40 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, including all its
41 congregations and ministers, continue to affirm all that God’s word says about our embodiment as either male
42 or female, the differences between the two sexes, God’s limits on sexual activity, and His prohibitions of using
43 our bodies to sin; and be it further
44

45 *Resolved*, That we “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) and teach consistently in the church and the
46 world about God’s “very good” creation (Gen. 1:31), which consists of two, complementary sexes (Gen. 2:18),
47 and “in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks
48 you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15 ESV); and be it
49 further
50

1 6 and 15 times in Romans 7. The existential experience of sin by the Christian is at the forefront of Paul's
2 thinking. His own experience, as it often is, is paradigmatic of the believer's experience. He sees his own
3 earthly agony caused by the intractability of sin as the problem faced by every Christian because it is faced
4 by the Apostle. Because this problem plagues every Christian, he is driven to explore the answer to this
5 question for the sake of all. The Apostle answers the question in at least four different interlocking and
6 interrelated ways (perichoresis of theology), which are spread across and throughout Romans 3-7.

- 7
- 8 1. Christ kills our sin in Himself, because Christ died on the cross in our place (Rm 3:20-5:21).
 - 9 2. Christ kills our sin and raises us again through baptism individually and personally (Rm 6:1-12).
 - 10 3. Christ puts to death old Adam by repentance and contrition to bring forth the new life of service
11 to the neighbor into which we have been called by baptism (Rm 6:12-23).
 - 12 4. Christ keeps killing us until finally we will be raised up to the resurrected life at His coming; a
13 life like the resurrected Christ's. (Rm 6:1-11; 2Co 5:17; 1Co 15, etc.).

- 14
- 15 1. Christ kills our sin in Himself, because Christ died on the cross in our place (Rm 3:20-5:21).

16 While we won't spend any time dealing with the material in which Paul discloses so powerfully the
17 substitutionary atonement in which Christ died for the wicked like us, the reckoned acquittal of sinners like
18 us is not far from the horizon of our texts. The language of reckoning or accounting not guilty finds
19 expression in Romans 4, being repeated in various forms fifteen times in Romans 4.

20

21 Even in Romans 6 where baptism is highlighted and the metaphor of death and life supersedes the
22 metaphor of reckoning, Paul still employs the term of reckoning or counting in Romans 6:11 to bring the
23 reader back to the theme of acquittal and divine reckoning. We need to see along with God. In our non-
24 seeing we will see along with God. Faith trusts what God says He sees and thus we walk by faith and not by
25 sight.¹ What Paul writes about baptism and its power to bring death and give life (Rm 6:3-11) must be seen
26 within the context of God's substitutionary acts in Christ and the divine reckoning of the full gifts of death
27 and life in Christ. He names things so in His Word. Luther hints at this in his Small Catechism when he
28 says, "Baptism is not just plain water,² but it is the water included in God's command and combined with
29 God's Word...as the words and promises of God declare...Certainly not just water, but the word of God in
30 and with the water does these things..." (SC 4.1-3). We would only know the benefits of baptism because
31 God has disclosed them to us. God's speaking, God's declaration does all through His Word.³

¹ "I believe in Christ, whom I do not see. But I have His Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and consolation through the Word and Absolution. Yet I see nothing of what He promises. Indeed, I feel the opposite in my flesh. Here, then, one must struggle and do battle against unbelief and doubt." AE 5:205.

² Luther is not unique in this view. "Regard not the font as simple water, but rather regard the spiritual grace that is given with the water. For just as the offerings brought to the heathen altars, though simple in their nature, become defiled by the invocation of the idols, so contrariwise the simple water having received the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and of Christ, and of the Father, acquires a new power of holiness." Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, 7.14-15

³ "We cannot put Paul's 'juridicial' and 'participationist' language into separate compartments, and any explanation of the roles of baptism in Rom. 6 must come to grips with the obvious centrality in Paul of faith as

1
2 What God says we get in baptism, we get in baptism, all human uncertainty, depravity, and
3 susceptibility to death notwithstanding. God reckons certain things to us in our baptism. The thing delivered
4 (forgiveness) is not far from the delivery mechanism (means of grace). Therefore, forgiveness cannot be
5 separated from the means of grace, without threatening the delivery of forgiveness itself. Martin Luther
6 encouraged his hearers by saying,

7 [Forgiveness] is not a mere prayer or wish; it is that by which, through the power of the Keys, I hand
8 over to you now the remission of sins, the grace and favor of God, in order that you may be able to conclude
9 with certainty that you have God, who is well pleased with you. This I hand over to you as a sure
10 possession.⁴

11 God's reckoning righteous and its ramifications in forgiveness are the all-encircling horizon in
12 Romans 6. The outcome of our redemption, which is the forgiveness of sins,⁵ cannot be separated from the
13 means by which that forgiveness is delivered to us. Luther says,

14 true theology teaches that there is no more sin in the world, because Christ, on whom, according to
15 Is. 53:6, the Father has laid the sins of the entire world, has conquered, destroyed, and killed it in His own
16 body. Having died to sin once, He has truly been raised from the dead and will not die any more (Rom. 6:9).
17 Therefore, wherever there is faith in Christ, there sin has in fact been abolished, put to death, and
18 buried. But where there is no faith in Christ, there sin remains. And although there are still remnants of sin
19 in the saints because they do not believe perfectly, nevertheless these remnants are dead; for on account of
20 faith in Christ they are not imputed.⁶

21
22 2. Christ kills our sin and raises us again through baptism (Rm 6:3-11).

23 Paul teaches that Christ perpetrates a euthanasia, "a good death" by baptism. This death, unlike other
24 deaths (1Co 15:26), is narrowly circumscribed: death to sin, which includes and implies the continual death
25 of old Adam and our death to the world (Col 2:20). Death to sin happens because we, who have been
26 baptized, have been baptized into the death of Christ (Rm 6:3). Martin Franzmann says, "What happened to
27 us makes any further connection with sin impossible. Sin *cannot* be our life-element any longer."⁷ We are
28 dead to sin. Though it still plagues us, it does not define us.

29
30 Surprisingly, Paul presumes baptism is intimately known and faithfully practiced by his Roman
31 readers. The word "to baptize" is all that is used. If Paul is writing Romans about 55 A.D., the rite of
32 baptism and its universal use among Christians is already long established and needs no explaining. Paul
33 presumes its use among the Roman Christians. There is no command to baptize here. The question of 6:3 is
34 entirely rhetorical. It is not as though there is any chance that the Roman Christians are ignorant of baptism
35 or its significance. Baptism is known and presumed in Rome where Paul has never visited in person. It is

the means by which our relationship to Christ is appropriated." Douglas Moo, *NICNT: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 365.

⁴ AE 5:196.

⁵ Col 1:14.

⁶ AE 26: 286.

⁷ Martin H. Franzmann, *Romans: A Commentary* (St. Louis: CPH, 1968), 109. Emphasis original.

1 not a later invention foisted on the church in imitation of the rites of the mystery religions.⁸ The rite, the
2 order, the liturgy, the “what to do” is long established and therefore well-known.

3
4 However, Paul does change gears on us. Where we might expect the metaphor of cleansing (Eph
5 5:26; Tit 3:5, 1Pt 3:21),⁹ since water washing away moral filth is the most obvious picture that arises out of
6 the washing with water, or renewal of life (Jn 3:5), which originates with Jesus, or forgiveness of sins (Acts
7 2:38), which arises at the dawn of the church on Pentecost or (less obviously) being clothed with Christ (Gal
8 3:27).¹⁰ Paul dramatically delivers to us death and life with Christ as the ruling metaphor in his description
9 of baptism. Again it leads me to think that the other, more obvious, metaphors could be presumed as known
10 and understood by his Roman readers.

11
12 His metaphor of death and life presumes our union with Christ Himself through the means of
13 baptism. His death and life are conferred on us in our death and life by baptism. This also presumes the
14 substitutionary nature of Christ’s work in that the great exchange is part and parcel of this work of Christ:
15 “what’s His (death) is mine and His life is mine” because of baptism. However, the obverse “my death is
16 His and my life is His” is not in view. Reciprocity in the exchange of benefits to me is not directly
17 considered by Paul here, although it certainly is elsewhere. We are brought “into the death of Him,” not
18 Christ into our baptism. Franzmann makes the point that this expression “safeguard(s) the one Man’s death
19 and resurrection.”¹¹ Michael Middendorf, the superb commentator on Romans in the Concordia
20 Commentary series, says, “Baptism is our death with Christ, not Christ’s death with us,”¹² nor is this just a
21 generic death, but specifically a crucifixion, sharing a death like His.¹³ Through baptism we become
22 participants in the death of Christ on the cross. The crucifixion becomes our present reality. Paul says that in

⁸ “Baptism is divine. It is not made up or invented.” LC 4.6. Quotations of the Lutheran Confessions from Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 423.

⁹ Tertullian: “Since we are defiled by sins, as if by dirt, we should be washed from those stains in water. But as sins do not show themselves in our flesh (as no one carries on his skin the spot of idolatry, or fornication, or fraud), so persons of that kind are foul in spirit, which is the author of the sin; for the spirit is lord, the flesh servant. Yet they each mutually share the guilt: the spirit commanding; the flesh serving (Mt 26:41). Therefore, after the waters have been in a manner endowed with medicine through the intervention of the angel (Jn 5:4 KJV), the spirit is corporeally washed in the waters, and the flesh is in the same spiritually cleansed.” Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 4.

¹⁰ See Michael Middendorf, *Concordia Commentary: Romans 1-8* (St. Louis: CPH, 2013), 1:454-55.

¹¹ Franzmann, 111.

¹² Middendorf, 1:454-55.

¹³ “What does being ‘baptized into His Death’ mean? That it is with a view to our dying as He did. For Baptism is the Cross. What the Cross then, and Burial, is to Christ, that Baptism hath been to us, even if not in the same respects. For He died Himself and was buried in the Flesh, but we have done both to sin.” John Chrysostom, “Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans,” in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. B. Morris, W. H. Simcox, and George B. Stevens, (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 1.11:405.

