

**Clergy of the ELDoNA,
affiliated congregations and missions**

Rt. Rev. James Heiser

Salem Lutheran Church, Malone, TX

Rev. Jeffrey Ahonen

Good Shepherd L.C., Tony, WI; Alpha & Omega Lutheran Mission, Winter, WI; Apologia Lutheran Mission, Deer Park, WI; Peace L.C., Ironwood, MI; Pure Blessings Lutheran Mission, Fox Valley, WI

Rev. Jerald Dulas

Sts. Peter & Paul L. C., Simpsonville, SC; All Saints Lutheran Mission, Myrtle Beach, SC; St. Michael & All Angels Lutheran Mission, Martinez, GA; St. Bartholomew Lutheran Mission, Fort Myers, FL

Rev. Douglas Handrich

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Peoria, IL

Rev. Kent Heimbigner

Charity Lutheran Church, Burleson, TX

Rev. Michael Henson

Trinity Lutheran Church, Herrin, IL

Rev. Daniel Mensing

Faith Lutheran Church, Beaverton, OR

Rev. Randy Moll

Good Shepherd L.C., Rogers, AR

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Redeemer L. C., Cambridge, MN

Rev. John Rutowicz

St. Boniface Lutheran Church, Niles, MI

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Christ Lutheran Church, Richmond, MO

Rev. Eric Stefanski

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Harrison, AR; Emmanuel Lutheran Mission, Conway, AR

Rev. Timothy Tolar

St. Luke Lutheran Church, Kenai, AK
Homer Lutheran Mission, Homer, AK

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St. Patrick Lutheran Church, Chipley, FL

Rev. Dcn. Gary Harroun

Trinity Lutheran Church, Herrin, IL

Rev. Dcn. Martin Jackson

Good Shepherd L. C. Rogers, AR

Rev. Dcn. Anthony Oncken

Salem Lutheran Church, Malone, TX

Rev. Dcn. Floyd Smithey

Sts. Peter & Paul Lutheran Church, Simpsonville, SC; St. James Lutheran Mission, Knoxville, TN

THE LUTHERAN HERALD



OCTOBER 2–29, 2022

**A PUBLICATION OF
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN DIOCESE OF
NORTH AMERICA**

The Calendar

The Lutheran Hymnal (1941): TLH; *The Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1912): ELHB;
The Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary (1913): ELH

(Monday: M; Tuesday: T; Wednesday: W; Thursday: R; Friday: F; Saturday: S)

October 2 Trinity 16 TLH 596

October 9 Trinity 17 TLH 524

October 16 Trinity 18 *Luther's Te Deum*

October 17 (M) *St. Ignatius, Bishop and Martyr*

October 18 (T) *St. Luke, Evangelist*

October 23 Trinity 19 TLH 251 (2nd tune)

October 28 (F) *St. Simon & St. Jude, Apostles*

October 30 Reformation Day (observed)/Trinity 20 TLH 262

ST. IGNATIUS SEMINARY UPDATE—The Fall Quarter for the Third Year of the program of studies at St. Ignatius seminary is well underway. This quarter, the classes are:

Homiletics 1 (P004) 3 credit hours;

Sacramental Theology (S008) 3 credit hours;

Post-Reformation (H005) 3 credit hours;

Confession & Absolution (P007) 1 credit hour.

major synodical hymnals demonstrates this. Where other bodies have adopted “sub-par” hymnals, we should not follow them into error. 2. Although built for use in the ELDoNA, our Church Order is meant to be *Lutheran*, not exclusively *ELDoNAn*, as regards the organization. Other confessional Lutherans will be able to appreciate and use it, if they want to, although it is not intended for them. 3. As the world grows wickeder and the visible Church more fractured, it is increasingly necessary that the true Christians put forward a clearer confession—how we worship is also an outward expression of our confession. St. Paul teaches that divisions are a necessary way of distinguishing the good from the wicked: “There must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you” (1 Cor. 11:19).



Bishop Heiser and Pastor Dulas, Visitation of Sts. Peter & Paul Ev. Lutheran Church (Simpsonville, SC),
September 25, 2022

OVERVIEW OF THE “COMMON SERVICE”—PART V & VI Pastor Scheck (Christ Ev. Lutheran Church)

VII. THE FALL OF THE COMMON SERVICE

After *TLH*, Lutheran churches, and especially the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, started moving in the direction of ecumenism (this word refers to when the clear confession of Doctrine is sacrificed for the sake of outward and false unity). The three best known hymnals to follow—*Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW or “the green hymnal”), *Lutheran Worship* (LW or “the blue hymnal”), and *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB or “the maroon hymnal”)—have all contributed to a deconstruction of the Common Service. They have proved to be mirrors reflecting the decline of doctrinal confessionalism in the major Lutheran synods. The *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB) is the best since *TLH*, because it contains the Common Service (“Divine Service setting 3”), but it is one option among 5, and there is no unity of use even among those congregations which use the same hymnal. Eighty years later, *TLH* is still the most confessional hymnal we have available.

