Victory in Christ Lutheran Church

June 2026

A Word from Pastor Schielke

This is part two of a multi-part series considering major developments within the Lutheran Church from the time of the Reformation to the present. It's important to note that during the 1600s Lutheranism began to spread significantly outside of Germany. By the late 1600s, Lutheranism was the dominant confession across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. A strong Lutheran presence was seen in Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia. Small Lutheran communities were present in the Netherlands and Russia with Lutheran communities beginning to appear in North America, especially along the Delaware River.

The 1600s mark the so-called "Age of Orthodoxy" within the Lutheran Church. As detailed last month, this time period was marked by clarification of many Biblical doctrines as well as a great deal of uniformity in doctrine and practice within Lutheranism. Some of the most prominent Lutheran theologians and hymn writers worked during this time. Worship practices would have varied by region and certainly from country to country, but the Divine Service would have been recognizable as Lutheran wherever you attended.

There was something of a reaction against this period. Some put the label of "dead" on the spirituality of the day calling it "dead orthodoxy." The criticism was aimed at the quest for pure doctrine at the expense of spirituality. Critics saw the faith being promoted at this time as reflecting the words of James, "So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). The critics claimed that theologians were arguing about fine points of doctrine while neglecting the spiritual needs of actual people.

These ideas led to a reaction against the Age of Orthodoxy and eventually gave way to a period often labeled the "Age of Pietism." This period is characterized by an emphasis on personal spiritual practices and reflection on one's own faith and good works. It sought to revitalize the church by emphasizing personal conversion, devout Bible study, and practical Christian living as opposed to a purely academic focus on doctrine. The period covers roughly the late 1600s through the mid-1700s. Some of the key figures of this backlash include Johann Arndt, Phillip Jakob Spener, and August Hermann Francke. This shift was seen outside Lutheranism as well, and adherents promoted practices such as small group Bible studies, personal devotions, mission work, philanthropy, and social action. We'll consider pietism more fully in next month's newsletter article.

There is much controversy among modern scholars about how "dead" the Age of Orthodoxy actually was. Certainly, there were fringe thinkers who cared only about perfect doctrine and not about the souls of individual people. But that seems to be the exception rather than the rule. There is evidence that the worship and community life in the Lutheran territories was robust. People were living out their faith even as the church worked diligently to teach the people the pure doctrine found in Scripture. The church realized that right teaching leads to right faith, which leads to right practice, which leads to God's people being comforted by the Gospel and living lives of service to their neighbors.

As evidence against labeling the Age of Orthodoxy "dead," consider one of the most beloved hymns to come out of that time period and notice its combination of sentiment and solid theology. This is *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* by Paul Gerhardt (stanzas one and three).

O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, Thine only crown.
O sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.

What language shall I borrow
to thank Thee, dearest Friend,
for this, Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever!
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love for Thee.

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"**
1 Corinthians 15:57

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The Smalcald Articles - On December 11, 1536, John Frederick commissioned Martin Luther to prepare a statement of faith in the form of confessional articles, The Smalcald Articles (SA), for presentation to a meeting of Lutheran theologians and lay leaders on February 7, 1537, in Smalcald, Germany. While working on the SA, on December 18, Luther became seriously ill and was convinced he was near death. The SA were considered Luther's "last will and testament." Over the next months, you will find the articles of the Smalcald Articles in our newsletter. It's good for all of us to have at least some familiarity with this important doctrinal statement.

Of the False Repentance of the Papists - Part 2

[18] Here we see how blind reason, in matters pertaining to God, gropes about, and, according to its own imagination, seeks for consolation in its own works, and cannot think of [entirely forgets] Christ and faith. But if it be [clearly] viewed in the light, this contrition is a manufactured and fictitious thought [or imagination], derived from man's own powers, without faith and without the knowledge of Christ. And in it the poor sinner, when he reflected upon his own lust and desire for revenge, would sometimes [perhaps] have laughed rather than wept [either laughed or wept, rather than to think of something else], except such as either had been truly struck by [the lightning of] the Law, or had been vainly vexed by the devil with a sorrowful spirit. Otherwise [with the exception of these persons] such contrition was certainly mere hypocrisy, and did not mortify the lust for sins [flames of sin]; for they had to grieve, while they would rather have continued to sin, if it had been free to them.

[19] As regards confession, the procedure was this: Everyone had [was enjoined] to enumerate all his sins (which is an impossible thing). This was a great torment. From such as he had forgotten [But if anyone had forgotten some sins] he would be absolved on the condition that, if they would occur to him, he must still confess them. In this way he could never know whether he had made a sufficiently pure confession [perfectly and correctly], or when confessing would ever have an end. Yet he was pointed to his own works, and comforted thus: The more fully [sincerely and frankly] one confesses, and the more he humiliates himself and debases himself before the priest, the sooner and better he renders satisfaction for his sins; for such humility certainly would earn grace before God.

[20] Here, too, there was no faith nor Christ, and the virtue of the absolution was not declared to him, but upon his enumeration of sins and his self-abasement depended his consolation. What torture, rascality, and idolatry such confession has produced is more than can be related.

[21] As to satisfaction, this is by far the most involved [perplexing] part of all. For no man could know how much to render for a single sin, not to say how much for all. Here they have resorted to the device of imposing a small satisfaction, which could indeed be rendered, as five Paternosters, a day's fast, etc.; for the rest [that was lacking] of the [in their] repentance they were directed to purgatory.