1 baptism, “We have been united with him in a death like His” (Rm 6:5). We were nailed up with Christ. We
2 bear the cross and become the *crucifixus* with Him. The crucified Lord is in the water. The death of Christ
3 has been plunged into the water so that the baptized person participates with Him in a death like His. Of
4 course, we are killing with Christ the child who is being brought to the font, even though this talk of killing
5 makes mothers nervous.

6
7 Since we have participated in a death like His, we will certainly “be united with him in a resurrection
8 like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be rendered
9 ineffective, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.
10 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him” (Rm 6:5-8). Sin lies dead in
11 the tomb. Newness of life with Christ comes forth from the tomb of baptism. As Luther says, “Every
12 Christian has enough in baptism to learn and to do all his life. For he has always enough to do by believing
13 firmly what baptism promises and brings: victory over death and the devil (Rm 6:3–6), forgiveness of sin
14 (Acts 2:38), God’s grace (Titus 3:5–6), the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts (1Co 6:11). In
15 short, baptism is so far beyond us that if timid nature could realize this, it might well doubt whether it could
16 be true.”¹⁴

17 Baptism is God’s business. He is doing the doing. Or as Professor Nagel used to say, “God is
18 running the verbs.” Luther says, “That we may retain Baptism and the true doctrine over against the
19 deception of both the pope and the Anabaptists, let us always teach and use this distinction between the two
20 things, that is, God’s work and ours.”¹⁵ The question always remains, “Who is doing the doing?” In Romans
21 6:3-11 there are eight passive verbs; every one of them “divine passives.” Also, four of the verbs are
22 intransitive. The second verb “We were baptized” means not that we baptized ourselves (that would be
23 middle voice in Greek), but that God baptized us. Much that we hear about baptism from our evangelical
24 neighbors and friends takes baptism out of the hands and action of God and places it into the hands of the
25 person who is done to by God, that is baptized by Him. Thus, baptism becomes merely a sign of
26 commitment to God on the part of the person baptized.¹⁶ In the Large Catechism Luther says,

27 To be baptized in God’s name is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself. Therefore,
28 although it is performed by human hands, it is still truly God’s own work. From this fact everyone may
29 readily conclude that Baptism is a far higher work than any work performed by a man or a saint. For what
30 work can we do that is greater than God’s work?¹⁷

31 Where Baptism is no longer a divine act but becomes a law-driven human work, it is no longer a
32 pledge of a good conscience in the sight of God (1Pt 3:21), but the human “do-it-yourself” repair of
33 conscience.¹⁸

¹⁴ LC 4.41-42.

¹⁵ AE 57:181.

¹⁶ “But if the “new spirits” say, as they are accustomed, “Still Baptism is itself a work, and you say works are of no use for salvation. What, then, becomes of faith?” Answer, “Yes, our works, indeed, do nothing for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work, but God’s.” LC 4.35.

¹⁷ LC 4.10.

¹⁸ Kurt Marquart lists all the gospel texts referring to baptism and compares those to all the law texts about baptism in which baptism is man’s action or where baptism is merely a picture or reminder of something else. The gospel column is filled with Bible passages. The law column is dead empty. Kurt Marquart, *The Saving Truth: Doctrine for Laypeople*, eds. Ken Schurb and Robert W. Paul (Fort Wayne: Luther Academy, 2016), 92.

1
2 The verbs are important here and throughout the section Romans 6:3-11, especially in contrast to the
3 verbs in the next section (Rm 6:12-23). The Aorist and Perfect tenses emphasize the decisive completeness
4 of the sacrament of baptism, as well as its ongoing benefit. God has completed the work of baptism and it
5 remains our possession, something which we may hold on to and trust unto our dying breath (remember that
6 baptism also gives resurrection). There is a small chiasm in Romans 6:3. God's act of baptism (divine
7 passive) is highlighted by being at the beginning and end of the rhetorical question spotlighting the divine
8 act for us. God's doing brackets rhetorically the outcome of baptism, keeping the benefits in the font, so to
9 speak.

10 Chiasm:

11 A. Whoever of us have been baptized

12 B. into Christ Jesus

13 B¹. into His death

14 A¹. (we) have been baptized.

15 God's doing keeps everything together. The structure of the words sandwiches the death of Christ
16 and our participation in it between the verbs, keeping the work in the hands of God. That's the gospel!
17 Baptism is God's decisive work.

18 The verbs are all indicative mood. They are stating the situation of the case as given by God in His
19 divine acts in offering our share in the death of Christ and in the life of Christ through baptism. The verbs
20 change to predominantly subjunctive mood in the proceeding section (Romans 6:12-23). Those verbs are
21 hortatory, as for example, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions"
22 (Rm 6:12). The focus turns to the outcomes of baptism in the Christian life of sanctification, about which
23 more later.

24 Between death and resurrection there is something else: burial. Verse 4 then presents us with the first
25 of the "with" compound verbs. We participate with Christ in His burial through baptism. There is given-ness
26 in this co-participation in Christ's entombment. Of course, Christ's burial was long ago. How are we buried
27 with Him? Through the means which God has given to place us in His tomb: the burial of baptism.

28
29 The Aorist Passive verb indicates that baptism puts us into Christ's death (v. 3) so decisively that we
30 ourselves are buried with Him. That is our divinely worked status. Only those who are dead are buried (1Co
31 15:4; Apostles' Creed), as is the case with Jesus in the Triduum.¹⁹ Middendorf says of our co-interment with
32 Christ: "Paul includes it as one of the three events of primary importance listed in 1 Cor 15:3-4...The burial
33 of his body verifies that he truly was incarnate and that his death and resurrection were bodily events."²⁰ An
34 illusory death and burial brings an illusory salvation. This is the spirit of the antichrist (1Jn 4:3). The
35 "Christ" who dies an illusory death is a pale pastel phantom in the place of the true Christ, who as the God
36 Man in one indivisible person dies a substantial death on the cross. The false "Christ" made up of airy-fairy
37 insubstantiality, is a substitute for Christ born of Mary who died for us. Our death and burial happen through
38 God's gift of baptism reinforcing the incarnate reality of the bodily suffering, death, and burial of Jesus for

¹⁹ This is why the Triduum is also, and maybe even primarily, about the hearers. We are not re-
crucifying Christ on Good Friday, but we are placing ourselves in the death, burial, and resurrection with Him
and it becomes our own. The gospel story becomes our story and not merely a historical recounting (although
no less than this).

²⁰ Middendorf, 458.

1 us sinners and into which God places us through co-interment by baptism. Our burial with Christ in baptism
2 also demands our involvement of body and soul. Baptism is not less than bodily washing, even if it is
3 certainly more. There are bodily outcomes. Are we not raised body and soul? Luther says, “Now, since both,
4 the water and the Word, make one Baptism, therefore, body and soul must be saved and live forever.”²¹ The
5 bodily death and burial of Christ has bodily outcomes for us Christians.²² By what means? Through baptism.

6
7 Paul is quite clear about this (see the Greek article in Rm 6:4 διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος) baptism being
8 the one introduced in verse 3 and it is not to be confused with any other ritual washing. The use of the
9 article here has demonstrative force, pointing us back to the rite well-known by the Romans. We should also
10 remember Paul’s statement of the uniqueness of the Christian rite of baptism from Ephesians 4:5 where
11 mono-baptism is as certain as monotheism. More than one baptism is as likely as more than one God or that
12 Christ died and was buried more than once. We may not “play fast and loose” with baptism. It may not be
13 trivialized, marginalized, or forgotten, any more than we could forget or trivialize the death and resurrection
14 of Christ. Baptism is the means by which we are plunged into Christ’s death. Baptism is the means by which
15 we are raised to newness of life. As such, baptism is inseparable from Christ’s work to save us from sin and
16 give us eternal life. Rebaptism should never be contemplated. Some years ago, the wife of a professor at
17 New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary was reputed to have been rebaptized 20 times! If God stands
18 behind baptism and it is His act, then multiple baptisms become unthinkable.²³ Multiple baptisms also imply
19 that God is an incompetent, as though He were unable to get baptism right the first time. As Luther warns
20 us, “How dare we think that God’s Word and ordinance should be wrong and invalid because we make a
21 wrong use of it?”²⁴ God always stands behind baptism because he has staked His triune name and reputation
22 on it.

23
24 Some years ago, the abbatial church of St. Benedict Abbey in Covington, Louisiana underwent a
25 significant renovation. The most remarkable change was the addition of a baptismal font in the entryway of
26 the church under which there is an artesian spring. The font is fed by the spring in such a way that just
27 enough water pressure from the spring pushes the lead stopper in the bottom of the font up to keep the font
28 filled just to overflowing. Water is always trickling down the outside of the font and spilling onto the church
29 floor. What overflowing superabundance this signifies. And this is not yet the most remarkable feature of
30 the font. The font was fashioned from a single piece of dark granite and is about three feet tall and four feet
31 square and its walls about three inches thick. When you peer into the font, you are gazing into a tomb, black
32 as death. You have been entombed with Christ in baptism. Your sin, your death and your hell are held there

²¹ LC 4.46.

²² “Just as the triune God Himself unites with the water when His name is spoken aloud, in order to draw near to us under the cover of a physical element, thus by the aid of those elements we are drawn physically into Christ’s death.” Albrecht Peters, *Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, trans. Thomas Trapp (St. Louis: CPH, 2012), 114.

²³ Nor is this merely a Lutheran mania. ““What does Paul mean when he says, ‘He died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God’ (Rm 6:10)? Christ was not subject even to one sin, but He died for our sin, that He might destroy it and cut its sinews and remove all its power. Do you see how he [Paul] frightened them? For if He does not die again, then there is no second washing and you should keep from all inclination to sin.” John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans*, 11.

²⁴ LC 4.55.

1 by burial with Christ.

2
3 Romans 6:4 gives us the counter-case to the rhetorical question of 6:1: “Are we to continue in sin
4 that grace may abound?” Never! Why? Because we have been raised from Jesus’ death to walk in that
5 newness of life. Paul emphasized divine monergism by confirming the divine passives in verse 4 with the
6 adverbial phrase “through the glory of the Father.” And just as His resurrection is certainly the work of His
7 Father, so here it is the same for us. If we are to be raised to new life, God must do it.²⁵ Although the Bible
8 attributes resurrection also to the Son of God (Rm 1:4), here Paul’s focus is on how we share in this death,
9 interment, and resurrection.