VIII. THE ELDoNA PROJECT

The ELDoNA is not attempting to create something new. We are trying to continue and faithfully build on the project that is the Common Service—the Lutheran Liturgy in English.

Why not just stick with *TLH*? There are a few reasons for this: 1. *TLH* has been out of print for years and, although you can still find it, the companion books (e.g. altar book, Agenda, etc.) are almost impossible to find. 2. *TLH* is under copyright, so we could never just “make more”. 3. Although faithful, *TLH* is not a complete church order. 4. There are some few undesirable things that crept into *TLH* (e.g. less-than-confessional hymns) and some few good things which were removed (e.g. the Exhortation). We desire to “clean it up”, so to speak, and to restore what has been removed.

But is it schismatic, and therefore contrary to the goal of the Common Service, to create our own Church Order, since it is intended only for the ELDoNA? To this: 1. Wherever the Doctrine has declined, the liturgy has also suffered. The chaos of the last three ma-

NEW HYMNAL SUPPLEMENT—Work nears completion on the draft of the new supplement. The **2022 Supplement for the Augustana Service Book and Hymnal** is scheduled for publication (formally) for the Festival of St. Andrew (November 30)—the plan is for the diocese to be in receipt of copies before the First Sunday in Advent (Nov. 27). What the *2022 Supplement* is and contains:

- *The Supplement* is a working document on the way to a new hymnal faithful to the Common Service/*TLH* tradition;
- It will contain the “Common Service” of the Divine Service with Propers for the Church Year (Introits, Collects, Assigned Epistle and Gospel, and Graduals for all Sundays, Feasts, and Festivals);
- Collects for Various Occasions;
- Luther’s Small Catechism;
- Baptism of Infants/Baptism of Adults;
- Order of Private Confession and Absolution;
- Order of Confessional Service.

What the *2022 Supplement* is not:

- *The Supplement* is not a final hymnal.

The Supplement is a working document that allows all interested parties within the fellowship of the diocese to get a sense of the direction of the overall work. In itself, it does not (and is not intended to) replace an existing hymnal; rather, it is intended to *supplement* the hymnal already in use. In keeping with its purpose, the *Supplement* (which is being published in hardcover for durability) is being passed along *at cost* so that pastors and congregations can provide thoughtful input and get a sense for the use of these materials in the life of the Church.

Work on the *Church Order* (which includes a *Missal/Altar Book and Hymnal*) had to reach a certain point in development before there would be a basis for feedback on future development. To that end, a survey will be distributed at the beginning of 2023 for congregational input on hymns and other aspects of the ongoing project.

What happens now: By Reformation Day, Pastors will need to let the Bishop know how many copies of the Supplement will be needed in their parish, if copies are needed by Advent 1—obviously, copies can be ordered at any time in the future. Congregations will be invoiced upon receipt of copies. THE COST (INCLUDING SHIPPING) IS EXPECTED TO BE \$15 OR LESS PER COPY.

Lesson from the Book of Concord

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

ARTICLE III.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

This article I cannot explain better than (as I have said) that it treats of Sanctification, viz. that thereby the Holy Ghost, with His office, is declared and set forth, namely, that He makes holy.

Therefore we must establish ourselves upon the word HOLY GHOST, because it is so precise and comprehensive that we cannot use another like it. For there are besides many kinds of spirits mentioned in the Holy Scriptures—the spirit of man, heavenly spirits and evil spirits. But the Spirit of God alone is called the Holy Ghost, that is, He which has sanctified and still sanctifies us. For as the Father is called Creator, the Son Redeemer, so the Holy Ghost, from His work, must be called Sanctifier, or one that makes holy. But what is the process of such sanctification? Answer: Just as the Son obtains dominion, whereby He redeems us, by His birth, death, resurrection, etc., so also the Holy Ghost effects our sanctification, as follows, namely, by the communion of saints or Christian Church, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body and eternal life; that is, He first leads us into His holy congregation, and places us in the bosom of the Church, whereby He preaches to us and brings us to Christ.

For neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe on Him and have Him for our Lord, except as it is offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel. The work is finished and accomplished; for Christ, by His suffering, death, resurrection, etc., has acquired and gained the treasure for us. But if the work remained concealed, so that no one knew of it, they it were in vain and lost. That this treasure therefore might not lie buried, but be appropriated and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed, in which He gives the Holy Ghost to bring this treasure home and apply it to us. Therefore sanctification is nothing else but bringing us to Christ to receive this good, to which, of ourselves, we could not attain.

Learn then to understand this article most clearly. If you are asked: What do you mean by the words: “I believe in the Holy Ghost,” you can answer: I believe that the Holy Ghost makes me holy, as His name implies. But whereby does He accomplish this end? Or what are His means and method to this end? Answer: The Christian Church, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. For in the first place He has a peculiar congregation in the world, which is the mother that bears every Christian through the Word of God, which He

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29: ZEPHANIAH 3:14–20 19TH SUNDAY A. TRINITY

“The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst.”

