

The Witness

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

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August 2022

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Vocation and You

When we hear the word vocation, we tend to think of our job. We think of what we do for a living, what we get paid for. And that's not all wrong. But it's not exactly right either because it's too limiting, too restrictive.

The word vocation is from the Latin verb that means "to call." To have a vocation is to have a calling. We aren't just called by God to work a job. God calls us to be His children, a member of His family in Holy Baptism. He calls us to be a member of a family when we were born or married. He even calls us to be members of the family of our nation, citizens of the United States.

This is quite a bit more than a job. It is life itself. It encompasses all our activities, the sum total of everything we have done throughout our lives.

Read Ephesians 2:8–9. St. Paul here tells us that our relationship to God in Christ is not based on our works but His work. And then in verse 10, St. Paul says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Think about what St. Paul is saying here. God created us for the purpose of doing good works. But He prepared those works for us to do in the first place. That means that any good work that we do never was or is ours. It's always His because We are His workmanship. This is vocation. God working through us to do the works He intends.

Luther called these vocations—who we are as members of the church, the state, and in the home—the masks of God. He calls them masks because God hides himself behind our vocations to serve and provide all those who are around us.

Take, for example, Luther's explanation of "Give us this day our daily bread" from the Lord's Prayer in the Small Catechism: "God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government"

Everything in this life is a gift from God, a gift He gives to us. But He doesn't just drop it out of the sky onto our door steps. When He gives gifts, he uses our vocations to do it. So that it is God who feeds us through the farmer, the rancher, the butcher, and the grocer. It is God who heals us doctors, pharmacists, nurses. It's God who protects us through the military, the police, and our parents. It's God who clothes and shelters us through our employer's pay. God hides himself behind these masks to provide. God's providential care is given through vocation, through our roles as members of the church, the state, and the family. So consider for a moment how God works through you to provide for others.

Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, worker? How does the Lord use you to help and serve your neighbor?

In Christ,
Pastor Matthew Uttenreither

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Saint of the Month: Johann Gerhard (1582–1637)



was a great Lutheran theologian in the tradition of Martin Luther (1483–1546) and Martin Chemnitz (1522–86) and the most influential of the 17th-century dogmaticians. His monumental *Loci Theologici* (23 large volumes) is still considered by many to be a definitive statement of Lutheran orthodoxy.

Gerhard was born in Quedlinburg, Germany. At the age of 15 he was stricken with a life-threatening illness. This experience, along with guidance from his pastor, Johann Arndt, marked a turning point in his life. He devoted the rest of his life to theology. He became a professor at the University of Jena and served many years as the Superintendent of Heldberg. Gerhard was a man of deep evangelical piety and love for Jesus. He wrote numerous books on exegesis, theology, devotional literature, history, and polemics. His sermons continue to be widely published and read.

From his **Sacred Meditations** (XI):

Draw me, O Lord Jesus, that I may possess in deed and in truth that which I look for with unwavering hope. Let me be with Thee, as Thy servants, I pray Thee, and let me behold Thy glory, which the Father has given Thee. Let me by and by dwell in that mansion which Thou hast gone to prepare for me in Thy Father's house. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they shall praise Thee forever and ever!

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Sunday, August 28, 2022



Lutheran Women's Missionary League

Lutheran Women
In Mission

Where Mites Go

Caring for and Sharing Christ
with Hurting People

Grant: \$100,000

Deaconesses are continually pointing those they serve toward the cross, sharing the Gospel with them so they gain the wonderful gift of eternal life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Concordia Seminary has requested, through this mission grant, much-needed scholarships for deaconess students and assistance with seminary costs to provide high-quality theological education. Enrollment in the new online Deaconess Studies Program is expected to increase, enabling the faculty to form more well-trained deaconesses and bring more people to Jesus and provide compassionate, Christ-centered help to those who are hurting and suffering — physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Testimonies from Around the World:

Malawi

We have had a Church that wasn't growing for five years. The attendance was below 15.

On the 28th of December 2019, we got two cartons of gospel literature of the Gospel of John/Romans which we distributed in every house in a village. The next Sunday the attendance of the Church moved from 15 to 40, and in the next month the Church has grown to 80 people.

We started studying the gospel together as a church and 30 people accepted the Lord and got water baptism. We bless the name of the Lord and ask God to bless those who donated such wonderful books to us.

The Ceremony of the Offertory



Have you ever noticed the subtle ceremony involved in receiving the offerings during the Divine Service? After all the offerings have been collected, they are brought forward and given to the pastor or one of his assistants. The pastor then turns toward the altar, and as he slightly bows his head, the collection plates with the offerings in them are raised slightly to the Lord and then placed either on the altar or a table for the offerings. Why do we do have this ceremony? And what does it teach us? For that is what ceremony does; it teaches, as the Augsburg Confession tells us, what we need to know about Christ (AC XXIV, 1–3).

Originally, this ceremony included more than simply bringing forward what was collected in the offering plates. The elements for the Holy Communion—the bread and the wine—were brought forward along with the offering plates. As the offering plates and the elements were lifted toward the Lord, and placed upon the altar, the elements would be put in the center and the altar, now made a table, would be set for the Lord's Supper.