10
11 Of course, the One who died and was buried also was raised by His Father. Baptism places us in the
12 drama of the Triduum, so just as we died with Christ, just as we were entombed with Him, so too we were
13 raised with Him who rose. The newness of life to which Paul refers here is a present possession. We have it
14 even now. Middendorf says, “The noun καινότητι “newness, renewal,” has the connotation of a restored
15 life.”²⁶ The term newness in Paul always refers to the new age of salvation which was inaugurated by the
16 New Testament. This should lead us to see this newness of life not merely as a list of moral imperatives, but
17 especially as the gospel giftedness of God to those whom He has plunged into baptism and therefore,
18 inexorably, into the life of Christ. Just as certainly as Christ has new life, so certainly we have that same
19 life.²⁷ Are we not baptized? Yes. Do we not have a resurrected life with Christ? Of course!

20
21 Let me make some suggestions to you about how to make use of this. I will focus on two
22 contemporary issues with which every pastor is confronted: contemporaneity and identity.

23
24 The aorist passive verbs in Romans 6:3-11 confront us with the situation in which every Christian
25 stands right now. Yes, the work is done and it is God’s work. We have much crying after the
26 “contemporary” and maybe we there is good reason for this cry to have gone up in the church, even though
27 the cry may have been answered in harmful ways. Why have we perhaps neglected the “now?” In my
28 opinion, this neglect is a response to the rejection of the historicity of the text of the Bible. We have often
29 dwelt exclusively on the “what happened.” Did Jesus rise from the dead on that first century Easter Sunday
30 morning? The answer to that is a decisive “yes!” However, that fact must also be true *for us* so that we
31 participate in it in precisely in the same way Paul sets before us in Romans 6. His death, burial, and
32 resurrection become useless to me if they are not mine. Baptism makes them mine. The gospel gifts may not
33 be reduced to nothing more than historical facts, even if they are not less than history. Baptism thrusts us
34 into the work of Christ to make it ours now. This is precisely how a means of grace should work. It is a
35 personalization of the work of Christ.

²⁵ I often warn the members of the congregation I serve that I do not want to make them better; I don’t want to make them feel better. I want to kill them by my preaching, so that God’s gospel alone would give them life. Death and burial precede resurrection. There is no other way out of the tomb than to be first placed in it.

²⁶ Middendorf, 459.

²⁷ Paul argued precisely this way elsewhere: “We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised” (1 Co 15:15–16).

1
2 Perhaps the hotter topic today is the question of identity. “Who am I?” is now a question the answer
3 to which is very much up for grabs. Tragically, the answer being groped for in our time is narrowly tied to
4 concerns of sex (there is even the phrase “sexual identity”) or “race.” Can human life really be reduced to
5 these things?²⁸ Which of you when asked who you are, would answer, “Heterosexual?” And yet for many
6 people the answer to the question, “who are you?” is clearly some sexual moniker (most of which are
7 opaque to me).²⁹ The same is true, of course, of so-called race identifications.³⁰

8
9 When called for jury duty in the state courts of Texas the state has a form that includes a tiny box
10 with this label: “Race:” and includes at the bottom that the state requires you to answer this question.
11 Churlishly, I respond “Human.” I am told that state court judges are none too happy about this response.
12 Who I am cannot be exhausted by such relatively minor issues of race and sex. My mind is not enslaved to
13 these ideas. I cannot be reduced by them. Why? Because God tells me who I am in Christ my Lord. Think of
14 it. You are a child of God, redeemed by the most precious gifts: His death, burial, and resurrection. This is
15 why we say the Creed together. The Creed is not merely a statement of God’s acts (it is that, of course), but
16 it also tells us who we are and to whom we belong. I know who I am when I know who God has made me in
17 His Son. Baptism places into the identity of the one Head, who is Christ, and we are His body. “For in one
18 Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of
19 one Spirit” (1Co 12:13).

20
21 During my teen years, this was driven home to me when my mother would tell me goodbye before I
22 left the house by myself. She would call out and say last of all, “Don’t forget who you belong to!” She
23 didn’t mean her and my father, but my heavenly Father who had named me in my baptism. She reminded
24 me that I was more than sex or race, but rather I was God’s own child. Baptism made me so. Baptism
25 broadens the horizon in which I live because it sets me free in the liminal but wide human realities of death
26 and life by giving them a new meaning. I may not be reduced to a culturally cramped cipher in slogans
27 about sex and racism. “God’s own child, I gladly say it. I am baptized into Christ.”

²⁸ For more on the narrowing of human significance to sex and race see the work of John McWhorter, Douglas Murray, and Jordan Peterson for helpful insights.

²⁹ See “The Gates of Hell and the Religion of Sex,” in *The Gates of Hell* ed. Scott R. Murray (St. Louis: CPH, 2018), 41-71.

³⁰ See for example the helpful work of John McWhorter, *Woke Racism* (New York: Porfolio/Penguin, 2021).

1 3. Christ puts to death old Adam by repentance and contrition to bring forth the new life of service
2 to the neighbor into which we have been called by baptism (Rm 6:12-23).

3 The sacrament of baptism is the sacrament of entry into the Christian life. God does not leave His
4 salvation to chance. For He dispenses His mercy in the flooding abundance of water connected with the
5 Word for the forgiveness of sins. The holy triune Name has been set upon those who have been baptized.
6 We are marked by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Our mortal body is washed by the water of
7 mercy and we are the possession of the God who marked and named us.

8 Through baptism, when we are cleansed in the bloody waters full of Christ, his death, and his
9 resurrection, the battle has now been joined, for Jesus has staked His claim for us. He has swept us clean by
10 grace. He has chased off Satan whose ways we have decisively renounced. Our old Adam has been
11 transfixed by the nails of the cross. But now the battle begins. There is no lack of struggle on the part of the
12 Christian conscience. We fear that Satan has been successful because we feel the sting and sorrow of sin in
13 our own hearts. Have we swept Jesus out the back door? Have we made an irretrievable hash of things
14 through our weakness?³¹

15 Let's pay some attention to what the apostle Paul says: "Let sin not reign!" (Rm 6:12). There will
16 always be sin, but it will not reign within us. Being in Christ means that sin cannot pry us out of His hands.
17 No, Christ cannot be chased away by sin! He comes to take care of sinners. He comes to take sin away. He
18 comes to acknowledge those who acknowledge Him (Mt 10:32), yes, with weakness, sin, and by fits and
19 starts. This too is a gift of Christ that comes through baptism, but a gift which Jesus does not take away
20 because of our weakness. What kind of King, once he has established His beachhead against Satan's evil
21 empire and old Adam's camp, constructed his capital, built His church among us, settled His throne, would
22 not see to it that His kingdom prevails among us? Indeed, Christ Jesus promises that the gates of hell shall
23 never prevail against it. We feel our sin. We must. But it is not enthroned, it is not king, or lord, or god. We
24 lament it. We repent it. We will confess to one another our sin. I am chief of sinners. But where Christ
25 reigns forgiveness remains. As Luther says,

26 It is evident that sin remains in the baptized and the saints as long as they are flesh and blood and
27 live on earth. But let us add further evidence. St. Paul says, 'For I delight in the law of God, in my inner
28 being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive
29 to the law of sin that dwells in my members' (Rm 7:22-23). St. Paul confesses here that he finds a good law
30 and will in his spirit, and also an evil law and will in his members. How is it then possible to deny that sin
31 remains in a holy baptized person? If it is not sin which is at war with the good spirit and the law of God,
32 then I should like to be told what sin is. What is the cause of this strife of the evil against the good within us,
33 if not our physical birth as children of Adam? This remains even after the good Spirit has begun his work in
34 baptism and repentance until it is overcome by the grace of God and the resistance and growth of the Spirit
35 and at last strangled by death and driven out.³²

36
37 Baptism has strong future implications. Launching out from Romans 6:5 "For if we have been united
38 with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" Paul presents us
39 with the eschatological implications of baptism.³³ About this Albrecht Peters in his commentary on Luther's

³¹ How will our pastors respond when we confess this fear to them?

³² AE 23:21.

³³ Middendorf argues that the future tense is not logical, but that by it "Paul is putting our full participation in Christ's resurrection into the future." Middendorf, 461.

1 catechism, stated,

2 Luther considered the Christian life a ‘daily Baptism, begun once upon a time relived time and time
3 again’; it is our “daily clothing,” in which we are to go about each day. It is not relegated to being a ‘portal
4 into the spiritual life’ that we passed through one upon a time, which is now behind us. It is much more
5 adequate to state that it leads us as the *sacramentum fidei* (the sacrament of [the] faith), in the full sense of
6 the word, all the way through to the eschaton.³⁴

7 Baptism is with us all the way through as the shape and source of Christian faith and life. In Romans
8 6:5 the future tense brings us to the resurrection with Christ on the last day.

9
10 But there is the intervening time; from what is to what will be. The intervening time, all under the
11 shadow of the final things, is filled with that promised future life under law and gospel. Here we must
12 remember that the promises of God remain yes and Amen (2Co 1:20). The Christian hope remains balanced
13 between the now and the not yet and between the full possession and future possession of the gifts of God.
14 In this intervening time, then, how shall we live? The answer to that question is what we would call
15 sanctification. I propose to consider that question from the perspective of the effects of baptism. There are
16 certainly other perspectives from which to consider the issue of sanctification, however it seems to me that
17 there is plenty of warrant for narrowing our field of vision to the sanctifying effects of baptism. The
18 newness of life of Romans 6:4 is complete by reason of the divine gifts, but is also incomplete because of
19 the struggle of the daily Christian life. No wonder the intervening time remains a time of sighing.

