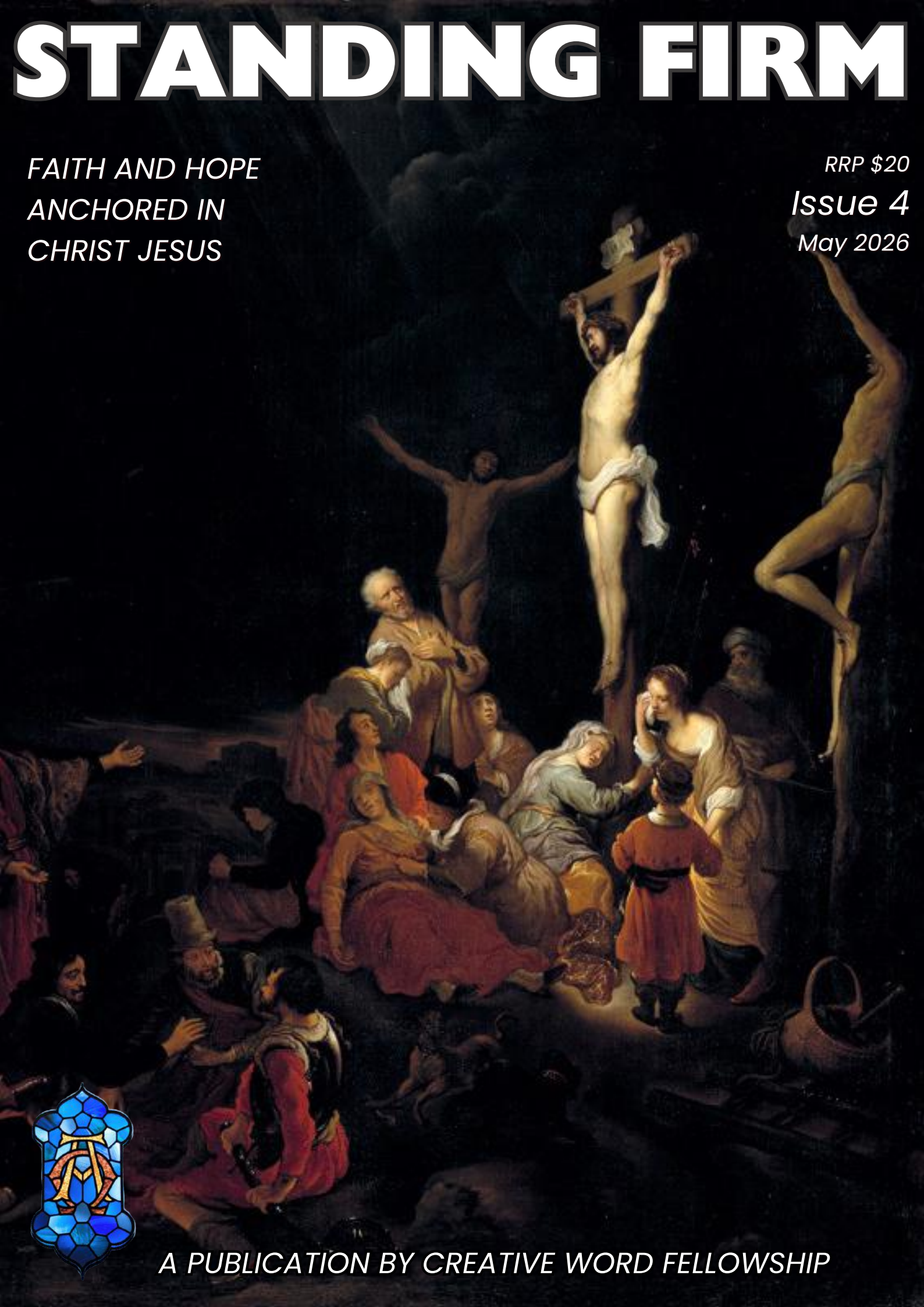


# STANDING FIRM

*FAITH AND HOPE  
ANCHORED IN  
CHRIST JESUS*

*RRP \$20  
Issue 4  
May 2026*



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We wish to thank and acknowledge the work of everyone who has contributed to this edition of Standing Firm -

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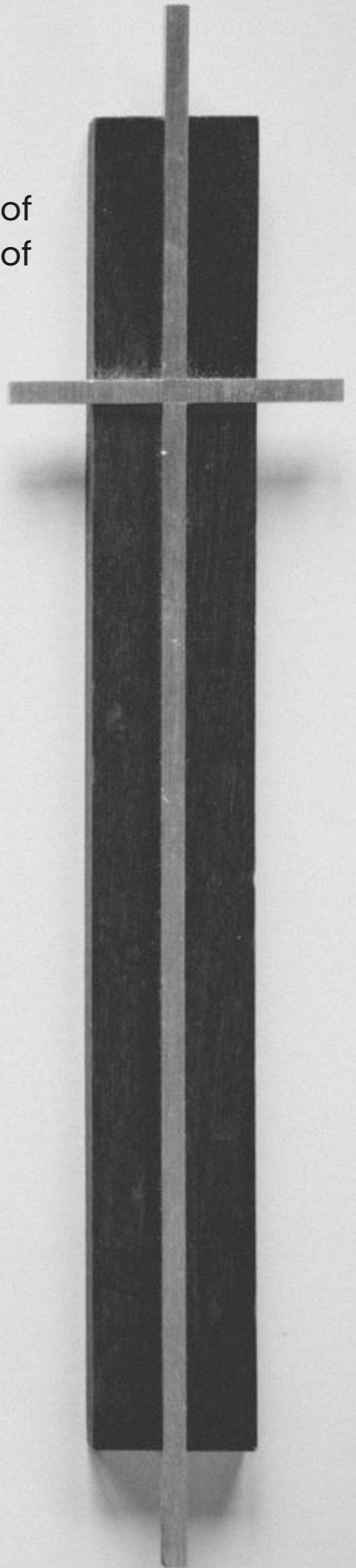
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# STANDING FIRM

## FAITH AND HOPE ANCHORED IN CHRIST JESUS

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# Letter from the Editor

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***"... always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect"***  
***(1 Peter 3:13-15)***

What did you do on the weekend? Nothing special? That probably makes for the sometimes awkward, but short and obligatory conversation at work on a Monday morning. There was a TV commercial for frozen chips that had the tagline "There's Something Special About Nothing Special", where the moment of having friends over to eat frozen chips was, in and of itself, special.

A pastor preached once on the sometimes simplicity of evangelism. Many of us may admit we are not confident in articulating what it is we believe let alone the intricacies what it means to be Lutheran. But I have tried to take the sermon's simple suggestion of starting with "I/we went to church on Sunday". I have had some differing responses "Oh ok", "I used to go to church", "What church do you go to?", "I go to this church". It has given me a

springboard with some at work to share what I believe and be more open about my personal life. One friend who is non-Christian I was blessed to share what Ash Wednesday and Lent were because he had never heard of them. In a Teams meeting, I left my blur filter off and someone asked, "what was that poster on the wall?" (hint, see below) to find out one person was baptised but non-practising Lutheran, and another raised Presbyterian. Something I may have never found out since they lived interstate, and I may never meet them in person. Sometimes that is all it takes to let someone you work with, your neighbour, a stranger who you are, where you go on Sunday morning. Going to church is special, worshipping with your brothers and sisters in Christ is special, communing with the saints is special. Sure, you might not know what to "say next" but take that as an encouragement to freshen up on your Small Catechism or gift someone a copy of "A Simple Explanation of Christianity" to help articulate and confess the reason for your hope, what Christ has done for us, and why church is special.

It has already been very busy start to the year as we bring you the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of Standing Firm for 2026 and we hope that you will be blessed, challenged and grow with the content - the articles, event reviews and supporting those who support the magazine.

***Karl Jericho***  
Editor

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# Letter from the CWF Chairman

---



## **Welcome to our Fourth Issue of Standing Firm (first for 2026)**

This issue comes together at Easter time, usually a time of holidays and celebrations for people in Australia and worldwide. I am sure that with the increasing living costs, amplified by wildly fluctuating fuel prices, many people's celebrations may have been subdued and holidays put on hold as budgets tighten.

For Christians, this is a time of reflection and celebration. We reflect on the sacrifice that Christ paid on the cross for our sins. We are reminded of the power of Christ's death on the cross and His ascent from hell every time we partake in Holy Communion, and we celebrate in His victory over sin, death and the devil. The Easter period in and of itself is a dichotomy of Christ's death on the Cross and His death bringing eternal life to all, a reality and concept that non-Christians just don't understand. Most Jews didn't get it (and still don't), and they had the whole of Scripture laid before them that testified of these things; they had the testimony of Christ in their time. We pray that like the Berean Jews they, and all people, would receive the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so, to hear and believe (see Acts 17:10-12)

Photo taken by Peter Wittwer



In this issue of the magazine, we have our regular contributions from Pastor Lee Van Rossen and Tasmin Bourne, the 'staples' or 'meat' of the magazine. Tasmin will be stepping back from writing for us as he spends more time in his studies for the ministry. We thank him for his tremendous efforts in giving us such rich articles about the Book of Concord and wish him and his family every blessing from God for this coming time of more intense study. To highlight a few of this issue's articles, Rev. Dr. Brian Kachelmeier has stepped up to the plate to continue the Book of Concord Series, Rev. Dr. Kevin Golden (one of our very early Speak Lord presenters) has written a Concordia Commentary on Hosea for us - centring around Hosea and the Easter story, and Pastor Carl Richter has agreed to write us a series of articles on 'life issues'.