Many people see going to church as a burden. Maybe they go because that’s just how they were raised, or maybe it is out of self-righteousness. Regardless, this should not be the attitude in gathering together as God’s Church.

When we attend the Divine Service, the Lord is gathering His Church to dwell with us, to give His Baptized elect His own presence by the Word and Sacraments. It is not the same as God’s presence everywhere, but it is His presence uniquely for those who are forgiven and saved in Christ.

It is the assembly of peace and praise. The Divine Service is God serving His people. This is not burdensome, nor is it a focus on us; it is a taste of the great assembly of the Communion of Saints. He gathers us because He is faithful to show Himself through His means of grace. That is Joy. It is the farthest thing from burdensome.

Prayer: O almighty and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:9–12 STS. SIMON & JUDE

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.”

It is often difficult to walk in the way of Christ in this life when we only see in part. We don't see the whole picture on this side of the Resurrection. This is why the Church is established with the preaching of God's Word and the giving of His Sacraments, to be received through faith. This is also why we remember the saints, like Simon and Jude. The Church is graciously blessed by the Holy Ghost with the Word and the Sacraments, as well as through the great cloud of witnesses to our Lord that have gone before us. His work is manifest in His saints throughout the ages.

Our Lord teaches that the world will hate us as it has hated Him first. Our faith must be strengthened in order to withstand such hatred from the world. Despite the fact that we don't always see clearly, the Word and the Sacraments are always clear.

Let us then “put away childish things,” childish things such as doubt and worry. Instead, let us be strengthened by Christ through the means He gives in His Church.

Prayer: O almighty and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

reveals and preaches, and through which He illumines and enkindles hearts, that they understand and accept it, cling to it and persevere in it.

For where He does not cause it to be preached and made alive in the heart, so as to be understood, it is lost, as was the case under the Papacy, where faith was entirely put under a bushel, and no one recognized Christ as his Lord or the Holy Ghost as his Sanctifier, i.e. no one believed that Christ is our Lord in the sense that He has acquired this treasure for us, and, without our works and merit, made us acceptable to the Father. And what indeed was the cause? This, verily, that the Holy Ghost was not there to reveal it, and caused it to be preached; but men evil spirits were there, who taught us to obtain grace and be saved by our works. Therefore it is no Christian Church; for where Christ is not preached there is no Holy Ghost who makes, calls and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord. ...

The holy Christian Church the Creed denominates a communion of saints, for both expressions are taken together as one idea. But formerly the one point was not there, as it is also unintelligible in the translation. If it is to be given very plainly, it must be expressed quite differently. For the word ecclesia is properly an assembly. But we are accustomed to the word church, which the simple do not refer to an assembled multitude, but to the consecrated house or building. Although the house ought not to be called church, except for the reason that the multitude assembles there. For we who assemble constitute and occupy a particular space, and give a name to the house according to the assembly.

Everything therefore in the Christian Church is so ordered that we shall daily obtain free and full forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs, appointed to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here. Thus, although we have sin, the Holy Ghost does not allow it to injure us, because we are in the Christian Church, where there is full forgiveness of sin, both in that God forgives us, and in that we forgive, bear with and help each other.

But outside of this Christian Church, where the Gospel is not, there is no forgiveness, as also there can be no sanctification. Therefore all who do not seek sanctification through the Gospel and the forgiveness of sin, but expect to merit it by their works, have expelled and severed themselves from the Christian Church.

These articles of the Creed, therefore, separate and distinguish us Christians from all other people upon earth. For all outside of Christianity, whether heathen, Turks, Jews or false Christians and hypocrites, although they believe in and worship only one true God, yet know not what His mind toward them is, and cannot confide in His love or expect any good from Him; therefore they abide in eternal wrath and damnation. For they have not the Lord Christ, and besides are not illumined and favored by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

—The Large Catechism, §34–45, 47–48, 56, 66

MONDAY, OCTOBER 3: JAMES 1:2–12 16TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

St. James encourages us to endure temptation with patience. What does patience look like? Patience means doing your duty as though nothing had changed. The commandments, “honor your father and your mother” and “you shall not steal,” do not change because of trials. When trials are hard, the temptation is to find an excuse to get out of doing our duty. Ironically, it is harder to do nothing than to sin. It is easier to sin than to keep suffering. Patience means choosing to suffer instead of sin, and that out of obedience to God.

Remember the example of our Lord Jesus when He fasted forty days in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11). The devil tempted Him to turn stones into bread, but He would not. Christ had come “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15), and this required Him to be righteous where we would fail. His vocation, at that time, was to complete His fast, even though hunger and the devil tempted Him to impatience.

True patience is impossible for us. Therefore St. James offers this encouragement: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally.” We must learn to pray that God would help us fulfill our duties. And God, who is rich in mercy, will comfort us in Christ, who manifested perfect patience for our righteousness.

Prayer: Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always go before and follow after us and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27: HEBREWS 10:1–10 19TH SUNDAY A. TRINITY

“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Here we have an explicit statement of our sanctification being wrought by Christ alone. There can be temptation to do so-called ‘fruit checking’ to make sure we are doing better in our sanctification. Even worse, there are some who measure their sanctification not by Christ’s Word, but by how much better they are doing than their brothers and sisters in Christ.