20 What are the sanctifying effects of baptism? First, we are reminded of Luther’s dictum in the Small
21 Catechism that “the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all
22 sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and live before God in righteousness and
23 purity forever” (SC 4.4). We might suspect Luther of attempting to rescue baptism as an ongoing aspect of
24 the Christian life. We must consider the fact that the talk of “Old Adam,” strictly speaking, is not quite
25 biblical. However, the term “Old Adam” correctly holds together the language of Romans 5 and 6.³⁵ Here
26 Romans 6 gives us the “old man” (Rm 6:6), as in “old person,”³⁶ although even that term carries freight that
27 doesn’t quite fit in this discussion. In Romans 5:14 Paul denominates the original sin “the transgression of
28 Adam.” As the prototypical man Adam’s transgression introduces sin and iniquity into every person, hence
29 the old Adam. Here “old” has the connotation of antiquated or worn out.³⁷

30 The flipside to the Old Man is not “the old woman,” but the new man. Paul does not use the term
31 “new man” in Romans 6 but rather in Ephesians 4: “Put off your old man, which belongs to your former
32 manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to
33 put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:22–24).

³⁴ Peters, 4:112.

³⁵ Middendorf takes the term be similar to the church’s use of “the term ‘Trinity.’ Although the word itself is not used explicitly in the Scriptures, the term is normally defined and developed in a way that faithfully and effectively conveys the biblical doctrine.” Middendorf, 1:462. Perhaps this is overstating the case, because “Trinity” is a novum; a term not found in the Bible. “Old Adam” is the marrying of two fully biblical terms.

³⁶ Humorously, when my children were adolescents, we attended church while on vacation. During the prayer of the church, which was delivered *ex corde*, the pastor prayed against the “old man,” and then after a pregnant pause said, “and old woman,” so that no one was left out. This was an equal opportunity imprecation! My children even recognized how silly this was and only with a mighty effort avoided laughing out loud during the prayers.

³⁷ Middendorf, 462.

1 Here there is a perfect contrast between the “Old Man” and the “New Man.” The contrast between the Old
2 Man and the New Man is certainly in view in Romans 6, although Paul sharpens the focus of his language in
3 Ephesians.

4 The daily struggle of the Christian in the midst of death and life demands a daily return to confession
5 and absolution. Both baptism and holy absolution confer forgiveness of sins on those who receive them.
6 Luther’s insistence on the continuation of confession and absolution as characteristic of the new life derives
7 from the language of Romans 6:5-11, in which the baptized life is seen as a continual death and rendered
8 ineffective.³⁸ Baptism gives the death of the old Adam; which is an ongoing project of the Christian life, for
9 he needs daily to be put to death by contrition and repentance.³⁹ The new man also needs to arise to holy
10 living through living in that baptismal power. The life of contrition is not a hapless floundering in the sea of
11 sin, as in the case where the Christian is cast upon his own resources in good works to make his own way to
12 the eschatological moment. Confession and absolution bring us back to the completeness of the font.

13 I appreciate the reformed placement of the baptismal font in our churches so that it is in in the
14 entryway to the nave. First by giving entry to the nave, as the sacrament of entry, it creates the nave itself,
15 that is the ship of the church. The rite of entry leads to the third article of the second chief part; from new
16 life to the edifying of the church in the work of the Spirit (this is not far from the forgiveness of sins!). The
17 rite of confession and absolution is able to be conducted at the font before the word of God conducts the
18 pastors into the nave by the introit. After God’s service to us is over as we walk back into the world past the
19 font, we are reminded that all of life, especially the life lived in the world (not of it), is lived by the power of
20 baptism in death and life. This walk past the font on the way to life also signifies that at the eschatological
21 moment (both near and far) we will pass through the font to the completion of the new life promised in its
22 death and life. We get intimations of this finality in the placement of the funeral pall over the remains of the
23 blessed dead signifying baptism and its donated holiness. The funeral brings us to the final dying of the
24 Christian life.

25 Until then, there is a tension to be lived in, even a battle to be joined. In Romans 6:6 Paul says, “We
26 know that our old man was crucified together with *him* in order that the body of sin might be rendered
27 ineffective, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.” Already Paul has placed us in newness of life
28 (Rm 6:4), using the qualitative term (newness) for the life given by baptism. Paul concretizes the newness
29 with the term “new man” in Ephesians.

30 The two men living within the baptized person is not a status that remains unchanged, but implies an
31 ongoing battle, a continual life and death struggle. This is hardly the “triumphant Christian life” touted by
32 the evangelicals. What does the battle look like? We live in state of crucifixion. Are we not united with Him
33 in the likeness of His death (Rm 6:5)? We remain co-crucified with Him (Rm 6:6). Our existence is entirely
34 tied up with Him as we have seen. Old Adam is constantly being done to death. The baptismal font in the
35 church I serve is an octagonal glass bowl about 40 inches wide, bisected by a cross. But, as lovely as this
36 image is, baptism doesn’t merely put us in the cross, it puts us in the crucifixion of Christ. Perhaps our
37 allergy to having crucifixes in our churches has more to do with what it means for us than what it means
38 about the resurrected Jesus. In other words, the man on the cross tells us who are in the baptized life. We are

³⁸ The resurrected Lord Himself, when He comes among His disciples, confers on them the power of absolution. The first sacrament of the resurrection is absolution. “When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld” (Jn 20:20–23). It is the sacrament of the Christian life.

³⁹ “This kind of confession should and must take place continuously as long as we live. For this is the essence of a genuinely Christian life, to acknowledge that we are sinners and pray for grace.” Martin Luther, “A Brief Exhortation to Confession,” K-W, 477.

1 to bear the cross and suffer contrition and repentance until we draw our last ragged breath. This daily being
2 done to death is a true Christian agony, a struggle. We drown Old Adam in baptism, but he is a good
3 swimmer. The battle goes on, raging across the frontiers of our person, until quelled by falling asleep in the
4 arms of Jesus.

5 Sanctification has gotten a bad name. Otherwise faithful preachers will claim that they never preach
6 "sanctification," fearing, I suppose, the threats of perfectionism, legalism, or synergism. This is quite simply
7 "throwing the baby out with the bath water." Abuses, misrepresentations, and incorrect definitions of what
8 sanctification is do not make illegitimate the work of the Holy Spirit who makes holy.⁴⁰ This is what
9 sanctification means, "to make holy."

10 Sanctification itself isn't the problem; the problem is in the claims made about the Author of
11 sanctification and the means by which He brings holiness into the church. Unfortunately, many people
12 falsely think that humans make themselves holy. However, the consistent testimony of Holy Scripture is that
13 God the Holy Spirit makes holy. The Author of sanctification is none other than God Himself.

14 By the power of the means of grace the people counted holy through the righteousness of Christ are
15 growing in personal holiness. Will they ever be perfect? No. That is why the Holy Spirit until the end of
16 time works in the church to bring holiness into it. That work of making holy will only come to full and
17 complete fruition when human flesh comes to its end at death. Then the hope that we have in the work of the
18 Spirit will be complete within us. Until then we walk in the Spirit by faith.

19 Note how Luther bundles the whole of the Christian life in faith and good works in a snapshot of
20 God's work in the Large Catechism:

21 While sanctification has begun and is growing every day (2Thess 1:3), we expect that our flesh will
22 be destroyed and buried with all its uncleanness (Rm 6:4-11). Then we will come forth gloriously and arise
23 in a new eternal life of entire and perfect holiness. For now we are only half pure and holy. So the Holy
24 Spirit always has some reason to continue His work in us through the Word. He must daily administer
25 forgiveness until we reach the life to come. At that time there will be no more forgiveness, but only
26 perfectly pure and holy people (1Co 13:10). We will be full of godliness and righteousness, removed and
27 free from sin, death, and all evil, in a new, immortal, and glorified body (1Co 15:43, 53). You see, all this is
28 the Holy Spirit's office and work. He begins and daily increases holiness upon earth through these two
29 things: the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sin. But in our death, He will accomplish it altogether in
30 an instant (1Co 15:52) and will forever preserve us in it by the last two parts [of the Creed].⁴¹

31 Luther talks about the imputed righteousness possessed by the Christian and in the same breath
32 about the incomplete holiness of the believer living out his life. How can he talk this way? Because
33 sanctification is entirely the work of God. As Adolf Köberle reminds us, "It is not fitting to teach
34 justification evangelically and then in the doctrine of sanctification to turn synergistic."⁴²

⁴⁰ "Thus I am not baptized, do not partake of the Lord's Supper, and am not absolved for the purpose of sleeping and snoring at home in idleness. But if you have the promise, Baptism, and absolution, remember that you have been called to be watchful and to be anxiously concerned about the things that pertain to your faith and calling. "How can we who died to sin still live in it?" says Paul (Rom. 6:2). We are not absolved from sins in order that we may live for them and serve them, but in order that we may fight against them and stoutly persevere in the promise, in order that I may chastise and mortify my flesh and bear it with a calm mind when God imposes a cross, in order that we may be purged and bring forth richer fruit." AE 5: 274.

⁴¹ LC 2.57-59.

⁴² Köberle, 95.

1
2 We must ever confess that sanctification is and remains the work of God and an act of grace.
3 Synergistic language must not seep into the theological description of the life of good works. Perhaps if we
4 speak of the newness of life from a psychological or experiential perspective, there would be grounds to talk
5 about the cooperation of the believer with God; however, this self-perception hardly squares with the Bible
6 which demands that we put to death this self-congratulatory perspective. Where I am beginning to take
7 credit God swiftly gets elbowed out of the way. God's grace works good works in us. No less a text than
8 Ephesians 2:8-10 helps us: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own
9 doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship,
10 created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." This
11 text describes good works as the work of the saving God. Salvation and sanctification are both the work of
12 grace, and God's grace which can never be conceived as a cooperative work, or it would no longer be
13 grace⁴³. Nor does it suffice to say at this point that good works cannot be entered into un-cooperatively.
14 Here we are not talking about the will, but whether God's grace is entirely sufficient. We may not retreat to
15 anthropological statements so as to posit an empowering of the will to cooperate with God. Here we must
16 limit ourselves to theology. Of course, the Bible often pairs faith and life as springing from the same source,
17 even if we can admit faith and life may be distinguished and one seen as complete and entire and the other
18 imperfect and constantly seeking growth and development.⁴⁴ Often the faith and life pairing places faith in
19 connection with the death of Christ and life as an outcome of the resurrection of Christ, although the line of
20 demarcation is not hard and fast. As Köberle summarizes, "How intimately the substitutionary act of
21 atonement and the power of God are bound together in the minds of the Apostles by their mutual
22 requirement of each other is evident in the frequent overlapping of the expressions 'faith and life' with the
23 corresponding correlatives "death and resurrection."⁴⁵ Baptism's crucifixion and resurrection, death and life
24 have to do with faith and good works straight through.