The CWF team has been split up this year with Pastor Carl Thiele, with his wife Krista and family, taking a call to Canada. Our prayers are with them as they settle into a foreign country, along with all the challenges that the move brings. They will be continuing to serve on the board and help where they can. During this time, as we re-adjust how we operate as a committee, we ask that you be patient, especially if you receive an automated notification about an outstanding invoice. We will respond as soon as we are able.

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We have already held two events this year, the Young Adults retreat and the Lutheran Men's weekend retreat. Melanie is busy organising with the 'She Prays' team for another Women's retreat this year. We have another Men's retreat, 'Men Led by God', coming up at the end of July, and we are trying to organise a Speak Lord Conference for this year. We are not sure what the Speak Lord Conference will look like this year - depending on the availability of a presenter and the availability of host congregations. If you have any gifts and talents that we could make use of, whether it's serving on an organising committee or hands and feet at an event, please let us know.

Photo taken by Peter Wittwer

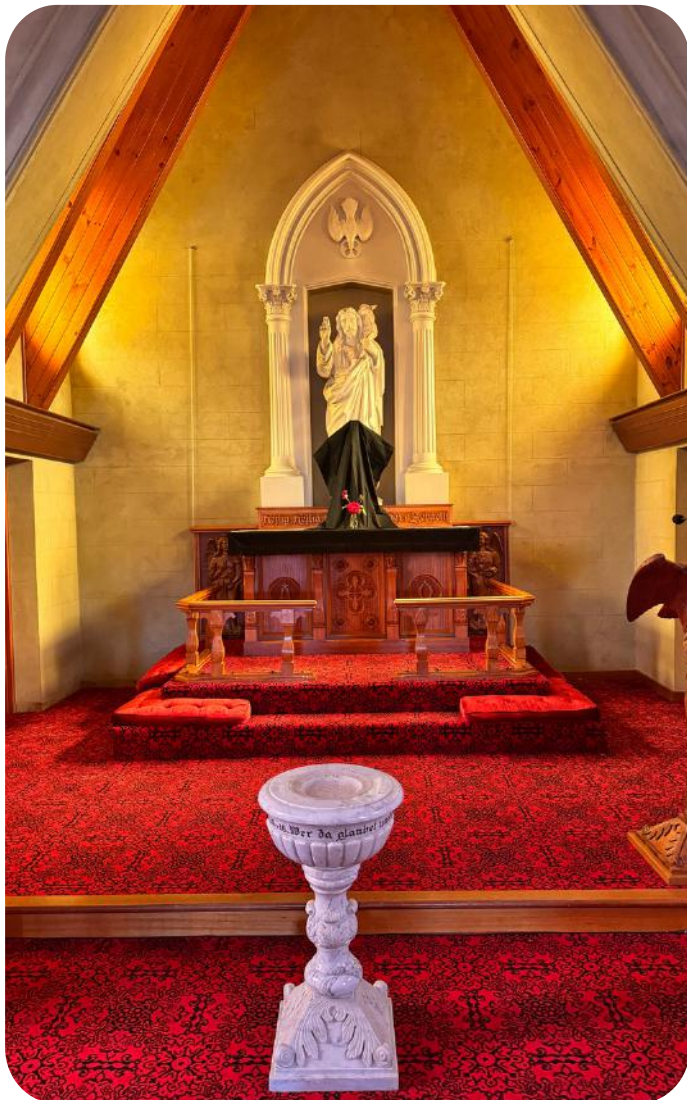


Photo taken by Yvonne Jericho

Once again, I would like to take the time to thank all the people involved in making this magazine what it is, to the volunteers who help with all of our events and last but certainly not least, to the donors who donate a very substantial amount of their first fruits to help subsidise events and the shipping of books.

My prayer for all of us this year, during the Easter period and the months after, as the increasing costs hit the back pocket, is that we remember more than ever to give our first fruits to God, to thank Him for our daily bread, the provision of Church, family, home and possessions, and that we don't repeat the mistakes of Covid and stop meeting together to worship Him, just because fuel is scarce and expensive. As with Covid, here is an opportunity to serve each other in difficult times with the many gifts God has given us so that there is none without need, be it transport to worship services or home visits for fellowship and prayer (see Acts 4:32-35).

God's blessings in Christ,

***Peter Wittwer***

CWF Chairman

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# CALLED TO SERVE

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# HOLY COMMUNION: IS MEANS IS!

# HOLY COMMUNION:

# IS MEANS IS!

By Pastor Paul Calnan  
2026

**This sermon was preached at Adelaide Northern Lutheran Mission, on Maundy Thursday.**

## **Holy Communion: Is Means Is!**

***“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’” (Matt. 26:26) “He took a cup... saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matt 26:27-28)***

It is here that our Lord Jesus Christ institutes His Holy Supper. And alongside this, the Apostle Paul says, “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you...” (1 Cor 11:23). With these words, Paul reminds the Church that the Holy Supper is what it is! Not a man-made tradition, but divine in origin. Paul didn’t invent the Lord’s Supper; it was not the

result of theological reflection, nor was it an attempt to explain the unexplainable. No, it was received from the Lord Himself, and faithfully handed on.

Each Sunday, we celebrate that same sacred tradition, handed down through generation after generation, preserved by God’s grace, and now delivered to us through His Word and Sacraments. We might ask why did Jesus give us this sacred meal? Why bread and wine? Why these words? Why this practice?

The Apostle Paul points us to at least four reasons: so that we might remember (1 Cor 11:24-25), receive (10:16), proclaim (11:26), and give thanks (11:24). And over all of this stands the certainty of Christ’s promise: “This is my body... This is my blood.” Not “this represents my body.” Not “this is like my blood.” We believe, teach, and confess the words as they are: is means is. In the first place, “Is means is” Because Christ Is Truly Present.

# HOLY COMMUNION: IS MEANS IS!

## ***“Is means is” Because Christ Is Truly Present.***

The Lutheran Reformation stood not just against abuses of power and piety, but for the clarity and certainty of God’s Word. And nowhere is this more important than the declaration in the words of Christ regarding Holy Communion. “This is my body... this is my blood of the covenant.”

***“This is my body... this is my  
blood of the covenant.”***

As Confessional Lutherans, we take these words at face value. We don’t spiritualise or symbolise them. We don’t try to explain them away with logic or reason. We simply take Christ at His Word. Is means is. That means that when you kneel at the altar, you are not only receiving bread and wine, you are receiving the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, given into death for you.

***You are receiving the true  
body and blood of Jesus  
Christ, given into death for  
you.***



*Cristo crucificado*  
Diego Velázquez

This distinguishes us from many other Christians who view the Lord’s Supper as merely a symbolic remembrance or re-enactment of the Last Supper. For them, Communion is a memorial meal. But for us, it is a miraculous meal, where Christ is truly present, not only spiritually but bodily, in a mysterious but very real way.

***For us, it is a miraculous meal,  
where Christ is truly present,  
not only spiritually but bodily,  
in a mysterious but very real  
way.***

As Martin Luther taught, the bread and wine in the Supper are truly the body and blood of Christ, not because of our faith, but because of Christ’s Word which does what it says. This is one of the mysteries of the faith.

In Exodus 24:3–11, the covenant is sealed with blood, and the people eat and drink in the presence of God. In Hebrews 9:11–22, we are told that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Christ fulfils both: He establishes the new covenant in His blood, and He gives that blood to us to drink.

Just as the Son of God took on flesh without ceasing to be divine, so also He gives us His very body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine, without ceasing to be true food and drink. **It is a holy paradox, held together by the power of the Word.** In the Lord’s Holy Supper, Christ is present.

He is here. For you. And He comes to give you Himself. So we can say with full confidence, is means is! In the second place, **“Is means is” Because We Receive Christ’s Gifts in the Supper**

# HOLY COMMUNION: IS MEANS IS!

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Jesus says: **“This is my body, which is for you... This is my blood... poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”** Herein lies the heart of the Sacrament: it is for you! For the forgiveness of sins! You see, Christ doesn't just talk about forgiveness: He delivers it. If you ever wonder, “Is God really for me? Are my sins really forgiven?” then here is His answer: “Take, eat... take, drink... for you.”

In this meal, we receive the very body and blood of our Lord. Not metaphorically, but sacramentally. Here, we receive Christ's body, the same body that bore our sins on Calvary, that endured the torment and beating, the nails, death and the tomb. And here, we receive His blood, the very blood shed to wash us clean, to establish the new covenant of grace. And with that body and blood, we receive everything Christ won for us on the cross: forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

As Hebrews 9:11–22 teaches so clearly, Christ has entered once for all into the holy places by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. That same saving blood is now given to you here.