If our sanctification was according to the Law, then we maybe could have a tier system of who is and is not a better Christian. However, in spite of what our sinful flesh thinks, the Law is not sufficient for our sanctification! “For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.” Instead of focusing on the shadow, we focus our sanctification on Christ Jesus to be conformed to Him.

Prayer: O almighty and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26: HOSEA 14:1–9 19TH SUNDAY A. TRINITY

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him.”

The Scriptures teach that those who are in Christ will walk in Christ and do the works of a Christian. However, even the saints of God are still sinners on this side of glory. When we walk, we will also stumble.

As we have learned to set our minds on things above and to lay up treasures in Heaven, we also learn that it is not only possible, but inevitable, that the people of God will backslide and fail. This is not because the Lord has failed us, but because we have sinful flesh to contend with until the end of our life. It is important to be reminded that we do not rely on our own strength, but on the promise of God in Christ, given in His Word and Sacraments.

Even as you stumble, remember that the Lord calls you continually to return to Him and trust in Him for strength to walk in newness of life.

Prayer: O almighty and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4: HEBREWS 10:35–39 16TH SUNDAY A. TRINITY

This passage is all about faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the apostle does not use the word “faith”; instead, he uses the word “confidence”. He calls faith a “confidence” to show that faith is not an opinion. Faith is not merely the best option among other religions. Calling faith a “confidence” also shows that faith is not mere knowledge. Even the demons know the truth of God and of the Christ, but their knowledge is not counted as saving faith (James. 2:19). True faith means having the confidence through Christ to approach God in prayer. For this reason, Dr. Luther taught in the Large Catechism, “I have often said that the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust be right, then is your god also true. And, on the other hand, if your trust be false and wrong, then you have not the true God; for these two belong together, [that is] faith and God.” (Part I, 1st Commandment) Faith is a living response to God and is, therefore, called interchangeably “faith”, “confidence”, and “trust”.

The fruit of true confidence, according to our text, is “the saving of the soul.” Faith has confidence in God not only for bodily needs and right morals, but for salvation. It includes all these things in addition to the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always go before and follow after us and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Satan seems to show more respect for marriage than most of the world. In the previous chapter, God says, “Do not lay a hand on [Job’s] person” (1:12), therefore Satan goes and destroys Job’s children, servants, and animals, but he does not touch Job’s wife. He knows that Scripture says the husband and wife “shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). If Job’s flesh is protected, that includes Job’s wife.

In the present chapter, Satan is allowed to attack Job’s flesh. He strikes Job with boils and turns Job’s wife against him, tempting him to curse God. The husband is the head of the wife, and Job is faithful to his vocation when he rebukes his wife for her unbelief. This is the opposite of the sin of Adam, who allowed Eve to tempt him to sin. In this way Job is an example to all husbands, how they ought to teach their wives true doctrine and to protect them from sinning. Moreover, Job can be seen, in a sense, as an image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Savior married Himself to an unfaithful wife, as He says through Jeremiah, “My covenant... they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord” (31:32). But Christ has done what Job could not do: He redeemed His bride with His blood and made her holy. The Christian Church is that redeemed wife of the Christ. Satan cannot destroy her, because she is one with her divine Husband.

Prayer: Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always go before and follow after us and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

You can discern many things about a person by what they hold dear to them. Our Lord Jesus Christ uses the image of the eye as the “lamp of the body” to demonstrate this reality. What you focus on will be the centerpiece of your life, whether that be for a short period or long period. The focus for every Christian is Jesus Christ. By Christ, we are dead to sin and raised again with Him through Baptism. By Christ, we are given the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Even in the midst of the distractions of the world, the flesh, and the devil, Christ is still our centerpiece.

Christ must be our focus. Without Christ, we have no righteousness. As our Lord says, “If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” If your own righteousness—your own ‘light’—is the focus, then darkness is all you will have.

Praise be to God that we have our treasure in Christ who gives the true light.

Prayer: O almighty and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24: COLOSSIANS 3:1–10 19TH SUNDAY A. TRINITY

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Notice that the apostle Paul gives the Colossians an understanding of their sanctification by pointing first to their justification. If you have died and have been raised with Christ in Baptism, then you will have a new heart and new desires. The great joy of every Christian is to appropriate more of Christ in their life; to “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

This process of sanctification always comes back to Christ. The Colossians are reminded that they did not save themselves from the sin “in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.” Likewise, our sanctification is of God. The power of the Holy Ghost gives us the gift to “put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...”

Even when we sin and fall short, we look back to Christ and set our mind towards Him for our continued growth.

Prayer: O almighty and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6: HEBREWS 12:4–11 16TH SUNDAY A. TRINITY

We should not be glad “in spite of” earthly trials, as though trials were a necessary evil. This text teaches that we should be glad “because of” earthly trials, because trials endured in faith and prayer testify that we are true children of God.