25 The Bible will talk about the fruit of faith as a natural outcome of being joined to Christ by faith. For
26 example, Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that
27 bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). It's just as easy as that! Therefore, there
28 is no need to preach the law to people who naturally produce good works without any coercion, dependent
29 as they are on the constantly overflowing mercy of God. That's absolutely true according to the gospel. In
30 the article of justification, the law has been brought to its natural end,⁴⁶ it does not apply, it need not be
31 preached. Luther preached,

32 We who have the Gospel, however, praise and honor Baptism as God's Work and order and do not
33 (God be praised) sin against the doctrine and God's Word. Everything is pure and undefiled in the pulpit
34 and in practice as well, since we baptize and are baptized according to them....When doctrine and faith are
35 right, the fruit thereof should also follow: that we live a life worthy of Baptism and thereby bear witness that

⁴³ "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace"
(Rm 11:6).

⁴⁴ "You see, all this is the Holy Spirit's office and work. He begins and daily increases holiness upon
earth through these two things: the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sin. But in our death He will
accomplish it altogether in an instant (1Co 15:52) and will forever preserve us therein by the last two parts of
the Creed." Large Catechism, 2.59.

⁴⁵ Adolf Köberle, *The Quest for Holiness*, trans. J. C. Mattes (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1938), 87.

⁴⁶ Rm 10:4.

1 we not received it in vain.”⁴⁷

2 Simple? Well, maybe not. For immediately Luther reminds us that “We deserve reproach...in our
3 failure to have our life follow our doctrine.”⁴⁸

4 Even as the battle against sin has been joined by the baptized person, God’s acquittal is not far away.
5 Unfortunately, the ESV leads us astray when it translates Romans 6:7: “For one who has died has been set
6 free from sin.” The verb here is specifically from the righteousness/justification word group. The Greek
7 verb “to be free” is nowhere in sight. The verse would be correctly translated, “The one who dies has been
8 justified from sin” (Rm 6:7). This is the divine declaration of righteousness *coram Deo* (in the presence of
9 God). The believer is no longer enslaved to sin, plagued by it though he is. However, it is God who changes
10 our status by making us participants in the death of His Son and taking us out of the dominion of sin. Christ
11 is our Lord; therefore sin cannot be lord over us. Paul solidifies the ongoing significance of baptism in the
12 life of the believer by saying that Christ died once for all (Rm 6:10) and in that dying for all all died.

13 One of the bugaboos about sanctification that seems to have a long life is that the Christian never
14 progresses in his sanctification.⁴⁹ The Bible passages that encourage growth in the Christian life must not be
15 ignored.⁵⁰ One example should suffice. “As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good” (2 Th
16 3:13). Growth in love is often praised by Paul. The question here is who works such growth in good works?
17 God Himself.

18 These days, preachers are reticent to disturb their hearers with calls to holy living through service to
19 one another for Christ’s sake. This reticence is all the more shocking in the face of the direct instruction of
20 our Lord Jesus Christ to love and serve one another (Jn 13). Their hearers are left to slumber soundly under
21 the delusion that they can live in sin, “because they have a Lord who loves them and forgives anything.”
22 This is making a half-truth out of the whole truth. Our Lord Jesus died to redeem us from all sin (1Jn 1:8-
23 10) and lives to confirm over and over again that gracious absolution on the lips of his called servants (Jn
24 20:22-23). However, Jesus does not live to condone wickedness, nor does He die to encourage us in our
25 vices. His grace is not permission as Paul makes clear in Romans 6:1-2. Preachers afraid to preach the law
26 are “antinomian,” that is, against the law.

27 Ultimately, antinomianism is preaching not just a different doctrine of the law, but a different Christ.
28 Antinomianism preaches only a half-true Christ and therefore no Christ. It is hard to picture the New
29 Testament’s Christ condoning wicked behavior or failing to preach against it; take for only one example in
30 Matthew 23. He even has hard things to say to His closest disciples, including Peter. In keeping with this,
31 major portions of the apostolic epistles exhort to holy living. We have a Lord who still lives and we want to
32 live up to Him.

33 Now, of course, such holy living is never perfect and the cross must always cover whatever is
34 lacking in it. We must ever go back to the life-giving font. We must always confess that our holiness is
35 never meritorious before God, for only the righteousness of Christ avails before God. However, that does
36 not absolve us of the responsibility to follow obediently the eternal law and will of God. The automobile
37 that has a powerful engine and no brakes would a useless conveyance. So the Christian life that claims to
38 have Christ but lives in reckless wickedness is equally useless, indeed it is no Christian life at all. It is a

⁴⁷ AE 57:185.

⁴⁸AE 57:185.

⁴⁹ “Now he who has this understanding of holy baptism which we have indicated, who knows what it is, what it does, what its benefits are, and who the Founder and real baptizer is, will also experience the power of it in his heart and be bettered by it.” AE 51: 328–329.

⁵⁰ Eph 2:21; 4:15, Col 2:19; 2Thess 1:3.

1 “Christian life” separated from the gifts of God in holy baptism. Luther is deadly clear about this in his
2 warnings against antinomianism:

3 There is no such Christ that died for sinners who do not, after the forgiveness of sins, desist from
4 sins and lead a new life. Thus [the Antinomians]...may be fine Easter preachers, but they are very poor
5 Pentecost preachers, for they do not preach about the sanctification by the Holy Spirit, but solely about the
6 redemption of Jesus Christ, although Christ (whom they extol so highly, and rightly so) is Christ, that is, he
7 has purchased redemption from sin and death so that the Holy Spirit might transform us out of the old Adam
8 into new men—we die unto sin and live unto righteousness, beginning and growing here on earth and
9 perfecting it beyond, as St. Paul teaches (Rm 6-7). Christ did not earn only grace for us, but also the gift of
10 the Holy Spirit, so that we might have not only forgiveness of, but also cessation of, sin. Now he who does
11 not abstain from sin, but persists in his evil life, must have a different Christ, that of the Antinomians; the
12 real Christ is not there, even if all the angels would cry, “Christi Christi” He must be damned with this, his
13 new Christ.⁵¹

14 Sanctification is not essentially offered to God. What would God want with our filthy works? I think
15 the Psalmist is making a joke using God’s rhetorical question,

16 “I will not accept a bull from your house. Every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand
17 hills.

18 “I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine.

19 “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of
20 bulls or drink the blood of goats?” (Ps 50:9-13).

21 While I love the Texas barbecue made by the members of my congregation, I am not so deluded as
22 to think that God is hankering for barbecue brisket and just waiting for them to offer it up to Him. The point
23 here is that good works are relatively worthless to God and are only valuable for Christ’s sake and for the
24 benefit of the neighbor. Therefore, in the freedom of the gospel we are emancipated to offer ourselves in a
25 sacrifice of thanksgiving for the benefit of the neighbor. Every sacrifice, although oriented to God and
26 sanctified by Him, benefits other persons and not God. God has no need of our offerings to Him. Our fellow
27 humans do. When we are freed unto good works by our reorientation to God through the verdict of not
28 guilty in the proclamation of the gospel, our freedom becomes harnessed to the need of the other. Our works
29 are no longer offered to satisfy God. When we go that direction work righteousness raises its ugly head.

30
31 When we no longer offer good works to impress God, we are freed from using others as a means to
32 an end, as the stage upon which the drama of our piety is shown off to God. We now are of service to others
33 for their own sakes, as persons, created individually by God. Showy good works are the opposite of the
34 sacrificial offering of the self to the other in need. True good works are hidden under the cross because their
35 value is no longer gauged by their ability to catch God’s attention. Spectacle is hidden by the cross.

36 The church’s life is hidden with Christ (Col 3:3). At no time is the sacrificial life of the church more
37 completely hidden and fully disclosed than at the gathering of the body of Christ around the baptismal font.
38 A life of service begins in the freedom of the gospel and moves forth from the font where the church is
39 incorporated into the death and life of Christ. While it is never anything but hidden under the shadow of the
40 cross, still it is lived out in our daily vocations in lives connected to the world through service and connected
41 to Christ through living in our baptism.

42 What do we do about people spiritually burdened by their own apparent lack of sanctification? 1. Set
43 before them the work of Christ given to them in holy baptism. Go back to what is to illuminate and

⁵¹ AE 41:114.

1 motivate. Return to the power of baptism in individual confession and absolution. C.F.W. Walther says,

2 If you truly want to comfort people who are in anguish and distress because they imagine that their
3 sins are too great or that they have sinned for too long, etc. then rise to the occasion by glorifying grace and
4 saying, "Even if you had committed every sin...you need not despair for the mercy of God."⁵²

5 2. Focus on the vocational/hidden nature of the Christian life under the signs of humility (water
6 connected with the word). Our forms of service may well be hidden under our vocation. I am a mother or a
7 father. Changing diapers is a glittering good work. I am a parent. Giving up my leisure time to coach my
8 daughter's softball team is glorious. Each Christian suffers these little martyrdoms until the last martyrdom
9 as we confess Christ on our death day. This living is just getting ready for dying.

10 Our Lutheran doctrine of sanctification is the only truly humanistic approach to life in the world.
11 Why? Because good works are not offered to God. They are offered to the neighbor. God does not need
12 your good works.

13 Christianity threatens the piety of the world by denying to ordinary or worldly piety a place in the
14 presence of God. Christianity does not want to displace ordinary or worldly piety in the world itself; in the
15 home and society, but it categorically denies that such prosaic righteousness avails before God. This angers
16 the world and leads the worldly-minded to accuse us of being the disturbers of civil tranquility and the quiet
17 life. The Christian obeys the law for the good of his neighbor and not to gain brownie points with God. In
18 that sense, Christians have a this-worldly basis for obedience to the law. We are much more practical than
19 our worldly opponents. And although the law remains God's law, we obey the law for the sake of the
20 worldly good it works in service to the neighbor (Lk 10:25-37). In this way we give the world its due in a
21 way that the world does not. All this can be assured to the church only because our righteousness in heaven
22 is well assured through the person and work of God's Son, who is our righteousness before God.⁵³ Then we
23 are free even to love our enemies and do good to those who persecute us, even if we do so imperfectly.
24 Imperfection should not surprise us. Nor should it paralyze us, so that we fail to help our neighbor because
25 we fear that we shall help him imperfectly.