This truly is no ordinary meal. The Supper of the Lord is a Holy Communion, not just with one another, but with the living Christ. It is a foretaste of the feast to come, a spiritual and physical encounter with the crucified and risen Lord.

***Christ doesn't just talk about forgiveness: He delivers it.***

And it's not about what we do, but what He gives...and He gives us Himself. Yes, bread and wine are truly present. But so also are the body and blood of Christ.

The Reformers called this the sacramental union; not a change of substance, like Rome teaches, but a mystery upheld by Christ's own words. And again, we say: Is means is. Now, in the third place, **“Is means is” Because the Supper Is a Confession.**

The Apostle Paul says, **“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”** You see, each time we come to this table, we are not just receiving: we are confessing. Confessing our sin and brokenness, yes. But also confessing who Christ is, and what He has done. The Sacrament of the Altar is a public witness. When we kneel at the rail, we are saying to the world: “Jesus Christ is Lord. He died for me. He rose for me. He is coming again.”

And just as importantly, when we commune together, we are confessing that we share the same faith. That's why the Church, from the earliest centuries, has practised closed or close communion. Not as a rejection of others, but as an expression of unity. To commune together is to say: “We believe, teach, and confess the same doctrine.” And so, to commune with someone who holds a different confession is not unity, and only causes confusion.

***And so, to commune with someone who holds a different confession is not unity, and only causes confusion.***

# HOLY COMMUNION: IS MEANS IS!

We invite all people to the Word. We desire that all come to the knowledge of the truth. But we do not pretend that doctrine does not matter, because it does. Confession matters. The Real Presence matters. Christ's words matter. And so again, we say: Is means is. In the fourth place, **"Is means is" Because the Supper Is Thanksgiving.**

In Psalm 116:12–19 we hear, **"What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord."** The **"cup of salvation,"** is the promise fulfilled at the altar. The Lord's Supper is not only a means of grace, it is a moment of joyful praise.

The Greek word in Matthew 26:27 for **giving thanks (εὐχαριστήσας)** is where we get the word **Eucharist, or "Thanksgiving."** Here, in this holy meal, we give thanks because God gives generously. We thank Him for the cross. We thank Him for the empty tomb. We thank Him for the once-for-all sacrifice proclaimed in Hebrews 9:11–22. We thank Him that what was accomplished there is now delivered here.



*Three Marys at the tomb.*  
Christoffel Von Sichem

As we join in the Sanctus, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord", we join our voices with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. Time folds into eternity. Earth joins with heaven. And Christ is in our midst. What more could we do but give thanks?

In conclusion, **"Is Means Is", Always and Forever**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, why did Jesus give us this Holy Supper?

- So that we might remember His death. Not just as a historical event, but as a present reality.
- So that we might receive His true body and blood, and with them, forgiveness, life, and salvation.
- So that we might proclaim His death until He comes again.
- And so that we might give thanks for His unending mercy and grace.

Holy Communion is not a symbolic ritual invented by man. It is truly a gift from the One who gave of Himself. Holy Communion is not a reminder of something that happened in the past. It is a very real and present reality. Holy Communion is not something we offer to God, but something God gives to us.

The words of Jesus are simple, but powerful: **"This is my body... This is my blood."** We do not change or reinterpret these words. We believe them, because Jesus said them. And if there is anything the Church must hold fast in these uncertain times, it is this: Christ's words are true. They are trustworthy. They are for you. **So come. Kneel. Eat. Drink. Believe, and receive. Because is means is.**

**Pastor Paul Calnan**

# READ YOUR CATECHISM!

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

By Pastor Lee van Rossen

2026

It seems to be part of humanity's corrupted nature to think that gaining access to God must be hard work. Whether it is the stories of Israel thinking that they would be saved through obedience to the law of Moses, or modern-day Christians thinking that 'Jesus gave me a ladder, but now I have to climb it' by 'producing enough fruit', we seem to regularly fall into the trap of trying to establish or maintain our salvation through good works. I hope that, in the last article (Standing Firm issue 3), you will not have fallen under that impression in any way!

The Apostles' Creed leaves no room for us to think that we can earn anything toward our salvation, and neither does it suggest that good works are necessary to remain saved. Rather, it shows us that God the Father has made everything and cares for us, that God the Son has done everything necessary to purchase and win us from all sins that we may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and God the Holy Spirit actively gives us everything we need to receive this salvation and stay in the one true faith.

Now, I hope that it is well established in your mind and heart that Jesus Christ has done all that is needed to save you from sins, and that your good works (caused in you by the Holy Spirit) are nothing more or less than the natural, thankful, joyful response of one who has been saved. What may not yet be well established, however, is that this all applies to prayer as well. Just as we seem to think we have to work hard to be saved, and are wrong about that, we seem to (un)naturally think that prayer must be difficult or complicated, too.

Prayer is not difficult or complicated. It has always been simple and straightforward – we talk to our God. God's design from the beginning was to be in dialogue with His creation. Adam and Eve's sin, and our sin, has broken that relationship, so perhaps it is in our guilt and shame that we (wrongly) think that we cannot talk to God. Granted, we don't deserve to talk to God – we have earned eternal separation from Him. Yet, if He has not severed our access to Him, we are wrong to think that prayer should be any different from what it was always meant to be.

Jesus prayed regularly and spoke multiple times about prayer. He told us some things not to do – like in Matthew 6 He told us not to pray for public attention, or to heap up empty words. Indeed, if one of my children were to publicly announce that they are going to talk to me, then heap up the longest words they can think of, I would think them quite ridiculous. As a broken and sinful father (even evil according to Jesus in Luke 11:13) I want my kids to come and speak to me earnestly, to tell me their thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears. How much more does our Heavenly Father who is good want us to speak to Him earnestly! He also taught us how to pray for others – in Luke 11:5-10 He encourages us that when we have a friend in need that we cannot help, we should (with shameless audacity!) knock on God’s door – badger and berate Him with requests to help our friend in need.

## ***Jesus Christ has done all that is needed to save you from sins***

But Jesus gave us something even more helpful and practical. While he points on how to pray are helpful, Jesus went one step further when His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. Rather than starting with instructions, Jesus gave them a prayer. This is more significant than we seem to realise at first. Jesus gave us a prayer! He gave us a list of things we are allowed to ask God for – and even prays them with us! Now, I know that God listens to all of my prayers. I know He loves and cares for me, so most of my prayers I know He will answer with something along the lines of: ‘Yes’, ‘Yes but not yet’, ‘Yes but in a different way’, or ‘No’. However, there is one prayer I know the answer will be ‘Yes’ to – Jesus’ prayer! The Lord’s Prayer! He will answer ‘Yes’ because it is He who tells us to pray it, it is He who leads us in praying it for

us, and as we will see, God already does everything He leads us in asking for!

So, the big question: What do we get to ask God for, that we can be confident He will answer ‘yes’ to? Let’s have a look, but first there’s something we really don’t want to miss! Before we begin asking for things from God, Jesus gives us an absolutely incredible privilege – one that we, now, take for granted daily. Before Jesus gave his disciples this prayer, it was considered blasphemous to refer to God as our Father. In fact, in John 5:18, we hear that the Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus for calling God His Father. It is not something we have any right to say. Yet, when Jesus gave His disciples, and us, this prayer, He leads us with those incredible words – **not ‘My Father,’ but ‘Our Father!’** This is not just a token privilege, but true reality! Being united with Jesus in His baptism, we are made one with Him and adopted as the Father’s children. It is on this basis, united with Christ, that we can boldly and confidently ask our Father for what we need.

With Jesus leading us to pray to Our Father in heaven, we first ask that His name be Hallowed. No, not ‘Harold’ as many kids seem to hear, Hallowed. It’s not a word we use regularly these days, but it means ‘for something to be made or kept holy.’ As Luther argues, God’s name is already Holy. No amount of misusing His name could ever truly defile it, so why would we ask this? As the Catechism explains, we are asking that His name be kept holy among us. We are asking God to help us keep His name holy in our daily lives. We ask that He would help us use His name rightly – to call upon it in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. We ask that His name would be holy in our lives – so that we value and treasure Him, His Word, His sacraments, His help. We ask Him to help us receive His help!

What a wonderful thing to start with – especially when we know the answer will be ‘yes’! We cannot turn to Him on our own. We cannot honour or revere Him as we should. So, He helps, and He leads us in praying to the Father for help.

The second petition is similar – we ask that His Kingdom come. Of course, His Kingdom has already come in the person of Jesus, and His eternal Kingdom is both here, and coming when Jesus returns. So, why would Jesus lead us in asking for this to happen? Is it because the Father might otherwise change His mind and forget about the whole thing? Of course not! Jesus leads us in asking that His Kingdom come – to us! We ask that He make us and keep us part of that perfect Kingdom. **As Luther explains, this means the Father giving us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives, both here in time and in eternity.** We cannot believe His Word by our own strength, and neither could any of us even begin to lead a godly life on our own. So, Jesus helps, and leads us in asking for help. Once again, thanks be to God, we can be confident that He will help – the answer will be ‘yes’!