Christians and non-Christians suffer differently. To Christians, our Lord says, “A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). But of the wicked, Scripture says, “God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts” (Romans 1:24). While Christians suffer persecution, the wicked are allowed to do what they want; and the wicked are worse off for it. King David prays, “Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man” (2 Samuel 24:14). How much worse still if God let us fall into the hand of our own sinful imaginations? It is better to suffer unjustly than to fall into sin. Those who do suffer unjustly and endure it with prayer have the assurance and the comfort that God counts them as sons.

If you suffer and you pray to the Christ for deliverance, know that you are saved, because only true faith can so pray. Meanwhile, the wicked are destroying themselves.

Prayer: Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always go before and follow after us and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7: REVELATION 2:8–11 16TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

“He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”
The devil is coming for you; you just have to overcome him.
However, you’re in trouble if you think you can do it yourself.

One of the chief lies of the devil is that faithfulness to the Gospel depends on our personal strength of character. When the Lord Jesus says, “be faithful,” and, “he who overcomes...,” the devil wants us to think that these are works which we do for ourselves. Instead, they are works of the Holy Spirit in us. If we trust in our own faithfulness, we will fail. But if we trust in the Christ to preserve us, He will.

What does it mean to trust in Christ over ourselves? It means to pray, “God, the devil is too strong for me; help me!” It means to go to church and receive Christ’s Body and Blood. It means to hear the Gospel preached and to believe it. God will preserve you from the devil through these things. Therefore, He tells the people in Smyrna, and us, “I know your ... poverty (but you are rich).” That is, not rich in earthly things, but rich in the gifts of God. The devil may imprison and kill us because we are weaker than he, but the Lord Jesus is stronger, and He will give the crown of life to those who pray to Him in faith.

Prayer: Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always go before and follow after us and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

Article IV.

Also they teach, that men cannot be Justified before God by their own strength, merits or works, but are freely justified for Christ’s sake through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake, who, by His death, hath made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

—Augsburg Confession

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22: PROVERBS 14:21–31 18TH SUNDAY A. TRINITY

In 1 Kings 3:9, Solomon prays for, in Hebrew, literally “a hearing heart.” Solomon asks that what he receives through his senses would be filtered through a heart relating all things to God’s will. He observes nature and mankind, relates them to God’s Word, and delivers summaries best understood by the same process: first consider his surface observation, then apply it to our relationship to God in Christ.

In Proverbs 14:21–22 we find that one having mercy on the poor is “happy”—the Hebrew word means “blessed” in the sense of “has fortunes.” The way it is stated, one cannot say grammatically whether that blessedness is brought about by mercy, or that mercy is the evidence of existing blessedness. Devising evil, then, leads us ever farther astray, and despising our neighbor is part of a larger package of sin. But one who is rich and blessed through God’s grace will show the same mercy that he has received from God. This results in his continued walking in that mercy and, therefore, in that blessedness. If mercy and truth are ours, we devise good and remain in mercy and truth.

Verses 26–27: proper fear of the Lord has us run to Him in repentance when we sin, lest our relationship be forever broken, so we remain in His protection, thus fearing neither death nor anything else.

Continue this by seeing Solomon’s surface observation and then relating, for example: v. 25 to John 6; v. 29 to Psalm 14:1 and Hebrews 12:3–11; v. 30 to Luke 9:23–24, 12:16–21.

Prayer: O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8: EZEKIEL 3:17–21 16TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The preacher’s vocation is to speak the truth. The hearer’s is to believe it and repent of one’s sins. It is not the preacher’s vocation to force someone to the truth, but only to speak it fully. The Augsburg Confession teaches, “to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, no jurisdiction belongs, except to forgive sins, to discern doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked men ... and this without human force, simply by the Word” (Article 28.21). The minister’s tool is the Word of God. As long as the minister does his duty according to the Gospel, it is the hearer’s duty to obey him and to repent in faith. However, if one knows the truth and chooses to ignore it, he is responsible for his sin; no one else is.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the true Watchman, as well as the Truth that the watchmen speak. Those who hear the minister hear the Christ. Those who hear the Christ hear God. And God warns that all sin must be punished. Now, the Christ was punished for all sin on the cross. Those who believe Him and repent have nothing to fear; their punishment has been paid. Those who reject the Christ must pay their own penalty.

Prayer: Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always go before and follow after us and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

The Third Commandment.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

When, then, it is asked: “What is meant by the commandment: ‘Remember the sabbath-day to sanctify it?’” Answer: To sanctify the Sabbath is the same as “to keep it holy.” But what is meant by “keeping it holy”? Nothing else than to be occupied in holy words, works and life. For the day needs no sanctification for itself; for in itself it has been created holy. But God desires it to be holy to thee. Therefore it becomes holy or unholy on thy account, according as thou art occupied on the same with things that are holy or unholy.

How then does such sanctification occur? Not that we sit behind the stove and do no rough work, or deck ourselves with a garland and put on our best clothes, but (as has been said) that we occupy ourselves with God’s Word, and exercise ourselves therein.