26 Proximate goods are acceptable in the world because they are not intended to attract God's attention.
27 The Christian faith pivots on the person and work of Christ. It doesn't depend on us. Christianity is a
28 religion about Christ. It is not a religion about us. Our status in God's sight was long ago assured in the
29 person of Christ. That's one of the reasons we don't evaluate the moral quality of our life, because we
30 believe that our relationship with our heavenly father was long ago taken care of by Christ our Lord. We can
31 give our lives up in service to the neighbor generously, even if imperfectly. Our status in God's sight has
32 long ago been settled in Christ. It wasn't up to us. And it never could be. We know the way because the way
33 is Christ. That's all settled. Our lives can be given without any moralistic questioning about our imperfect
34 motives, efforts, and niggling scruples.⁵⁴ Sanctification puts to death old Adam by repentance and contrition

⁵² C.F.W. Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, trans. C. Tiews, et al., (St. Louis: CPH, 2010), 135.

⁵³ "Wherever there is faith in Christ, there sin has in fact been abolished, put to death, and buried. But where there is no faith in Christ, there sin remains. And although there are still remnants of sin in the saints because they do not believe perfectly, nevertheless these remnants are dead; for on account of faith in Christ they are not imputed." AE 26:286.

⁵⁴ "The other saintliness is a saintliness of works. It is love, which does what is pleasing. Here not only God speaks, but I strive to follow God when He speaks. But because weakness clings to us, this righteousness is not pure. But the Lord's Prayer reigns, and it is necessary to pray: 'Hallowed be Thy name' (Matt. 6:9). This pertains to our saintliness and the saintliness of works, which is formal and pertains to the saintliness of the Decalog and the Lord's Prayer. But the first saintliness must be referred to the Symbol, to the Creed; for I do

1 and brings forth the new life of service to the neighbor into which we have been called by baptism (Rm
2 6:12-23).
3

not take hold of the promise of the Word through the Ten Commandments. Nor do I do so through the Lord's Prayer. But with them I grasp my love and my works. Through faith, however, I take hold of the Word, that is, purity itself." AE 5:214.

1 4. Christ keeps killing us until finally we will be raised up to the resurrected life at His coming; a
2 life like the resurrected Christ's. (Rm 6:1-11; 2Co 5:17; 1Co 15, etc.).

3 We go from living in death and life by baptism to its eschatological completion. Earlier we saw that
4 Luther identified the ongoing baptismal life with daily contrition and repentance (SC 4.4). But we are only
5 halfway through at that point. Baptism also signifies "a new man should daily emerge and arise to live
6 before God in righteousness and purity forever." Here Luther has the new life as lived daily, but also
7 brought to its eternal fruition and completion. There is no significant distinction between them. Paul says,
8 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come"
9 (2 Co 5:17). Here the word "new" is the word that means not merely improved but something entirely new.
10 God has not merely given us an overhaul, but we are as different from our old selves as a human corpse is
11 from a living human.

12 I find it remarkable that at the time of Jesus' greatest humiliation and weakness while standing
13 before the high priest and the Sanhedrin he can make the high claim, "I tell you, from now on you will see
14 the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26:64). He
15 claimed transcendent power and an imminent return at the moment when He appeared least likely to be able
16 to do it. He claimed power over death and yet that power He keeps under the signs of humiliation and death.
17 During His earthly ministry He raises few people and only seldom in view of crowds (the widow of Nain's
18 son). He shows Himself only to those who belonged to the Christian community as the list in 1 Corinthians
19 15 shows:

20 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in
21 accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with
22 the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five
23 hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he
24 appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (1
25 Co 15:3-8).

26 Acts implies the negative case, "God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all
27 the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose
28 from the dead" (Acts 10:40-41). In other words, Jesus presented Himself alive uniquely to the community
29 of the Apostles and other faithful as listed in 1 Corinthians 15 and not to those were not part of the band of
30 believers. The resurrection of Christ is a datum of faith. No surprise. Think of what father Abraham says to
31 the rich man, "If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should
32 rise from the dead" (Lk 16:31). Human perversity is so adept at ignoring the truth that even a resurrection
33 could be ignored (and has been). The hiddenness of the resurrection also means that it is present to us now
34 by faith. The eschatological reality always has a present component. I think that John the Evangelist was
35 captivated by that reality and discloses it to us in his Gospel when he speaks of eternal life using present
36 tense verbs. For example: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life" (Jn 3:36). Not will have, not ought
37 to have. But "has." This is our settled possession in baptism as we have already seen, because "you also
38 must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rm 6:11). A certain future hope
39 derives from a present possession of the resurrected life.

40 How can we be sure that we shall be raised incorruptible with Christ? Perhaps no doctrine of the
41 Christian gospel has been so universally criticized, mocked, and rejected than the doctrine of the bodily
42 resurrection. Augustine says, "In nothing is the Christian faith so spoken against as in the resurrection of the
43 flesh."⁵⁵ Of course, that mockery finds its expression already in Acts 17 in Paul's speech to the Athenian

⁵⁵ Augustine of Hippo, *Psalms 88*, Quoted in John Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces: On the Resurrection of the Dead and the Last Judgment*, Locus 30, trans. Richard J. Dinda, gen. ed. B.T.G. Mayes (St. Louis: CPH, 2020), 9.

1 Areopagus, which seemed to be going swimmingly until he spoke of Christ as the righteous man who had
2 been raised from the dead (Acts 17:31). This contention generated guffaws: “Now when they heard of the
3 resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this” (Acts 17:32).
4 As far as we know Paul never received a return invitation, since the Greek mind considered the resurrection
5 of the flesh less than ideal. The people of our time are not the first to deny the resurrection of the flesh and
6 to mock it.

7 Luther points out that the resurrection of the dead is neither more nor less likely than any of the other
8 central articles of the Christian doctrine: baptism, absolution, the incarnation, or the real presence. How
9 could we have the courage to mock the resurrection, as did the Sadducees, and the liberals of a previous
10 generation?⁵⁶

11 Why are we Christians so sure of the bodily resurrection? God expressly wills that we should live
12 forever in perfect fellowship with him through our resurrection from the dead. Our Lord Jesus confounded
13 the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, when he pointed out that God names Himself with
14 the names of His people: “As for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by
15 God: ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead,
16 but of the living” (Mt 22:31–32). Notice that Jesus when he quotes Scripture to his opponents, says that he
17 is quoting God. He stuns the Sadducees by flatly rejecting their denial of the resurrection of the dead, “You
18 are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Mt 22:29). God’s revealed will
19 was that he should raise the dead.

20 God raised Jesus from the dead. That alone does not yet prove that we shall be. However, God
21 revealed in His Word that the resurrection of Christ is the paradigm for all those who believe in him. As
22 John Gerhard put it, Christ’s resurrection “is not only an example, prelude, earnest and pledge but also the
23 efficient cause and source of our own resurrection.”⁵⁷ The cause assuring us that we are possessors of
24 eternal life is Christ’s own triumphant resurrection. “For if we have been united with him in a death like his,
25 we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (Rm 6:5). Jesus himself says, “Because I
26 live, you also will live” (Jn 14:19). When Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life” (Jn 11:25), this
27 statement is apotelesmatic, that is, it is not merely a statement of raw fact, but it also has salvific effect for
28 us. Jesus is saying, “Not only shall I Myself rise again and live, but I shall also be the cause of resurrection
29 and life for others.”⁵⁸ Jesus subsequently demonstrates his power over death by raising Lazarus from his
30 tomb in that graveyard.

31 Jesus demonstrated his power over death during his public ministry by raising the dead. At the
32 resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus strolls into the bone yard to put flesh and bone back in order (Jn 11:38; Ez
33 37). Why? Because He is the Lord God of Israel, who gives life and takes away, who kills and makes alive.
34 The enemy thinks he has barred His way. The tomb is slammed shut. Jesus has even given death a head
35 start, so He can assure us and all His disciples that death cannot hold him, the tomb cannot remain shut
36 against Him.

37 He confronts even Martha’s sensible, if ghoulish, undertaker’s warning, “Lord, he stinks.” It is as
38 though He said to her: “Yes, I know what decomposition is. I know what condition Lazarus is in.” Maybe
39 you have had that quiet moment before the casket of a loved one when death seemed to be ascendant over

⁵⁶ “And just as we must and should treat this article of the resurrection, so also we should treat the other articles of the Christian faith, whether of Baptism, Absolution, the Lord’s Supper, etc. We should set reason entirely aside and say: ‘If God has spoken it, then it will surely come to pass.’” AE 58:116.

⁵⁷ Gerhard, 30:17.

⁵⁸ Gerhard, 30:57.

1 life. My mother and I shared that moment at the side of my father’s casket. That moment when she reached
2 in to touch the hand of a beloved husband. Tear-washed eyes met over the casket, and she said, “He’s cold.”
3 Mary and Martha knew that feeling. “He’s cold and decaying, Jesus.”

4 But what is that to the Life of all the living? Why should death stand in His way? What power has
5 the stink of putrefaction against the true incense of life? The sweet-smelling odor of the offering to the
6 Father must take away the stink of death. It does by calling forth life from death. In Him we become the
7 fragrance of life (2Co 2:16).

8 Let us then offer up the sweet odor of faith and life in the graveyard of death. How we ought to pray
9 for those who need the Lord’s life; those who doubt God’s power over death and its decay. We shall speak
10 the stink to silence. Our decaying bodies weighed down by age, trouble and death have come to hear Jesus
11 say, “Come forth,” a word first spoken in baptism and at the last repeated on the day of resurrection.

