



Victory in Christ Lutheran Church

July  
2025



## A Word from Pastor Schielke

### God, Family, Country

You may have heard the phrase, “God, family, country.” It is meant to be an ordering of loyalties in the life of the Christian. God comes first, then one’s family, and finally one’s country. This makes sense from a Biblical perspective as Scripture always has us putting God first. “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). “Seek first the kingdom of God...” (Matthew 6:33). “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5). Love for God comes first, and God’s love for us extends to our love of the neighbor, which of course includes your family who tend to be the closest of “neighbors.”

Scripture has things to say about family, too. “Honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12). “But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8). Family is typically extended to include those within the “household of faith” or one’s local congregation, then of course other people with whom we have a relationship. Italian theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD), summarizes

the “order of charity” in this way, “We love God above all, then our parents, then others.”

Finally, we come to country. Throughout much of history nation-states with very fixed and internationally recognized borders have been the exception rather than the rule. However, Scripture does discuss how we relate to the governing authorities that God has placed over us. In Romans 13:1-7, Paul goes into some detail about how we are to subject ourselves to the rulers over us. He also encourages us to pray for those people, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Tim. 2:1-2). However, the power that the government has over us is limited by God, and His word overrules that of the temporal authorities. “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Of course, it is possible for a nation to become an idol, if we put our fear, love, or trust in our country instead of in God. St. Augustine (354-430) writes in *The City of God*, “The earthly city glorifies

itself; the Heavenly City glories in the Lord.” In the *Large Catechism*, Luther writes, “That to which your heart clings and entrusts itself is, I say, really your God.” C. S. Lewis writes in *The Four Loves*, “A man may have to die for his country, but no man must worship it.” The tension between earthly government and Divine authority was evident during the height of the Covid-19 panic. Some temporal authorities told Christians that they could not meet together for worship while God’s authority clearly states that Christians are to meet together. While our great nation may be referred to as “one nation under God,” it is not the same thing as “the kingdom of God” which is found only in The Church.

As we remember and celebrate the founding of our nation this July 4 weekend, may we give thanks to God for the freedoms we enjoy and pray for peace, justice, and civility within her borders. At the same time, may we not neglect to be in the house of God as He sustains us and strengthens us as citizens of His kingdom which has no end.

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

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**The Formula of Concord** - The Formula of Concord (FC) was the last of the confessional documents written by the Lutherans in the 16th century. Finished in 1577, the FC consists of twelve articles presented in two parts. The first part, the Epitome, is a brief presentation of each point of doctrine and the controversy surrounding it while the Solid Declaration presents a more detailed discussion. Over a dozen authors contributed portions of draft versions of the FC, but the most influential authors of the final document were Jakob Andrea and Martin Chemnitz. The need for the FC arose after the death of Martin Luther in 1546. Over time, the Lutherans became divided over several points of doctrine. Several political peace treaties also forced the Lutherans to entertain and accept certain points of Reformed theology which had been developing in Switzerland. Thus, the FC was pivotal in clarifying the Lutheran position over and against both the Roman Catholic position and more significantly, over the Reformed position. It is the FC that most clearly distinguishes Lutheran teaching on several important points and against the various Protestant bodies we see around us even today. Over the next months, you will find the articles of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord in our newsletter. It's good for all of us to have at least some familiarity with this important doctrinal statement.

**XII. Other Sects - Erroneous Articles of the Schwenkfeldians.**

- 20 1. That all those have no true knowledge of Christ as reigning King of heaven who regard Christ according to the flesh as a creature.
- 21 2. That the flesh of Christ by His exaltation has assumed all divine properties in such a manner that Christ as man is in might, power, majesty, and glory altogether, as regards degree and position of essence equal to the Father and to the Word, so that now there is only one essence, property, will, and glory of both natures in Christ, and that the flesh of Christ belongs to the essence of the Holy Trinity.
- 22 3. That the ministry of the Church [ministry of the Word], the Word preached and heard, is not a means whereby God the Holy Ghost teaches men, and works in them the saving knowledge of Christ, conversion, repentance, faith, and new obedience.
- 23 4. That the water of Baptism is not a means whereby God the Lord seals the adoption of sons and works regeneration.
- 24 5. That bread and wine in the Holy Supper are not means through and by which Christ distributes His body and blood.
- 25 6. That a Christian who is truly regenerated by God's Spirit can perfectly observe and fulfil the Law of God in this life.
- 26 7. That it is not a true Christian congregation [church] in which no public excommunication [some formal mode of excommunication] or no regular process of the ban [as it is commonly called] is observed.
- 27 8. That the minister of the church who is not on his part truly renewed, regenerate, righteous, and godly cannot teach other men with profit or distribute genuine, true Sacraments.

**Error of the New Arians.**

28 That Christ is not true, essential, natural God, of one eternal, divine essence with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, but is only adorned with divine majesty inferior to and alongside of God the Father [is so adorned with divine majesty, with the Father, that He is inferior to the Father].