## ***We cannot believe His Word by our own strength***

Next, we ask for something earthy and practical. One might expect Jesus to encourage us not to focus on the bodily needs of this life, to focus only on eternal life, but He does care about our needs here and now. He leads us in praying that God would provide our daily bread. Again, God provides anyway. As Jesus said in Matthew 5:45, God “makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” Yet, we ask that God provide for us personally, and can be confident that He will.

Now, Luther seems to take this and run with it. He argues not only that God already provides our daily bread, but everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body – “food, drink, clothes, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbours, and the like”!

Has Luther gone too far? I say ‘not at all’. The whole canon of scripture shows it is God’s good and gracious will to provide for all our needs. He is not a harsh taskmaster, demanding that we suffer. While He does call us to take up our cross and follow Him, and that sometimes means going without, Jesus leads us in this prayer.

He knew full well what it feels like to be hungry, to be thirsty, to be stripped bare. He lived without a home, without land or resources. His ministry required leaving His family, being hunted and hated by corrupt leaders and government. He was attacked, tortured, slandered, and abandoned. He knows the pain of all these things, and leads us in praying that the Father would provide all these things for us – for His sake – even as we follow Him.

Next, He leads us in asking for forgiveness. Again, we know that Jesus came and died on the cross to forgive all our sins, long before any of us could have ever considered asking Him to forgive us. What we ask, now, is that God attribute the forgiveness Jesus earned to us. Jesus, the one who earned that forgiveness, asks on our behalf, and encourages us to ask with Him, even though it was our sins that put Him on that cross.

What He then leads us to ask, though, is that we be forgiven just as we forgive others. In fact, Jesus was quite firm on this matter.

In Matthew 6:14-15, directly following teaching this prayer, Jesus stated; “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” We easily misunderstand this, however. He is not suggesting that we earn forgiveness by forgiving others. Jesus came and suffered and died to get rid of all sin.

***“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”***

What we do when we hold back forgiveness toward someone is to keep sin and its effects around. He wants all sin gone! He wants every sin forgiven and removed, and every hurt relationship, every trauma, every lingering pain – all gone! When we refuse to forgive someone, we are seeking to make them pay or suffer for their sins, or at least, treating them as though they were dead. Whatever our actions, unforgiveness is our way of breaking the perfect community of God. So, Jesus is quite firm – if you choose to keep sin and its effects active in the community, it won't be them that is unforgiven, but you.

Now, that sounds like some pretty harsh law right there. It is a direct command from Jesus to forgive others, and a warning that failing to do so will result in unforgiveness for you. What one of us could ever forgive others as described here? I know I couldn't!

Thanks be to Jesus, He leads us in praying for help. Not only does He lead us in asking for the Father to forgive us (even for our unforgiveness toward others!),

He leads us in asking for help to forgive those who have sinned against us. Stubbornly refusing to forgive someone, choosing to try to make them suffer, that is one thing, but asking God to forgive our unforgiveness and help us forgive? That is exactly what Jesus leads us in here, and we can be confident that the Father will do so!

Next, after knowing we are forgiven when we ask for forgiveness, Jesus leads us in asking that the Father not lead us into temptation. Now, the wording is very specific here. The Father tempts no one to sin. He does not desire that anyone sin under any circumstances.

Yet, Jesus experienced being led into temptation – by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days of fasting, followed by a personal temptation by the devil! But, we don't have to fear – He conquered temptation for us, and now leads us in asking the Father that the same not happen for us. He leads us in asking that the Father would “guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice.”

When temptation comes, as it always does, we can be confident that Jesus has given us this prayer, and prays with and for us, and the Father will help! Does that mean praying this prayer whenever tempted is the secret to never sinning? Unfortunately, while we have a sinful nature, even with God's help we choose to sin. Even praying for help, and receiving it, we choose to sin daily. That is why Luther encouraged that we pray this prayer multiple times a day! As we still sin, we can pray with Jesus again, receive forgiveness again, and know that the Father will help again.

## ***He has already won the victory over all evil.***

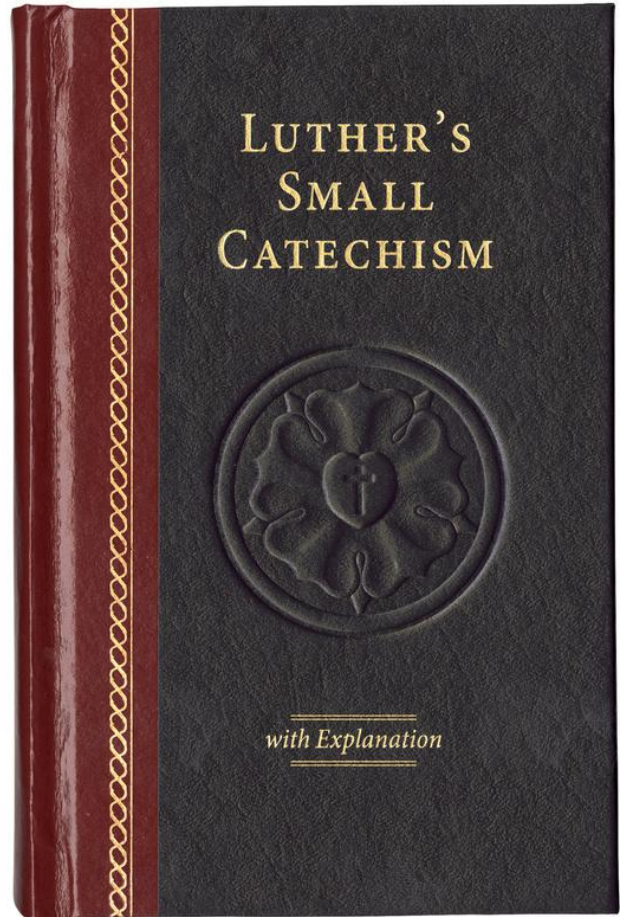
The thing that Jesus leads us in asking the Father for is ultimately a summary of all that has come before it – that He deliver us from evil. He has already won the victory over all evil, and it is only a matter of waiting until Jesus returns for all evil to be removed forever, but Jesus leads us in asking that this be the case for us both now and for eternity. We ask that He remove all evil from us – from within and without, and that we ultimately are saved from sin, death, and the devil, forever! What right do we, the perpetrators of evil, have to ask this of God? None! But in His grace and mercy, Jesus leads us, praying this for us, and encouraging us to pray. And again, the answer is 'YES'! It is the Father's desire that we, His children, be saved!

So, join me in praying the Lord's prayer with confidence and joy! Read it, study your catechism again and again until you see and realise the incredible privilege Jesus has given us! Join your Lord and Saviour as He prays for you.

**Pastor Lee van Rossen**

## **References:**

1. Luther's Small Catechism 2017 edition with explanation.



Looking to add Luther's Small Catechism to your personal library? Order your copy with Creative Word Fellowship!

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**



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## **ADELAIDE CONFSSIONAL LUTHERAN GATHERING**

**Where:** Ern Malley, 137 Magill Rd  
Stepney (enter the beer  
garden via Ann St)

Parking a bit tricky?  
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**When:** First Thursday of every Month from 6:30pm

**Who:** All Confessional Lutherans (kids welcome too!)

**What:** A time of fellowship, support and  
encouragement, meet new people, and enjoy a  
good drink and a toasted sandwich