12 The raising of Lazarus tells us that there is no reason why the graveyard must stay full. The God who
13 comes to the graveyard of the world comes to say to our corpse: “Lazarus, come out.” Even (and especially)
14 COVID-19 cannot change the power of Christ over death. Jesus asks us, “Did I not tell you that if you
15 believed you would see the glory of God” (Jn 11:40)? Is He not still asking us believers the same question?
16 Are we not listening? Can we not say, “Yes, Jesus, you did!”

17 Our dying accomplishes the good that comes from the life of Christ. This is what is happening when
18 we give ourselves up to one another in humble and sacrificial repentance, saying, “Dear brother, dear sister,
19 I have sinned against you. I have transgressed against your person. Please forgive me. I have done you
20 wrong.” We might well weep tears of grief because this is so humiliating, yet with us Jesus weeps. When we
21 are living in baptism by repenting, we are truly living while we’re dying.

22 I am praying to let Jesus’ life come through my death. Jesus let life come through His death. Let life
23 live. You can live in dying. Jesus assures us: “He who believes in Me will never die. And though he dies,
24 yet shall he live” (Jn 11:25-26).

25 We need to let Christ perish, or we shall. God must die, or we will not live. The tradeoff is quite
26 simple. There can be no new life without death. If the old dying life is not done to death, there will not be
27 the immortal life conferred through it. We are dying to live. Just as did Lazarus.

28 The devil was overcome by that through which he held power. Through that weapon—that is,
29 death—which was his strength against the world, Jesus crushed him. See what a great blessing death has
30 worked. Why then do you tremble? Why are you afraid of death? It is no longer terrifying. It has been
31 trodden underfoot. It has been despised and smashed by Jesus. You too should despise it, because Jesus has.
32 Luther says:

33 This is also the way a Christian can defy death: “Although I must be buried beneath the earth and
34 become ashes, I have the Lord above, who is of my flesh and blood, who will never die again (Rm 6:9),
35 because He is utterly alive. He became my Lord so that I might not remain in the power of death or the
36 devil. I shall live with Him. I believe that death cannot strangle life as much as Christ can give life. And He
37 will give even more. Thus also St. Paul writes: “For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to
38 the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and
39 lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living” (Rm 14:8-9). Therefore, even though I
40 must die, I shall nonetheless live, because my Lord lives, who was Lord also in death. He shall not leave me
41 in death, but as He lives, so I shall live also. As He says Himself: “Because I live, you also will live” (Jn
42 14:19); or “where I am, there will my servant be also” (Jn 12:26).”⁵⁹

43 Christ’s resurrection gives us certainty about our own. Just as He was laid in the grave, so too will
44 we be. Just as He burst death’s doors, so we shall burst forth from death unto life. It must be this way, just

⁵⁹ AE 13:244-245.

1 as the head is always followed by the body. If the head rises, so also will the body. We are that body that
2 follows the Head from the grave. Here is why there is such great joy in the Easter season for us Christians,
3 because it proclaims not just the Lord's indestructible life, but it also teaches us our own. So connected is
4 our resurrection to Christ's Luther will say,

5 For our Lord Jesus Christ began the resurrection in His own body, but the resurrection is not
6 completed unless we, too, are raised....After the resurrection of Christ, one must preach about our own
7 resurrection, since the two belong together in order that the resurrection may be complete."⁶⁰

8
9 Christ in Himself has no need of the Easter mystery. He is the Easter mystery. But He does not need
10 to die, and for that reason has no need in Himself to rise from the dead. He does all this for our sakes, that
11 we who are His body by faith might die and rise with Him. In his lovely commentary on 1 Corinthians 15
12 Luther says,

13 We must view Him in this light, that this dying and rising again were for your benefit and mine. As
14 He died and lay under the sod as you and I must die and be buried, thus He also rose again for our sakes and
15 made an exchange with us; as He was brought into death through us, we shall be restored from death to life
16 through Him. For by His death He has devoured our death, so that we all will also arise and live as He arose
17 and lives. Therefore, Christ is rightly called *Primitiae*, 'the Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep,' since
18 He takes the lead and draws the whole throng after Him. For whenever a first one is mentioned, it is implied
19 that more than one are involved. The others who follow, the second, the third, and so forth, are included
20 here, all bound together, as many as have fallen asleep. Otherwise, if Christ had risen alone and no one were
21 to follow Him, He could not be called the First.⁶¹

22 So certain are we of this life in Christ, that for us death is only a "little sleep." Jesus describes the
23 dead maiden (Jn 5:39) and His friend, Lazarus (Jn 11:11-12), as only asleep because they will rise. Paul is
24 so certain of this awaking that he does not speak of us as the "dead," but only as those who are asleep (1Co
25 15:18-20). I am just as certain that I will rise from the bed of death as I am that I will awaken tomorrow
26 morning after a peaceful night of sleep. This is why we pray, "Now I lay me down to sleep..."

27
28 Some colleges have what they call "legacy" admissions for students whose parents or grandparents
29 are graduates of the institution. Certainly, there is a legacy admission to the new life, the resurrection of the
30 flesh, and the life of the world to come. For Christ has been the Father's favorite, that we might become His
31 favorites. The Son has triumphed over death, therefore; we have triumphed over death. The Son has been
32 admitted into the heaven, which He has prepared for us, that we might enter with Him into that life.
33 Whatever He did, He did for us sinners. He has gained admission to the new life, therefore; we also are
34 admitted. Christ has assured us a legacy of life.

35 Not only the raising of Tabitha or Lazarus or the son of the widow, assure us that Christ has the
36 power of life in his hands and therefore can fulfill his promise to be our resurrection and life, but the Gospel
37 of St. Matthew also presents us with those who rose with Christ and after coming into the Jerusalem below
38 testified to the Jerusalem above: "The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had
39 fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and
40 appeared to many" (Mt 27:52-53). The resurrection of Christ showed its shared nature when the tombs of
41 those around him could not remain occupied at his rising. John Gerhard says:

42 Christ wanted to have some of the dead saints, patriarchs, matriarchs, kings, prophets, etc. as his
43 companions and consorts as witness that the fruit of his resurrection is the resurrection to life of the faithful.

⁶⁰ AE 58:102.

⁶¹ AE 28:109.

1 In these firstfruits of the universal resurrection a type of [the resurrection] to be expected on the Last Day is
2 set forth. For what the resurrection of Christ gave them will also be given to us who are faithful because
3 there is one hope, one faith, one salvation for all [Eph 4:4-6].”⁶²

4 The empty tombs of Easter were a stunning prolepsis of what is yet to come for us.
5

6 Nor is the Old Testament silent about the resurrection. The Pentateuch, Job, the Psalms, and the
7 prophets all testify to the resurrection. Luther sees the resurrection promised in the Protoevangelium.⁶³ He
8 says, “This statement includes the redemption from the Law, from sin, and from death; and it points out the
9 clear hope of a certain resurrection and of renewal in the other life after this life. If the serpent’s head is to
10 be crushed, death certainly must be done away with.”⁶⁴ This conclusion brings great comfort to us as we
11 find ourselves confronted with the initial human depravity and its necessary penalty of death.

12 Most pastors can rattle off from memory Job 19:23-27, because it is so often used in Christian
13 funeral rites. I would estimate that 85% of the funerals I conduct include this text as the Old Testament
14 lesson along with the eponymous hymn “I Know That My Redeemer Lives.” Despite the beauty, the clarity,
15 the certainty, and the great comfort of this text, I find myself tongue-tied by it. What could I say to be
16 helpful, that would render this Word of God sufficiently clearly to God’s people? Of course, there have been
17 attempts over the years to reduce Job’s speech to something more mundane, requesting of God that he return
18 to him his home, fortune, and family. Yet a much more sublime and comforting subject is taught here by
19 this ancient witness.⁶⁵

20 1. Job calls our highest attention to his words when he cries out, “Oh that my words were written!
21 Oh that they were inscribed in a book! Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock
22 forever!” (Job 19:23-24). This is no ordinary public service announcement or the introduction to a mere
23 mundane insight on the part of a suffering man. He was also creating a permanent record of his words
24 hammered into stone with lead so that the words would long stand not merely as a testimony to future
25 generations but also that they would stand to be vindicated “at the last” (Job 19:25).

26 2. Job is absolutely certain of his confession of the resurrection. Note that he says, “I myself
27 know...” He is certain of complete restoration at the resurrection, even if, when he says these things, he is
28 uncertain of the restoration of his wealth, health and family to him (see Job 7:7; 10:20-21; 13:15; 17:1).

29 3. The Hebrew word Redeemer cannot refer to any merely generic restoration of health and wealth.
30 A Redeemer is a kinsman, who buys the life of another out of slavery. Here the Redeemer buys us out of
31 death. Furthermore, with some frequency, the Old Testament uses the term Redeemer to denominate the
32 Messiah.⁶⁶ Note too that this Redeemer will stand upon the dust of the earth; He is victor over the dust of
33 death. He triumphs over the dissolution of the body into dust.

34 4. Job confessed that he expected his redemption after his skin had been destroyed, implying that he
35 expected to be eaten by worms. Job is speaking of something that would occur only after his death and
36 could only be assured by his Redeemer and with the result that there would be a bodily resurrection for him.

⁶² Gerhard, 30:64. Interestingly, Gerhard is of the opinion that these saints who rose entered into their heavenly glory together with him on his Ascension Day. Gerhard, 30: 220.

⁶³ “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gn 3:15).

⁶⁴ AE 1:196.

⁶⁵ Hebrew scholars have considered Job’s language some of the oldest in the Old Testament.

⁶⁶ See for example, Gn 48:16; Is 59:20; 63:9; Hos 13:34.

1 How comforting these words of Job are to us that they were spoken by the prophet in the midst of
2 indescribable grief and bodily suffering. In the midst of our sorrow as we suffer the loss of our loved ones,
3 these words lift our downtrodden hearts and minds to Christ, who as our Redeemer promises life that cannot
4 die.

5 Ezekiel's desert of dry bones shows us the knitting together of bones and sinews at the resurrection.
6 "Then [the Lord God] said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word
7 of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall
8 live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and
9 put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD" (Eze 37:5-7).

10 1. The God who had power of life and death and could raise the dead could certainly assure his
11 people a return from Babylon. This is a greater to lesser argument.