These gifts brought to the altar came from the sweat of the people's brow. It is the bread and wine, the fruits of the peoples' labor in this fallen world. After six days of labor and toil, the people would bring a generous proportion for the Lord's work. It was set upon the altar and offered to the Lord for Him to take up and press into His service for His gracious work in and among them.

For what they offered to the Lord from the sweat of their brow, the bread of anxious toil, came back to them as the bread of life, the bread come down from heaven that whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup would receive life through the forgiveness of their sins.

This is not unlike what the Lord did for His people in the Old Testament:

You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses, to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household.

What a blessing! God provides for us in all things. He provides bread from the sweat of our brows, and He receives this from us in the first fruits offerings we give to Him in thanksgiving and praise. He receives and turns it into spiritual bread, heavenly bread, the bread of eternal life and gives it back to us so that we might have joy. So, the next time you are in the Divine Service, watch this ceremony in wonder, that the Lord gives back to us, what we have given to Him so that we may rejoice in the salvation He has won upon the cross and gives to us in His supper.

The Fine Art of Forgiveness

The art of forgiving those who wrong us is one of the greatest spiritual graces. Here are some principles of forgiveness that are based on the teaching of the Bible:

1. Remember how often God has forgiven you when you did not deserve His forgiveness.
2. List the blessings and the mercies which you have received from the hand of God and which you did not deserve.
3. Remember that the Spirit of God lives in you and that He will enable you to forgive, even as Christ forgave those who wronged Him.
4. Begin to pray earnestly for God to bless the person who has wronged you.
5. Make a special effort to surprise the person who wronged you with some act of kindness or thoughtfulness.
6. Repeat slowly and thoughtfully this phrase from the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

~ From *The Church Bulletin Bits #3*

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District News

On the afternoon of June 13, 2022, a Service of Praise and Thanksgiving in the Closure of The Lutheran Center was held. President Allan R. Buss led the service for those in attendance which included past employees and other church workers who served in the Northern Illinois District.

The sale of the LCMS Northern Illinois District (NID) office building at 2301 S. Wolf Road, Hillside, Illinois, occurred on Thursday, February 24, 2022. The Board of Directors of the LCMS Northern Illinois District approved the relocation of the District's office currently located in Hillside, Illinois. The approval authorizes the relocation to a property located on the campus of Concordia University Chicago in River Forest, Illinois. The anticipated relocation date is early August 2022.

Time & Talent

Deacons

August 7	Jim Jenne
August 14	Jonathan Schultz
August 21	Tom Friedewald
August 28	Jim Jenne

Greeters

August 7	Judy Darville Rosalie Streng
August 14	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten
August 21	Gail Bujnowski Judy Darville
August 28	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten

Altar Guild

August:	Judy Darville Gail Bujnowski
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We congratulate the following members of Ascension as they celebrate their **birthdays** in August.

- August 4 Katie Uttenreither
- August 11 Audrey Schultz
- August 20 Rosalie Streng
- August 21 Sally Parison
- August 28 Marc Schultz
- August 29 Arlene Koprivnik
- August 31 Jim Jenne



We also congratulate the following couples as they celebrate their **wedding anniversaries** in August.

- August 2 Mark & Melinda Plucinski
- August 8 Jonathan & Kristina Schultz
- August 15 Richard & Sandy Schultz
- August 25 Nick & Christina Aguilera

These are the **birthdays** and **wedding anniversaries** recorded in our church records for the coming month. If any birthday or anniversary was omitted, please notify the church office.



Around Ascension . . .

Summer is heating up but we still experiencing lots and lots of rain! Thanks to Jason, Tom, and Jim for cleaning up the “excess water” in the classrooms!

Vacation Bible School is planned for Sunday, July 31st (after the deadline for this August issue of *The Witness*) so you’ll have to wait for our next issue for all the details of “God’s Promise to Noah.” 😊



Please remember we are still collecting food for those in need in our community. Your donations are bundled up and dropped off at the Niles Food Pantry. Your donations and the efforts of our volunteers are greatly appreciated.

Mark your calendars for our next Voter Assembly on August 28th, immediately following our worship service. Be there and be informed about what is happening around YOUR church!



2022 ASCENSION COUNCIL BOARD MEMBERS

President:	Tom Friedewald
Vice President:	Jim Jenne
Treasurer:	Sandy Friedewald
Secretary:	Audrey Schultz
Financial Secretary:	Carolyn Jannusch
Board of Deacons:	Jim Jenne (Chair) Hal Downs (Emeritus) Tom Friedewald Jim Jenne Jonathan Schultz
Board of Christian Ministries	Lois Marten (Chair)
Board of Trustees:	Jason Romano (Chair)
Board of Youth:	Sarah Lindahl (Chair)

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OFFICIAL ACTS

None on record

Do you have an announcement to share about your family such as a birth, death, engagement, graduation, etc., **let us know! We'd love to hear from you!**

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