**Ephesians 1:15-23**



# REVIVING AN INDIGENOUS SAMI CONGREGATION IN NORWAY



Photo supplied by Gunstein Innvaer

By Pastor Gunstein Innvaer  
2026

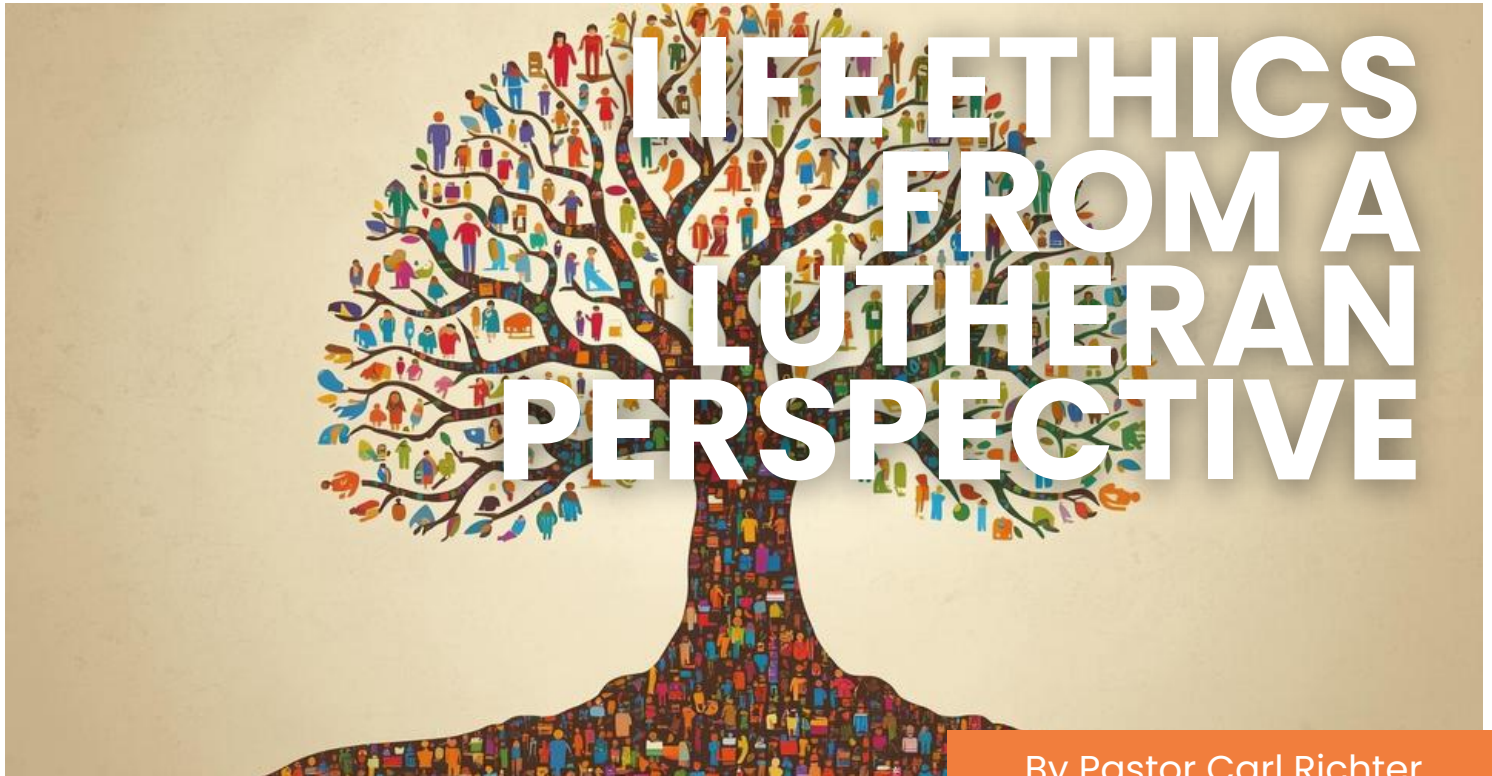
***Pastor Gunstein Innvaer, born in 1998 was ordained on Ascension Day 2025 and is a Pastor in the Lutheran Church in Norway and Iceland. He received a Master of Theology and mission from Fjelhaug International University College (Norway) and a Master of Arts from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana (USA). He is husband to Helene, they have two sons and are expecting another child soon.***

I am a Norwegian Confessional Lutheran Pastor who serves an indigenous Sami congregation in Kautokeino (in Sami: Guovdageaidnu), Norway. Kautokeino lies in the northernmost part of Norway. I started studying theology in 2019. At that point I had no other goal than “to become a missionary” as I would say. I got married to my wife, Helene, in 2020 and from 2023 on we were fixed on service in Kautokeino.

In the summer of 2024, I attended an annual Lutheran conference for young adults

(with my wife and one year old), called Corpus Christi, where I met Peter Wittwer and his family and traveling group from Australia. I wish I had been going to this conference before, as it was a wonderful time with great teaching and getting to know brothers and sisters in the faith from around many parts of the world. Here I heard more about the troubles in the Lutheran church in Australia. That summer my wife, son and I were bound for the US because I was going to study for a year at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In my church, the Lutheran Church in Norway and Iceland (LCNI) such a year is mandatory to be eligible for ordination. This is because of the lack of proper biblical (Lutheran) theological education in Norway. The stay for studies at one of the LCMS theological seminaries is like a theological detox program for us. In Fort Wayne we also became friends with the Steel family who also had just moved. Needless to say: in one short year my horizons broadened significantly.....



By Pastor Carl Richter  
2026

My name is Carl Richter, and I'm a Lutheran Pastor currently serving the Cummins Parish on the Eyre Peninsula of South Australia. I am married to Sarah, and we have been blessed with four living children, Emilie, (Kyrie), Hanna, Jeremiah and Micah. I've been asked to write on the topic of Life Ethics from a Lutheran perspective. This is an area that has interested me since my theological studies at Australian Lutheran College, during which I had the opportunity to first study the ethics of IVF, and in my capstone research assignment I focused on the topic of 'Spirituality and Dementia'. This really opened my eyes to the important truths regarding the sanctity of all human life and the inherent and indelible dignity bestowed on all mankind as a result of being made in the image and likeness of their creator.

Over the years, I have been part of the Lutheran Church of Australia's "Lutherans for Life" as a member and chair. I recently resigned on the basis of conscience, as I felt strongly convicted that it was inappropriate

for an entity of the LCA to be speaking into matters of life on the basis of God's word, whilst at the same time not fully submitting to the authority of God's word in several other areas and continuing to travel further in those directions. It is on this topic, 'Lutheran Life Ethics and the Authority of God's Word', that I'd like to share with you further.

Lutheran Life Ethics sits quite comfortably under the umbrella of what is popularly called a "Pro-Life" position. However, there are many different ways that a "Pro-Life" viewpoint can be helpfully argued. For example, when challenging the acceptability of abortion, science can be used to show the developmental stages of a foetus, even in the early stages of pregnancy, which might convince people of the personhood of the unborn. Science, logic, reason and philosophy should all be employed as Lutherans engage in meaningful and compassionate conversation with the world around us on the nature of life.....



Lutheran Mission - Australia gives thanks to God for His blessings and provision. With over 20 congregations and more joining us all the time, we are filled with joy as we anticipate our first Synodical Assembly in August 2026, and the opening of Lutheran Theological Seminary - Australia in January 2027.

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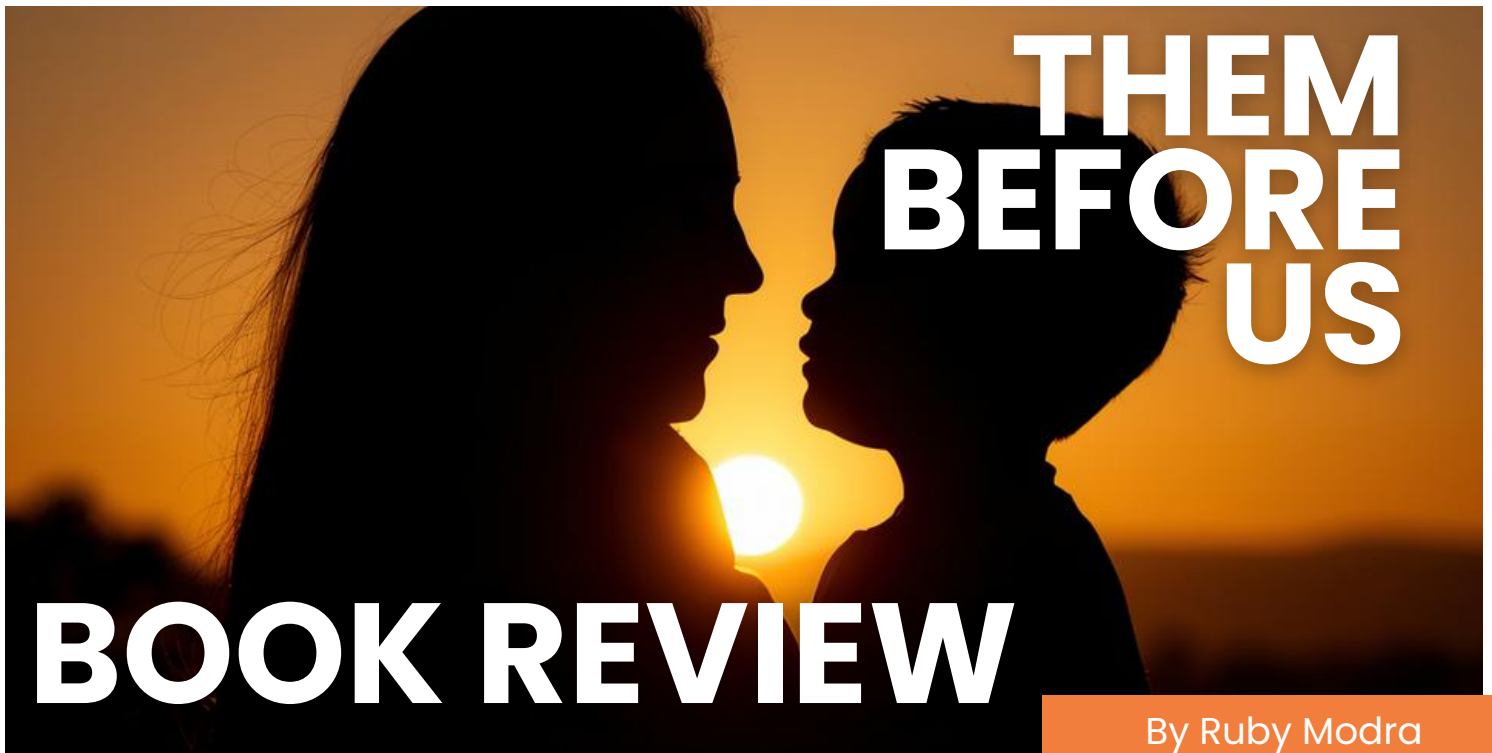
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By Ruby Modra  
2026

In our modern-day landscape of social advocacy, Katy Faust presents a perspective that is simple yet challenging, familiar yet entirely new: what if we put children first? Children are, after all, the world's most vulnerable demographic of people. Katy Faust's first novel, "Them Before Us," is the foundational text for her global social rights movement of the same name. The premise? Adults must do hard things for children because children shouldn't have to.