And indeed we Christians ought always to keep such a Sabbath, and to be occupied with nothing but holy things, i.e. daily to meditate upon God’s Word, and carry it in our hearts and upon our lips. But because (as has been said) we do not all have leisure, we must devote several hours a week to the young, or at least a day to the mass of people, in order that we may be concerned about this alone, and especially urge the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, and thus direct our whole life and being according to God’s Word. The Sabbath is truly kept whenever time is devoted to earnest attention to this, and the practice of it; but that cannot be called a true Christian Sabbath where this is not done. For they who are not Christians can keep holiday and be idle just as well as the entire swarm of our ecclesiastics, who stand daily in the churches, singing, and ringing bells, but who keep no Sabbath day holy, because they neither preach nor practice God’s Word, but teach and live contrary to it.

For the Word of God is the sanctuary above all sanctuaries, yea, the only one which we Christians know and have. For though we had the bones of all the saints, or all holy and consecrated garments upon a heap, they would not avail us anything; for all that is a dead thing which can sanctify nobody. But God’s Word is the treasury which sanctifies everything whereby even all the saints themselves were sanctified. —The Large Catechism, §87–90

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21: JAMES 3:13–18 18TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Worldly wisdom is always looking for an audience. It looks to show others up and will use whatever dirty tricks it needs to win the battles it chooses. It is what comes from our flesh and feeds on the praise of the dead worldlings. Instead of loving the truth, it loves what it has constructed to replace God’s truth. Its own confusion resonates with the confusion of the rest of the self-seeking, fallen heirs of Adam. It justifies what is impure, what seeks its own desires, and what clings to self-will.

True, godly wisdom is meek. That is, it doesn’t say, “Look at me!” but “Look at the Lord! See how kind and good He is! Even though His judgment and punishments have been very severe, He does them all so that man might repent and live, purely by His grace and favor!” The wisdom from above doesn’t strive to get and to keep things for itself. It follows the Father’s pattern in giving the dearest treasure away. It seeks to bring clarity of thought that can come only from the forgiveness of sins, the relief of man’s burden of condemnation.

Verse 17, then, is like Philippians 2:5–11. As the only pure Man, in the ultimate spirit of gentleness (since He could simply have given us the Hell we deserved), He comes to bring peace (though sin opposes Him and makes His peace-bringing the bringing of a sword!). He willingly yielded Himself for our sake, “full of mercy and good fruits” for us.

Prayer: O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20: 3 JOHN 2-8 18TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

It is a great joy for a pastor to see those in his care prospering! When your profession of the faith is praised, he rejoices to glorify God. He prays that you may be blessed even more in body and soul, so that you may have the opportunity to be faithful with even more. While a pastor is called to be faithful without regard to the result, when God so blesses his preaching and teaching, your confession echoing back to him also strengthens him. It is like the encouragement you give to all in the parish when you are gathered to receive the body and blood of Christ, proclaiming by your attendance at the altar that you, too, are a sinner in need, and that in His Supper Jesus feeds and strengthens you by the forgiveness He there brings.

By walking in what you confess, by living out what you confessed at Baptism and continue to voice in Confession and Absolution and in the Creed, through your actions toward both your brethren in Christ and for strangers, you bring joy to your pastor and glory to God. Especially in John's view is your reception of and giving aid to those who proclaim the Gospel both far and near. (He is addressing a congregation in which some spurned pure preachers of the Word.) When you pray for the pastors of our fellowship and seek to uphold them in their needs because you see the need for God's Word to be taught purely to future generations, you are doing exactly what St. John here commends.

Prayer: O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10: JUDE 20-25 17TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

“And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.”

What are we to do while we await that day when Christ returns and, in mercy, receives us to Himself in heaven? Like Enoch, we continue to warn the impenitent and unbelieving of God's coming judgment upon all who continue in rebellion against Him. We warn those who use the grace of God as a license to indulge in their sinful longings and desires. But we also show mercy. We have compassion on those misled and overcome by sin. We warn them of the consequences and offer them the comfort of God's pardon and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Patiently and compassionately, we reach out to the lost and erring, that they too might come to repentance and be saved through faith in Christ Jesus and His cross.

Some we “save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.” We use the utmost care so that we too are not drawn into sin and error through the weakness of our own flesh. We recognize the danger and consequences of sin. But, through the right application of God's Word, we pull them from the impending fires of hell. We hate their sinful deeds, and show them the right way—a life lived by faith in the Son of God.

Prayer: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11: HEBREWS 4:9-13 17TH SUNDAY A. TRINITY

“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.”

Though Joshua led the children of Israel into Canaan, the land of promise, as David later testifies in Psalm 95, there yet remains a rest for the people of God—a place in God’s everlasting heavenly kingdom. God has provided that rest in His Son and His atoning sacrifice on the cross: “It is finished” (John 19:30).

We cannot enter that rest by our own works, but rather by ceasing our attempts to make ourselves acceptable to God and by trusting in the completed work of Christ for pardon, forgiveness, and the everlasting joys of heaven (Cf. Romans 4:4-5). This, of course, is not a license to sin, leading to death, but rather the gift of God received through faith, giving us eternal rest.