12 2. Think of how emphatic and clear is the description of what happened to the dry bones: God
13 opens their graves (v. 1), the word of God has the bones come together (v. 7), sinews knit the bones together
14 (v. 6), flesh comes upon them and skin covers them (v. 8), breath enters them (v. 10), and they live again
15 and stand on their own feet (v. 10).

16 3. The universal nature of the resurrection is indicated by the breath coming from the "four winds."
17 Jesus gives us the correct interpretation of this when he teaches, "And he will send out his angels with a
18 loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"
19 (Mt 24:31). This is again an argument from the greater to the lesser. If God raises all the dead and gathers
20 them from the four winds, can he not bring the far smaller number of Israelites from Babylon to Jerusalem?

21 4. Nor does this word of the Lord raise only Zombies. These are fully sentient beings who will
22 recognize the triumph and lordship of their God: "You shall know that I am the LORD."

23 What does Jesus say about the resurrection? Jesus teaches a bodily resurrection. He warns us not to
24 fear those who kill the people who confess him: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the
25 soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). The obvious parallel to this
26 threat is the clear implication of the promise that the believer will be saved both body and soul in heaven.
27 As Tertullian argued on the basis of this text, "Since, then, the body after the resurrection has to be killed by
28 God in hell along with the soul, we surely have sufficient information in this fact respecting both the issues
29 *which await it*, namely the resurrection of the flesh, and its eternal 'killing.'"⁶⁷ The resurrection will
30 certainly be a body and soul event, both for good and for ill.

31 Jesus directly teaches a universal resurrection and therefore a resurrection of both believers and
32 unbelievers. "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the
33 voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted
34 the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the
35 Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice
36 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the
37 resurrection of judgment" (Jn 5:25-29).

38 First, we see that the cause of the resurrection of believers is the life-giving voice of the Son of God
39 that awakens them from their graves. He confers life because He is the life. Second, there are those who will
40 be raised to judgment because they have done evil.

41 Other passages in the Gospels teach the same thing, however the most powerful instruction about our
42 resurrection is settled so beautifully in the resurrection narratives that conclude the Gospels. As I said
43 earlier, the Triduum is about us if we believe in Him, who first underwent those days. Perhaps one of the

⁶⁷ Tertullian, "The Resurrection of the Flesh," in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. Peter Holmes, vol. 3, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 571.

1 finer examples of Lutheran Easter hymnody flows from the pen of Paul Gerhardt. In “Awake, My Heart,
2 with Gladness” he melds the resurrection of our Lord with ultimate triumph over death:

3 Awake, my heart, with gladness,
4 See what today is done;
5 Now, after gloom and sadness,
6 Comes forth the glorious sun.
7 My Savior there was laid
8 Where our bed must be made
9 When to the realms of light
10 Our spirit wings its flight.⁶⁸

11 Our present possession of the resurrected Christ and the resurrection of Christ needs to be a clear and
12 present element in our Easter preaching.

13 We have no choice but to end by raising some of the objections to the resurrection of the dead as
14 Paul responds to such in 1 Corinthians 15. Is the resurrection worked by Christ really a bodily resurrection?
15 Who are the dead of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 15? In many ancient texts “the dead” is used for a
16 corpse, that is, the body of a dead person. Greg Lockwood in his commentary on this text says, “The term
17 νεκρὸς “dead” often carries graphic realism. Christ’s resurrection—and the believer’s—is the real, physical
18 resurrection of their bodies.”⁶⁹ Given this, Lockwood argued that the term “resurrection of the dead” could
19 easily be translated as “resurrection of corpses.”⁷⁰

20 It seems to me that if the early Christians were attempting to downplay or soften the resurrection of
21 the dead in keeping with the well-known Greek aversion to a bodily resurrection, they did a poor job of it.
22 Instead, the Apostles stubbornly used the term “the dead” to refer to the condition of the resurrected, even in
23 the face of its connection with corpses. The terms are put cheek by jowl no less than 26 times in the New
24 Testament by my cursory survey, four of those in 1 Corinthians alone. No, this is an emphatic avowal of a
25 real, physical, bodily resurrection.

26 How is this body raised? Luther simply bats this back into the lap of the questioner by asking what
27 makes you think that the Almighty God, Creator of the universe, is incapable of such thing? For Luther the
28 denial of the bodily resurrection is tantamount to rank unbelief and a breach of the first commandment.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Public domain.

⁶⁹ Gregory Lockwood, *Concordia Commentary Series: 1 Corinthians* (St. Louis: CPH, 2000), 559. Interestingly, what the ancients called a νεκροφέρως, we would call a “pall bearer,” testifying to the source of life and the ultimate disposition of the bodily remains.

⁷⁰ “Is it really possible that this sin-filled, decayed flesh could be subject to the blessings of divine righteousness by the power of the Holy Spirit? Luther in his characteristic hyperbole calls the human body a bag of worms. We commonly call a buried corpse ‘worm food.’ Several fanciful etymologies of the word cadaver are worth a ghoulish chuckle. Tertullian understood the word to derive from the term for the fallen, *cadendum*. In the medieval period the scholastics were even more creative, taking the word to be the elision of *caro data verminibus*; ca-da-ver, namely, flesh given to the vermin. Despite their fancifulness, if nothing else, such older views give off the odor of realism about death. In this older view there is nothing like the common sentiment spoken over bodies in modern funeral homes, ‘Doesn’t he look wonderful?!’ Yet, despite this silly sentiment about the wonderful appearance of the deceased we moderns are unlikely to attribute holiness to the human body, let alone a corpse.” Scott R. Murray, “Resurrection of the Flesh.” in *You, My People, Shall Be Holy*. eds. John R. Stephenson and Thomas M. Winger (St. Catharines: Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2013).

⁷¹ See Luther’s Easter 1544 sermon. AE 58:102-118.

1 No wonder Paul blasts the questioner of 1 Corinthians 15 with the epithet, “Fool!” (1Co 15:36) for has not
2 the fool said in his heart there is no God (Ps 14:1)?

3 In our time, we stumble over Paul’s adjective “spiritual,” thinking it to be the opposite of physical,
4 when in 1 Corinthians the opposite of spiritual is natural (ψυχικός 1Co 2:14; 15:44, 46).⁷² Note too that
5 spiritual food and the spiritual Rock are both very real, physical food and Rock (1Co 10:3-4).

6 Greg Lockwood puts in conjunction the two emphases highlighted by Paul: “Paul’s response stresses
7 both the continuity of the resurrected body with the believer’s earthly remains, and the remarkable
8 transformation into a glorified, spiritual body.” Luther will take up this theme by saying,

9 Man will retain only what pertains to his essence, but nothing will remain that relates to this
10 transitory life. And yet it will be the same body and soul with all the members that man had here. But he
11 will have to leave behind all that he required in this world.⁷³

12 If we look for an example of this spiritual body and if Christ is the firstfruits (1Co 15:20, 23), there
13 is no more helpful and comforting example than the resurrected Christ, who eats food (Lk 24:41-43) and
14 points to His bodily wounds (Jn 20:27) in the presence of his disciples, and was recognized by them, to
15 prove his bodily and physical resurrection and yet is unconstrained by physical barriers (Jn 20:19). We too
16 will be recognizable flesh and blood, yet truly spiritual. Now that is something to look forward to!

17 We will continue dying until finally we will be raised up to the resurrected life at Christ’s coming; a
18 life like the resurrected Christ’s life. (Rm 6:1-11; 2Co 5:17; 1Co 15, etc.).

19 When the pastors that succeed me go to the death bed of the people I catechized, what will they say?
20 Their last words will be the first words that were set upon their heart and their forehead. “In the name of the
21 Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” “Dear Lord, now I go to see that which I only hoped for and
22 believed and trusted my whole life. Now it’s all mine.” Baptism makes its return when the beginning and
23 the end of the Christian life meet and kiss.⁷⁴ In what ways would you change the death bed experience of
24 your flock, if you could? What would be the best ways of comforting those who are struggling with the
25 possibility of a bodily resurrection?

26 Let us defy death by confessing the resurrection. During COVID-19, eleven people tested positive

⁷² “Psychikos describes a state of life out of touch with God. Paul writes that the natural (psychikos) person cannot discern the things of God (1 Cor 2:14). Paul also contrasts the spiritual, resurrected body with the natural (psychikos) body using the same term (1 Cor 15:44, 46).” S.v., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Joel T. Hamme, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

⁷³ AE 28:182.

⁷⁴ “If you fortify yourself with the seal of baptism, you will secure yourself for the future with the best and strongest of all aids. You will be marked both in body and soul with the anointment, as Israel was of old with that blood anointment of the firstborn at night that guarded him (Ex 12:22), what then can happen to you, and what has been worked out for you? Listen to the Proverbs. ‘If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet’ (Pro 3:24). Listen to David giving you the good news, ‘You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day’ (Ps 91:5). This, even while you live, will greatly contribute to your sense of safety, for a sheep that is marked is not easily stolen, but that which is unmarked is an easy prey for thieves. At your death baptism will be a blessed shroud, more precious than gold, more magnificent than a sepulcher, more reverent than fruitless libations, more seasonable than ripe firstfruits, which the dead bestow on the dead, making a law out of custom (Lk 9:60). If all things forsake you (Ps 27:10), or be taken violently away from you; money, possessions, power, honors, and everything that belongs to this earthly turmoil, still you will be able to lay down your life in peace and safety, having suffered no loss of the helps which God gave you unto salvation.” Gregory Nazianzus, *Theological Oration*, 40.15

1 after attending Easter Sunday services 2021. Everyone recovered quickly, except one elderly saint who
2 spent about four weeks in the ICU. While his wife was at home in quarantine, I kept in contact with her by
3 phone, praying with her, comforting her and finding out how her husband was doing. I apologized to her for
4 the trial that she was undergoing because of their attendance at Easter Sunday service. Her husband was
5 wavering between life and death. Despite that, she said, “Oh, pastor! It was all worth it to be able to attend
6 Easter service with God’s people.” She knew what it meant to defy death. Her Lord was living; living for
7 her and her husband.

8
9 Scott R. Murray
10 Houston, Texas
11