The call to protect children is one many have heard before. The Pro-Life/Abortion Abolitionist movement is one that many of us stand for. Children should have rights in and out of the womb. The first way to protect children is to let them be born. However, the common critique from Pro-Choice activists is often, "What about the kids that are already born? How many babies have you adopted? Why aren't you reforming the foster care system?"

Faust's work bridges the gap between being "pro-life" in the womb and "pro-child" outside of it. It gives a comprehensive framework of how to protect kids all throughout their development.

The movement's core premise is a call to adult sacrifice: adults must do hard things for children, because children shouldn't have to. Faust argues that marriage (the union of one man and one woman) is the design that best keeps children safe. She presents evidence suggesting that other domestic situations involving unrelated adults are directly related to higher statistics of abuse, neglect, and mental health struggles. By centring the child, she re-evaluates complex topics like divorce, same-sex parenting, surrogacy, and donor conception, insisting that adult desires should not override a child's fundamental needs.....

# OVERVIEW OF SMALCALD ARTICLES

# AN OVERVIEW OF THE 1538 SMALCALD ARTICLES OF MARTIN LUTHER



By Rev. Dr. Brian L. Kachelmeier  
2025

The Lutheran Faith is a historical faith rooted in the history of the church catholic and proclaimed throughout the centuries from the times of the apostles. The events that took place in Western Christendom forged and formed the Lutheran Faith. It is a Historical Faith. Our theological forefathers of the Lutheran Faith wrote down that which we confess, teach, and believe as Lutherans so that future generations would know how to face the challenges and the changes in life. There is a fundamental difference between the Christian Faith and the faith of a Christian. The Christian Faith is the Faith that is confessed. The faith of a Christian is the faith that believes. The individual faith of a Christian is not a mere belief in these historical events. It is a personal faith that trusts in the completed work of Jesus on the cross, which grants the individual forgiveness, life, and salvation. God gives this personal faith as a gift through the message of the Gospel, that is, the good news of the person and work of Christ.

Through this external Word, the Holy Spirit works in the heart to convict of sin, to convert, to fortify faith in Christ's atoning work, and to sanctify. Nevertheless, in the days of Martin Luther, the church replaced this promise with a message of salvation based upon the works of the individual to atone for each sin committed by the Christian. This message stole glory that properly belonged to Jesus, and it robbed the individual of true comfort. This message left the Christian with an endless pursuit of making satisfaction for sins through human effort. The papal church left the conscience restless without true peace. In 1538, Martin Luther published the Smalcald Articles in the midst of the controversies that confronted the clear teaching of the Gospel message of the person and work of Christ. There is a fundamental difference between the works of Christian and the works of Christ. Christ alone has atoned for all sins. For the sake of Christ, the entire person of the individual is declared to be righteous before God.

# OVERVIEW OF SMALCALD ARTICLES

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The faith of a Christian justifies. This proper proclamation of the Gospel and the individual apprehension of the promise is the Chief Article of the Christian Faith. The Smalcald Articles, written by Martin Luther, establish a foundation for making sure that the Chief Article of the Christian Faith is believed, taught, and confessed by the church amid the challenges and changes of life, so that the individual conscience can rest in peace through faith in the person and work of Christ.

The Christian Faith is a historical faith. It is not a mythological belief in things that never took place in time. Rather, the Christian Faith has been forged and formed through the interaction of God and humanity. In the beginning of creation, God created man in his own image. God formed Adam from the dust of the earth, and He built Eve from the side of Adam. God gave man the gift of original righteousness. Humanity had the ability to fear, love, and trust in God above all things. Adam and Eve lived in peace and holiness in the Garden of Eden. God gave Adam the gift of His Word. However, the old serpent slithered in and brought sin. The serpent seduced them to listen to a different word. Humanity fell into slavery and captivity to sin through the act of disobedience by Adam. Sin separated humanity from God and brought death into creation. Nevertheless, God entered the Garden of Eden and separated humanity from Satan through the promise of the Seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head. As God speaks to the serpent, Adam and Eve heard the external Word. Individual faith in this work of the Seed comes through hearing this promise. The Sacred Scripture records the events of salvation history, that is, the interaction with God and His people who have His Word. The children of Adam and Eve received this Word of promise as a gift, which gave the gift of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Later, Abraham trusted in this promise, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. His posterity became heirs of the promise. Each generation handed down the promise to the next generation throughout the time of the Old Testament scriptures. During that time, God continued to send His prophets to turn His people back to the promise of the Seed who would crush the Serpent's head. This Word of promise was written down for posterity's sake to be certain and sure that for the sake of the Seed, they had the victory over sin, death, and the devil. In the days of the New Testament scriptures, the Seed was born of the Virgin Mary and given the name Jesus, for He came to save us from our sins. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, and died on the cross to pay for the sins of all humanity through His obedience. It is at this point that Jesus defeated death and the devil. He was raised for our justification. After the resurrection from the dead, the Living Lord Jesus sent out the apostles to proclaim this promise to all nations. The apostolic message was then written down for future generations to be certain and sure of the forgiveness of sins won on the cross. The Historical Christian Faith is rooted in Holy Scripture. This promise is to be received by faith. It alone brings peace to the conscience.

In the Middle Ages, the practice of penance clouded over the completed work of Christ. The church taught that Christ paid the price for original guilt, but the individual needed to atone for each actual sin committed after being baptized. The church claimed to have the authority to transfer eternal punishments of sin into temporal punishments. If satisfaction for individual sins was not made in this life, it would need to be completed in the life to come. After death, the Christian entered a state of Purgatory where he would be purged of all sins.

# OVERVIEW OF SMALCALD ARTICLES

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However, the church taught that certain Christians had achieved a state of perfection in this life, that is, they had completed more deeds than they needed to atone for their individual sins. The papacy claimed to hold these extra credit works in a treasury of merits, which the pope could dispense through indulgences. Indulgences could be gained through acts of penance such as giving alms, prayer, fasting, and going on pilgrimages.

In 1517, Martin Luther challenged the selling of plenary indulgences, which gave the individual the false sense of security of complete satisfaction for all sins based upon a monetary transaction. By the purchase of such a papal piece of paper, the works of the saints from the treasury of merits could be transferred over to the account of the individual without faith in the completed work of Christ. With the plenary indulgence in hand, the individual no longer needs to live out the life being contrite, confessing sins to a priest, and performing the required penance prescribed by the priest. An individual could also purchase a plenary indulgence for a loved one suffering in Purgatory. John Tetzel peddled these pieces of paper with the jingle, "As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, another soul from Purgatory springs." Luther posted the Ninety-five Theses, debating such a monetary transaction. If the pope had the authority to free souls from Purgatory, he should do it for free and not for money. Luther's first thesis stated that the Christian is called to a life of repentance, not a life of doing penance, that is, making satisfaction for his own sins.

In 1521, Pope Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther. Later, Emperor Charles V called Luther to recant his teachings at the Diet of Worms. Luther refused to recant. His conscience was bound to the Gospel, that is, the person and

work of Christ, who alone can atone for all sin. In 1530, the Lutheran princes were summoned before Emperor Charles V in the city of Augsburg. Philip Melancthon presented the Augsburg Confession of Faith, stating that the Lutheran Churches have not taught anything new. They confessed the same Historic Christian Faith as the apostolic catholic church. They have reformed some of the practices that clouded over the person and work of Christ, which steal glory from Him and rob individual consciences of true comfort in the completed work of Christ on the cross. The emperor and the papal representatives rejected the Augsburg Confession. Thus, in 1531, the Smalcaldic League of Lutheran princes was formed. The hope of the Lutheran Reformers was placed in the calling of a Church Council to address the theological abuses of the church. In 1536, a new pope, Paul III, declared that he would call a general Church Council.

In 1538, Luther published the Smalcald Articles as the foundation of what needed to be addressed at such a council, which, of course, confronted the teaching and practice that clouded over the chief article of the Christian Faith. Luther writes,

***The first and chief article is this: Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification (Romans 4:24–25). He alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29), and God has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all (Isaiah 53:6). All have sinned and are justified freely, without their own works or merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood (Romans 3:23–25). This is necessary to believe. This cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law, or merit. Therefore, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us.<sup>1</sup>***

# OVERVIEW OF SMALCALD ARTICLES

During Luther's day, the church promoted the image of Jesus as the angry judge. Instead of taking refuge in Him, the baptized ran to other mediators to mediate between Jesus and them. The Virgin Mary took the primary role as mediator, being the compassionate mother. Luther restored the image of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus bears our sin. The faith of the individual trusts this completed work of Jesus to be true. The free forgiveness of sins is promised through the Gospel message, which is found in the external voice of a preacher, in the written Scripture, in the waters of baptism, in individual absolution, and in the bread, body, blood, and wine of the altar. A promise can only be received by faith alone. Again, the faith of an individual is not a mere belief in the historical events of the person of Jesus, but rather, trust in the personal promise that Jesus died "for you." For His sake, all sins are paid for completely and fully. Not only are the individual acts atoned for, but the whole person stands justified before God.