Prayer: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 19: DEUTERONOMY 30:11–20 18TH S. A. TRINITY

Yesterday’s reading helps us understand today’s: the original audience for Deuteronomy was not made up of unbelievers. The things God has Moses tell the people to do are not things that can be done apart from Him. They can’t be done without faith in His works and His promises that make the hearers His people and Him their Lord! How would people “choose life” while dead in trespasses and sins? Such choosing is a spiritual impossibility for the unbeliever! (Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3; 3rd Article of the Creed in the Small Catechism.)

For you, though? It’s not mysterious, not far off, not beyond the sea or in heaven, so that you would need someone to go get it for you. It is already at hand—it’s already in your mouth, already given to you to speak and sing liturgically, even before you are old enough to read! This is why it is so essential that children be with their parents in church: so that they may learn to sing and say what the adults do each week. (They do it at home, but in the liturgy the experience comes with the guarantee that it is good and right and salvific!) Through such worship that Word of God becomes a part of them. What’s coming out of their mouths can help them to know that they need to cling to the Lord, and to know how it is done: continuing to believe that through Holy Baptism they already possess everlasting life, having been given faith in the crucified Son of God!

Prayer: O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18: DEUTERONOMY 10:12–21 FESTIVAL OF ST. LUKE

On this Festival of St. Luke the physician and Evangelist, we have the Lord's prescription for His people. In the question, "What does the Lord your God require of you?" let us not miss what is already there: the requirement won't gain God's favor and make Him their God; they have already been chosen and made His own. The Lord has no need of gifts and praise, because it all belongs to Him already. What He requires is to live in the light of what He has done for you. The surgery performed outwardly on eight-day-old baby boys as the Old Testament Sacrament pointing forward to the great Serpent Crushing Descendant of Eve, that surgery must be performed on the hearts of those who have received that gracious gift. To put it in New Testament terms: you who have been Baptized, set your heart (by His Word) to live according to that washing of forgiveness He has given you!

As Jesus will further say (Luke 6:36), show yourself to be a true child and heir of your Father in Heaven, being merciful as He is merciful. Serve Him by serving others, not seeking praise from men, but having the Lord ever as your praise. For all of the awesome things Moses points to in our reading, how much greater He has done for us! He allows us to live when His promise has already been fulfilled and we can look with full confidence to the cross of Jesus, because we know the resurrection of Jesus (2 Peter 1:19–21; Luke 10:23–24).

Prayer: O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-9 17th S. A. TRINITY

"Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality."

Though the churches of God in Macedonia suffered persecution and great poverty, by the grace of God they were moved to give liberally to aid the saints in Jerusalem. St. Paul writes: "For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

Our Lord Jesus Christ became poor for our sake. He suffered and died for our sins so that we might become rich in the spiritual blessings of forgiveness and life eternal. From His teaching and example we are urged to sacrifice our worldly goods so that others too might hear the Gospel and become spiritually rich through faith in Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13: EZRA 9:6-9 17TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

“O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.”

This prayer of Ezra expresses shame and humiliation over the rebelliousness and sin of God’s people, which led to God’s judgment on Judah and Jerusalem, and to their captivity in Babylon. But if we rightly examine ourselves in the light of God’s Word, who could not join in praying this prayer? We are all guilty before God. We have all come short of what He desires for us. It is in His mercy that He has left us a remnant that still holds to the truth of His Word and seeks to worship and glorify His name for the salvation He provided in the Son.

With Ezra, we weep over our sins and the sins of our people, for they “have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.” But we rejoice in God’s mercy, that He is gracious to us and forgives our sins for the sake of Christ Jesus and His perfect sacrifice on the cross, for our sins and the sins of the entire world.

Prayer: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17: ST. JOHN 15:1–17 FESTIVAL OF ST. IGNATIUS

We abide in Jesus’ love—who abides in the Father’s love—as we do what He commanded His Church. This is by virtue of our connection with Him as branches to a vine. Branches not bearing fruit are worthless and thrown into the fire, but He who is alive and gives life chooses to lay down His life for us, to make us more than servants. Friends are those who have been chosen to receive everything that the Father has revealed in Christ; having that revelation as our life, bearing fruit is simply a given.

We celebrate St. Ignatius’s confessing the Holy Supper of the Word Made Flesh as the “medicine of immortality”:

*Who abides in Christ, the Savior Shall abundant fruit bring forth
All in thanks for God’s great favor That grants sinners a new birth.
Gracious Jesus, grant that ever We with heart and life declare
How Your death has brought God’s mercy And forgiveness everywhere.*

*Jesus, Lord, enthroned in glory, On Whom once our sins were laid,
On the cross our judgment bearing. You have full atonement made.
Here, Your blood and body give us That Your branches may confess
To all men, both great and lowly, You, alone, our Righteousness.*

*For, O Savior, we’re but branches You the ever-living Vine
Who with love and mercy feeds us Through the Word-blessed bread and wine;
May Your Spirit dwell within us That we love You, Word Divine,
And so nourished and so fruitful Gladly leave this world behind.*

Prayer: O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

consolation, and a joyful message which does not reprove or terrify, but against the terrors of the Law consoles consciences, points alone to the merits of Christ, and again comforts them by the precious preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ's merit.