**Error of the Anti-Trinitarians.**

- 29 This is an entirely new sect, not heard of before in Christendom, [composed of those] who believe, teach, and confess that there is not one only, eternal, divine essence of the Father Son, and Holy Ghost, but as God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct persons, so each person has its essence distinct and separate from the other persons of the Godhead; and that nevertheless they are either [some think] all three of equal power, wisdom, majesty, and glory, just as otherwise three men are distinct and separate from one another in their essence, or [others think that these three persons and essences are] unequal with one another in essence and properties, so that the Father alone is properly and truly God.
- 30 These and similar articles, one and all, with whatever other errors depend upon and follow from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, contrary to the Word of God, the three Creeds, the Augsburg Confession and Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and Luther's Catechisms, against which all godly Christians of both high and low station are to be on their guard as they love the welfare and salvation of their souls.
- 31 That this is the doctrine, faith, and confession of us all, for which we will answer at the last day before the just Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ, and will neither secretly nor publicly speak or write anything against it, but that we intend by the grace of God to persevere therein, we have after mature deliberation testified, in the true fear of God and invocation of His name, by signing with our own hands [this Epitome]. (Source: <https://bookofconcord.org/epitome/>)

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



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4 	5
6 Divine Service 10 a.m. Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 Divine Service 10 a.m. Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	14	15 Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.	16	17	19	19 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
20 Divine Service 10 a.m. Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Voters' Meeting	21	22 Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.	23	24	25	26
27 Divine Service 10 a.m. Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	28	29 Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.	30	31		

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**July Birthdays:**

- 1 Aria Higby
- 12 Lori Rohloff
- 14 Orion Ward
- 17 Bobbie Sherrod
- 19 Grace Metoxen
- 23 Theresa Rohloff
- 30 Azarah Menendez



**July Anniversary:**

20 Randy and Brenda VanDekerkhove

**Future Church Cleanings:**

July 5 Elledge

July 19 Higby and Metoxen

Aug. 2 Haney and Knox

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

July 1: Psalms 90-95	July 14: Prov. 4-6	July 27: Song of Solomon
July 2: Psalms 96-102	July 15: Prov. 7-9	July 28: Isa. 1-4
July 3: Psalms 103-105	July 16: Prov. 10-12	July 29: Isa. 5-8
July 4: Psalms 106-107	July 17: Prov. 13-15	July 30: Isa. 9-12
July 5: Psalms 108-114	July 18: Prov. 16-18	July 31: Isa. 13-17
July 6: Psalms 115-118	July 19: Prov. 19-21	Aug. 1: Isa. 18-22
July 7: Psalm 119	July 20: Prov. 22-23	Aug. 2: Isa. 23-27
July 8: Psalms 120-125	July 21: Prov. 24-26	Aug. 3: Isa. 28-30
July 9: Psalms 126-132	July 22: Prov. 27-29	Aug. 4: Isa. 31-35
July 10: Psalms 133-139	July 23: Prov. 30-31	Aug. 5: Isa. 36-41
July 11: Psalms 140-145	July 24: Eccl. 1-4	Aug. 6: Isa. 42-44
July 12: Psalms 146-150	July 25: Eccl. 5-8	Aug. 7: Isa. 45-48
July 13: Prov. 1-3	July 26: Eccl. 9-12	Aug. 8: Isa. 49-53

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## The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry – [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)

Newsletter Article – July 2025

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### ***Faithfulness: The Stewardship Standard***

*“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).*

What is the standard to which a steward is held? Ask the average person, and they might talk about percentages, tithes, and commitments. Too often, the default mode of measuring stewards is by how much and how frequently they give. This is not helpful. Measuring activity without any connection to baptismal identity is a recipe for disaster. It can either breed a sense of superiority and self-righteousness or create a culture of scarcity and despair. Neither outcome is godly or helpful.

This is not to say that stewardship should be regarded as "no big deal." St. Paul, within his discussion of the ministry to which he has been called, sets the standard of accountability for the steward: faithfulness. This removes any sense of superiority or self-righteousness and dispels scarcity and despair. When a steward manages what the Lord has entrusted to them — resources and all aspects of life — for God's purposes, the focus is not on how much or how frequently they give.

This standard reflects the stewardship portrayed in the Gospels where Jesus entrusts varying amounts, each according to ability. The commended stewards were recognized for their faithfulness in their vocation, not the amounts they managed. Conversely, the condemned stewards were not castigated for their lack of performance but for their lack of faithfulness.

What does this mean for the steward in the pew? The Lord has entrusted you with various things. Luther captures them in his explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed and the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. The familiar couplets of food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, animals and all possessions are the Lord's, and He has entrusted them to you for His purpose. This trust brings an active realization of thanksgiving.

This active thanksgiving is our stewardship. It can be distilled into two questions that the steward regularly needs to answer:

1. How has God blessed me?
2. How is He calling me to respond?

The first question is quite simple to answer: if the Lord has entrusted something to you, it is a blessing. This blessing is for God's glory and the benefit of your neighbor. The second question is more challenging to measure; it is not about percentages and charts. Instead, it is about a life of

thanksgiving that flows from the mercies of God revealed in Jesus Christ. This thanksgiving starts at and flows from the cross and the empty tomb. Our stewardship of the Gospel drives our stewardship of everything else.

The standard, then, is faithfulness. Faithfulness flows from eyes focused on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. It does not come from our efforts but through the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, through Word and Sacrament. It begins at the altar in the Divine Service but extends into the world — from hearth and home to workplace and classroom, from commerce to leisure. The mercy of God, freely given in Jesus, leads us to demonstrate a faithfulness that reveals to others the same mercy we have received in Jesus.

This faithfulness cannot be measured empirically. It is simply allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through us for the glory of God and the benefit of our neighbor. Weekly. Daily. Faithfully.