The Chief Article is the Historic Faith that is confessed, which enables the individual to have faith in the person and work of Christ. The doctrine of justification is the teaching on which the church will either stand or fall. Luther again states,

***Upon this article everything that we teach and practice depends, in opposition to the pope, the devil, and the whole world. Therefore, we must be certain and not doubt this doctrine. Otherwise, all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all adversaries win the victory and the right over us.***<sup>2</sup>

The Reformation did not merely confront moral corruption in the church found in Luther's time. Rather, it addressed the theological perversion of the Gospel rooted in the "Dark Ages." The ancient serpent continued to seduce humanity to listen to a different voice than the Word of God. The world promoted worship without God's Word, which is idolatry. The pope stood in opposition to the clear words of Christ. He set himself up as antichrist. The papacy set up new articles of faith and different ways to obtain salvation apart from faith in Christ. Nevertheless, the pope cared more about money, honor, and power rather than the care of consciences.<sup>3</sup> Luther writes,

***When we distinguish the pope's teaching from, or compare it to, Holy Scripture, it is clear that the pope's teaching at its best has been taken from the imperial and heathen law. It deals with political matters and decisions or rights, as the decretals show. His law also teaches ceremonies about churches, garments, food, persons, and childish, theatrical, and comical things without measure. But in all of this, nothing at all is taught about Christ, faith, and God's commandments. Finally, the papacy is nothing else than the devil himself, because above and against God the pope pushes his falsehoods about Masses, purgatory, the monastic life, one's own works, and false worship. (This, in fact, is the papacy.) He also condemns, murders, and tortures all Christians who do not exalt and honor 'his' abominations above all things. Therefore, just as we cannot worship the devil himself as Lord and God, so we cannot endure his apostle—the pope or Antichrist—in his rule as head or lord. For what his papal government really consists of (as I have very clearly shown in many books) is to lie and kill and destroy body and soul eternally.***<sup>4</sup>

# OVERVIEW OF SMALCALD ARTICLES

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The teaching of the papacy covered over the Gospel. Neither the person of Christ nor faith in the completed work of Christ could be seen by the average Christian. The papal commandments replaced God's commandments. The pope peddled manmade laws without the Gospel. The new ways to worship included the abuse of Mass, which was sold for money and applied to others without faith. Priests were paid to perform this Mass rather than give out the free forgiveness of sins. Luther is referring to the so-called "private" Mass in which a priest performed the human work of saying the words of the Mass to reconcile oneself and others to God to merit the forgiveness of sins. In this way, the priest replaced Christ as the One Mediator between God and Man. The priest's "sacrifice" overshadowed the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.<sup>5</sup> The papal private Mass directly conflicts with the chief article of faith about the person and work of Christ. When the Historic Christian Faith is not confessed purely, the individual cannot have faith in Christ alone as the One who atones for all sin. This understanding of the "sacrifice" of the Mass is set in opposition to the practice of the common Mass through which Holy Communion is distributed to baptized believers in both kinds. Luther reformed the practice of the common Mass according to Christ's institution. Previously, the laity did not receive both the body and blood of Christ to eat and to drink. Thus, they could not trust in the free forgiveness of sins won on the cross in history and delivered to the individual in the present time.

According to the papacy, even souls in Purgatory could benefit from the offering up of the Mass without faith. Luther called the papal private Mass the greatest and most horrible abomination and the dragon's tail.<sup>6</sup> Luther states, In short, we cannot tolerate the

Mass or anything that proceeds from it or is attached to it. We have to condemn the Mass in order to keep the holy Sacrament pure and certain, according to Christ's institution, used and received through faith.<sup>7</sup> And again he writes,

***... evil spirits have produced many wicked tricks by appearing as the souls of the departed [1 Samuel 28], and with unspeakable lies and tricks demanded Masses, vigils, pilgrimages, and other alms. All of this we were expected to receive as articles of faith and to live accordingly. The pope confirmed these things, as he did the Mass and all other abominations. Here, too, there must be no yielding or surrendering.***<sup>8</sup>

The papal church framed the concept of Purgatory by the idea that Christ did not make satisfaction for all sins. Thus, the papal private Mass was primarily used for the dead. The monastic movement became the epitome of trying to make God merciful by manmade methods of holiness. Behind such deception lurked the devil himself, who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning. The tyranny of the pope was enforced by excommunication and execution. Not only did the pope condemn people to hell, but he also tried to send them to hell with the help of the civil government by murder.

The pope authorized new forms of worship to dispense grace while he gained earthly riches. He decreed that a person must obey him to obtain salvation. Luther challenged the papal rules. He writes, "The true rule is this: God's Word shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel, can do so [Galatians 1:8]."<sup>9</sup> The Scripture alone is the ultimate authority on what is necessary to believe for salvation. God gives to us the revealed knowledge of salvation in the written Word, so that we can be certain and sure of the free forgiveness of sins won on the cross and distributed in the present time through the Gospel. Human opinions cannot overrule the Word of God. Luther writes,

***We do not agree with them that they are the Church. They are not the Church. Nor will we listen to those things that, under the name of Church, they command or forbid. Thank God, 'today' a seven-year-old child knows what the Church is, namely, the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd [John 10:11–16]. For the children pray, "I believe in one holy Christian Church." This holiness does not come from albs, tonsures, long gowns, and other ceremonies they made up without Holy Scripture, but from God's Word and true faith.***<sup>10</sup>

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. The sheep know the Shepherd, hear His voice, and He knows them. They know His voice, and they follow Him from death to life. Outward things without God's Word do not make people holy. The Holy Scripture clarifies what sanctifies God's people. Only the blood of the Lamb makes the people of God holy. True worship receives this promise by faith. Luther states,

***God is superabundantly generous in His grace: First, through the spoken Word, by which the forgiveness of sins is preached in the whole world [Luke 24:45–47]. This is the particular office of the Gospel. Second, through Baptism. Third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar. Fourth, through the Power of the Keys. Also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, "Where two or three are gathered" (Matthew 18:20) and other such verses [especially Romans 1:12]."***

The purpose of the church on earth is to freely forgive sins. Luther calls this "the particular office of the Gospel." Faith comes through hearing this preached word as the Holy Spirit teaches in Romans 10:17. Again, this faith is not a mere belief of the historical events of the life of Christ. Justifying faith clings to the promise that for the sake of Christ, who is both the Lamb and the High Priest, the individual Christian is declared righteous before God. This is not an artificial declaration in a mock trial. The wickedness of the individual is imputed, reckoned, and accounted to Christ on the cross in truth and reality. The One who knew no sin became sin for us (See 2 Corinthians 5:21). At the same time, the righteousness of Christ is imputed, reckoned, and accounted to the believer in truth and reality.

# OVERVIEW OF SMALCALD ARTICLES

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This is the great exchange. What took place on the cross in history benefits the Christian in the present time through the apprehension of the Gospel. Luther writes,

***I do not know how to change in the least what I have previously and constantly taught about justification. Namely, that through faith, as St. Peter says, we have a new and clean heart [Acts 15:9–11], and God will and does account us entirely righteous and holy for the sake of Christ, our Mediator [1 Timothy 2:5]. Although sin in the flesh has not yet been completely removed or become dead [Romans 7:18], yet He will not punish or remember it.***<sup>12</sup>

For the sake of Christ, actual sins that are committed are not counted against the believer. Even better, the believer is not only exonerated for committing specific sins, but the person of the believer is also entirely righteous and holy before God. Luther states, “The entire individual, both his person and his works, is declared to be righteous and holy from pure grace and mercy, shed upon us and spread over us in Christ.”<sup>13</sup> Jesus continues to be the One Mediator between man and God. He continues to make intercession for transgressors. Christ was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Romans 4:25).

Again, the Christian Faith is a historic Faith. Yet the Faith that is confessed by the church is distinct from the faith that is believed by the individual. Justifying faith is not merely a belief in the historical events regarding the person of Jesus. It is a living faith that trusts in the completed work of Jesus on the cross, which wins the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation for the individual. Luther writes, “Such faith, renewal, and forgiveness of sins are followed by good works [Ephesians 2:8–9].