[22] Here, too, there was nothing but anguish and [extreme] misery. [For] some thought that they would never get out of purgatory, because, according to the old canons, seven years' repentance is required for a single mortal sin. [23] Nevertheless, confidence was placed upon our work of satisfaction, and if the satisfaction could have been perfect, confidence would have been placed in it entirely, and neither faith nor Christ would have been of use. But this confidence was impossible. For, although any one had done penance in that way for a hundred years, he would still not have known whether he had finished his penance. That meant forever to do penance and never to come to repentance.

[24] Here now the Holy See at Rome, coming to the aid of the poor Church, invented indulgences, whereby it forgave and remitted [expiation or] satisfaction, first, for a single instance, for seven years, for a hundred years and distributed them among the cardinals and bishops, so that one could grant indulgence for a hundred years and another for a hundred days. But he reserved to himself alone the power to remit the entire satisfaction.

[25] Now, since this began to yield money, and the traffic in bulls became profitable he devised the golden jubilee year [a truly gold-bearing year], and fixed it at Rome. He called this the remission of all punishment and guilt. Then the people came running, because everyone would fain have been freed from this grievous, unbearable burden. This meant to find [dig up] and raise the treasures of the earth. Immediately the Pope pressed still further, and multiplied the golden years one upon another. But the more he devoured money, the wider grew his maw.

Later, therefore, he issued them [those golden years of his] by his legates [everywhere] to the countries, until all churches and houses were full of the Golden Year. [26] At last he also made an inroad into purgatory among the dead, first, by founding masses and vigils, afterwards, by indulgences and the Golden Year, and finally souls became so cheap that he released one for a farthing.

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.	3	4	5	6 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
7 Divine Service 10 a.m. Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	8	9 Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.	10	11	12	13
14 Divine Service 10 a.m. Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon VBS Set-Up	15 VBS 9 a.m. - noon	16 VBS 9 a.m. - noon	17 VBS 9 a.m. - noon	18 VBS 9 a.m. - noon	19 VBS 9 a.m. - noon	20 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
21 Divine Service 10 a.m. Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	22	23 Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.	24	25	26	27
28 Divine Service 10 a.m. Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Council Meeting 12:45 p.m.	29	30 Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.				

June Birthdays:

3 CJ Teague

8 Brandon Rohloff

24 Kara Rohloff

29 Tim Rohloff

29 Brenda VanDekerkhove

June Anniversary:

June 17 Tim and Terry Schmidt

Future Church Cleanings:

June 6 VanDekerkhove

June 20 Crutcher, Foltz, Mitchell, & Morgan

July 4 Richardson, Scott, Kymberly, & Tim Rohloff

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The Bible readings for June and part of July are listed below.

June 1: Job 1-4
June 2: Job 5- 7
June 3: Job 8-10
June 4: Job 11-13
June 5: Job 14-16
June 6: Job 17-20
June 7: Job 21-23
June 8: Job 24-28
June 9: Job 29-31
June 10: Job 32-34
June 11: Job 35-37
June 12: Job 38-39
June 13: Job 40-42
June 14: Psalms 1-8
June 15: Psalms 9-16
June 16: Psalms 17-20
June 17: Psalms 21-25
June 18: Psalms 26-31
June 19: Psalms 32-35
June 20: Psalms 36-39
June 21: Psalms 40-45
June 22: Psalms 46-50
June 23: Psalms 51-57
June 24: Psalms 58-65
June 25: Psalms 66-69
June 26: Psalms 70-73
June 27: Psalms 74-77
June 28: Psalms 78-79
June 29: Psalms 80-85
June 30: Psalms 86-89
July 1: Psalms 90-95
July 2: Psalms 96-102
July 3: Psalms 103-105
July 4: Psalms 106-107
July 5: Psalms 108-114
July 6: Psalms 115-118
July 7: Psalm 119
July 8: Psalms 120-125
July 9: Psalms 126-132

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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship

Newsletter Article

What Do You Want?

Originally published June 2023

One of the best-known and most-beloved psalms is Psalm 23, the "Shepherd Psalm." There we learn that the Lord is our Shepherd. And since He is our Shepherd, we will not want. We will not suffer want because the Lord, our Shepherd, will lead us to green pastures and beside still waters. In other words, the Lord, our Shepherd, will provide for all that we need in both body and soul.

Yet, we live as though this is not the case. We live as though we actually suffer from want, that the Lord, our Shepherd, will not provide for all that we need. And thus, we live as though the Lord is not our Shepherd. And that means that we live as though we are not the Lord's sheep.

When do we live as though the Lord is not our Shepherd? When we put anything else before Him and His provision for us. When we think that going to work is more important than receiving His gifts in church on Sunday (in violation of the First and Third Commandments). When we fail to give generously of the first fruits of what the Lord has provided for us because we don't know what the future will bring (even though He has promised that He will lead us to green pastures and still waters).

We live as though we are not the Lord's sheep when we think that the Lord is only in the business of helping those who will help themselves. We act this way because our minds are set on earthly, temporal things and not on heavenly, eternal things. We act this way because we have stopped hearing the call of our Shepherd, which comes through His Word.

Through the Word of God, the Shepherd calls us to Himself. Through the Word, the Holy Spirit gathers and enlightens us with His gifts. Through the Word, we are kept holy and nourished in the one true faith, the faith that follows our Shepherd wherever He leads us. He promises to lead us to our true home, to the land flowing with milk and honey, to a better country, not of this world, but a heavenly one.

And so, here's the Good News: the Lord is your Shepherd, even and especially for wayward sheep. For Jesus seeks and saves those who are lost. He finds the lost sheep and carries them back to the fold. He is the Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. The Lord is your Shepherd. Let us live as His sheep.