7. As to the revelation of sin, because the veil of Moses hangs before the eyes of all men as long as they hear the bare preaching of the Law, and nothing concerning Christ, and therefore do not learn from the Law to perceive their sins aright, but either become presumptuous hypocrites as the Pharisees, or despair as did Judas; Christ takes the Law into His hands, and explains it spiritually (Matt. 5:21 sqq.; Rom. 7:14). And thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all sinners (Rom. 1:18), how great it is; by this means they are instructed in the Law, and then from it first learn to know aright their sins—a knowledge to which Moses never could coerce them.

Therefore, although the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God, is an earnest and terrible proclamation and declaration of God's wrath, whereby men are for the first time led aright to the Law, after the veil of Moses has been removed from them, so that they first know aright how great things God in His Law requires of us, nothing of which we can observe, and therefore should seek all our righteousness in Christ—

8. Yet, as long as all this (namely, Christ's suffering and death) proclaims God's wrath and terrifies man, it is still not properly the preaching of the Gospel, but the preaching of Moses and the Law, and therefore a "strange work" of Christ, whereby He attains His proper office, i.e. to preach grace, console and quicken, which is properly the preaching of the Gospel.

Negative.

Contrary Doctrine which is Rejected.

Therefore we reject and regard incorrect and injurious the dogma that the Gospel is properly a preaching of repentance or reproof, and not alone a preaching of grace. For thereby the Gospel is again converted into a law, the merit of Christ and the Holy Scriptures obscured, Christians robbed of true consolation, and the door opened again to the Papacy.

—The Formula of Concord, Epitome

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14: JEREMIAH 13:15-25 17th SUNDAY A. TRINITY

"Hear and give ear: do not be proud, for the LORD has spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God before He causes darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and while you are looking for light, He turns it into the shadow of death and makes it dense darkness."

Human pride so often gets in the way of hearing the rebukes of God's Word and repenting of the sins and evils in our lives. Rather than hearing what God says, we imagine that we are right, that we are righteous, and that those who rebuke us with God's Word are wrong. God, however, urges us to give Him glory and hear the warnings of His Word before it is too late, before we stumble in darkness and He turns the light we have into "the shadow of death and makes it dense darkness."

If we refuse to hear and heed the warnings of God's Word and repent of our sinful and erring ways, we will soon be hardened in our sins and unbelief, and God will "weep in secret for [our] pride." He truly desires that we look to Him for mercy and forgiveness in Christ Jesus and His cross, and by His Spirit and help we are able to do so.

Prayer: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” says the LORD. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats.’”

To continue on in one’s sinful ways and then simply go through the motions of offering the prescribed sacrifices is empty and worthless religion, God says. The same is true for us today. To sing the hymns and liturgy with only our voices, to say the words of confession with only our lips, to hear only with our ears the Scripture readings, and to partake only with our mouth of the Lord’s Supper will do us no good. If we do not heed the words and message God speaks to us, repent of our sins, and look to Christ and His cross in faith for mercy and forgiveness, we miss the purpose of these profound gifts.

God desires that our religion not just be going through the outward motions, but truly listening to the warnings and promises of God’s Word. He wants us to partake of Christ’s Body and Blood, given and shed for us, with faith in His Word. He wants us to sing the hymns and liturgy with a heart that looks to Christ and His cross for pardon, peace, and life eternal.

Prayer: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Chapter V. Of the Law and the Gospel.

Statement of the Controversy.

Whether the preaching of the Holy Gospel be properly not only a preaching of grace, which announces the forgiveness of sins, but also a preaching of repentance and censure, rebuking unbelief, which is rebuked not in the Law, but alone through the Gospel.

Affirmative.

Pure Doctrine of God’s Word.

1. We believe, teach and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church as an especially brilliant light, whereby, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God may be rightly divided.

2. We believe, teach and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reproves everything that is sin and contrary to God’s will.

3. Therefore everything that reproves sin is and belongs to the preaching of the Law.

4. But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, should believe, viz. that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and, without any merit of theirs [no merit of the sinner intervening], has obtained and acquired forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.

5. But since the term “Gospel” is not used in one and the same sense in the Holy Scriptures, on account of which this dissension originally arose, we believe, teach and confess that if by the term “Gospel” the entire doctrine of Christ be understood, which He proposed in His ministry, as also did His apostles (in which sense it is employed, Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21), it is correctly said and written that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and of the forgiveness of sins.

6. But if the Law and the Gospel be contrasted with one another, as Moses himself is called a teacher of the Law, and Christ a preacher of the Gospel, we believe, teach and confess that the Gospel is not a preaching of repentance or reproof, but properly nothing else than a preaching of