What is still sinful or imperfect in them will not be counted as sin or defect, for Christ’s sake [Psalm 32:1–2; Romans 4:7–8].”<sup>14</sup> And again he writes, “We say, besides, that if good works do not follow, the faith is false and not true.”<sup>15</sup> Faith without works is dead. Faith in Jesus is not a one-time event. The Lutheran Faith rejects the manmade concept of “once saved always saved.” Luther warns about the false faith of those who claim they can live in a state of ruling sin. Luther writes,

***During the peasant rebellion, I encountered some who held that those who had once received the Spirit or the forgiveness of sins or had become believers—even if they later sin—would still remain in the faith. Such sin, they think, would not harm them. They say, “Do whatever you please. If you believe, it all amounts to nothing. Faith blots out all sins,” and such.***<sup>16</sup>

The Gospel frees people from sin. It does not free people to commit sin. Although sin remains in the baptized, it should not reign in the life of the baptized. Ruling sin kills faith and casts out the Holy Spirit. The Gospel gives the Holy Spirit, who desires to sanctify and purify the believer from sin. Luther goes on to say,

# OVERVIEW OF SMALCALD ARTICLES

***When holy people—still having and feeling original sin and daily repenting and striving against it—happen to fall into manifest sins (as David did into adultery, murder, and blasphemy [2 Samuel 11]), then faith and the Holy Spirit have left them. The Holy Spirit does not permit sin to have dominion, to gain the upper hand so it can be carried out, but represses and restrains it from doing what it wants [Psalm 51:11; Romans 6:14]. If sin does what it wants, the Holy Spirit and faith are not present. For St. John says, “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning ... and he cannot keep on sinning” [1 John 3:9]. And yet it is also true when St. John says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” [1:8].<sup>17</sup>***

Original sin is the chief sin. It is at the root of all actual sins, which is the fruit of the deeds forbidden by the Ten Commandments. In this life, this root sin is never uprooted. It dwells within the body of all people, including the baptized. Thus, as the baptized we are called to daily die to sin and rise again to newness of life. It is a daily repenting and turning away from sin and back to God through Christ. The Holy Spirit works in the heart through the external Word. However, if one lets sin have dominion over him, he rejects Christ and resists the work of the Holy Spirit. Without the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, faith dies.

In this life, there is still time for the Holy Spirit to work through the ministry of the Word; however, if one continually rebels, resists, grieves, and quenches the Holy Spirit, it becomes more and more difficult for the heart to be converted again. A veil remains over the heart when the Sacred Scriptures are read (2 Cor. 3:14-17). The gospel is veiled, for such a person is blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

Thus, we are warned, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Jesus states, “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” (Mark 3:28-29). If one dies in this unrepentant state, there is no forgiveness of sins. Without faith, one cannot be justified.

When Luther nailed the Ninety-five Theses to the castle church door in 1517, He opened the Reformation with an understand of the life of a Christian is a life of repentance. In 1538, Luther continues that understanding by stating,

***In Christians, this repentance continues until death. For through one’s entire life, repentance contends with the sin remaining in the flesh. Paul testifies that he wars with the law in his members (Romans 7:14-25) not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Spirit that follows the forgiveness of sins [Romans 8:1-17]. This gift daily cleanses and sweeps out the remaining sins and works to make a person truly pure and holy.<sup>18</sup>***

# OVERVIEW OF SMALCALD ARTICLES

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True repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit with the Word of God. Through the Word of Law, the Holy Spirit calls us to be different and behave differently. Luther states that the chief force of the Law is to reveal original sin and the actual sins that come from it as fruit from the root. However, without the Word of the Gospel, the Law only accuses. A preacher of repentance must also proclaim the Gospel clearly. Luther writes,

***But to this office of the Law, the New Testament immediately adds the consoling promise of grace through the Gospel. This must be believed. As Christ declares, “Repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). That is, become different, act differently, and believe My promise. John the Baptist (preceding Christ) is called a preacher of repentance, but this is for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>19</sup>***

As a preacher of repentance, Luther calls his hearers to become different, behave differently, and believe that the blood of Jesus makes a difference in our lives. It is at this intersection that the proclamation of the Historic Faith becomes a personal faith in the heart of the hearer. The faith of a believer comes through hearing the prophetic and apostolic preaching. This faith is not a one-time historic event in the life of the believer. Rather, the Holy Spirit continues to work with the external Word in the present time.

The Lutheran Faith is a historical Faith rooted in the Promise given to Adam and Eve and handed down to the people of God in the apostolic age. The prophets and apostles preserved this Faith in the written scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. During the Middle Ages, the tyranny of the pope clouded over the Gospel message of the person and work of Christ. The pope instituted new forms of worship and manmade laws for the purpose of obtaining God’s favor, meriting forgiveness, and making satisfaction for sins. In the early 1500’s, the events in the Western Church brought about the opportunity to bring light and life where the pope brought darkness and death. In 1538, Martin Luther published the Smalcald Articles, which clearly conveyed the Christian Faith during the historic events of the Reformation, so that the individual could have justifying faith in the completed work of Christ on the cross. Thus, amid the challenges and changes of life, the believer could rest assured that he stands righteous before God.

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**Rev. Dr. Brian L. Kachelmeier**

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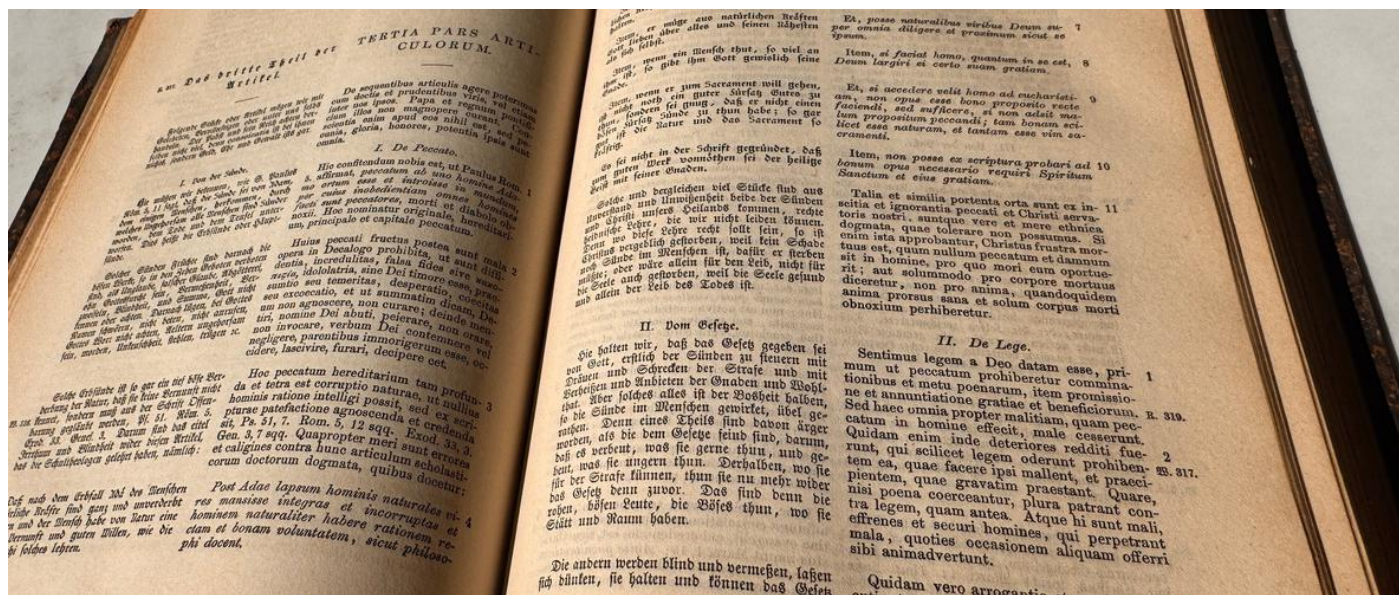


Photo of German Book of Concord, Smalcald Articles taken by Peter Wittwer



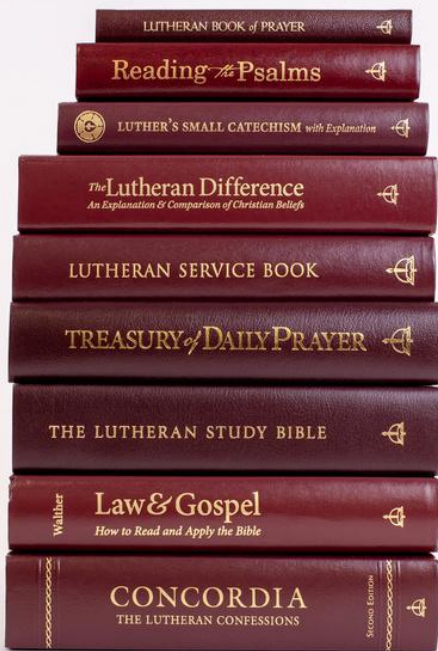
By Rev Joshua Pfeiffer  
2026

***'But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.' 1 Peter 3:4***

In all the years of discussion within Lutheran Churches on men, women and ordination to the pastoral ministry, how many times have you heard words like 'beauty' and something being 'precious' in God's sight? I can't remember too many. Yet in the verse above, the Apostle Peter uses these words to speak about themes parallel to the ones involved in the ordination discussions of recent decades. I'm convinced this points to a gap that needs to be addressed where this sort of language finds a home in our discussions. It's to do with the articulation of something beautiful in ministry and service.

In particular, a vision for life in the Church where the Lord has called qualified men to be pastors, but where he has also given women unique gifts for service in the life of his church, which need to be recognised, utilised, and celebrated. This short article is intended to be a contribution toward this end.

A part of the problem, it seems to me, has been that our polarised debates have often left no space in the middle for this sort of task. On the one side, those who hold to the church's historic teaching and practice have focused on defending this, and thus on dismantling the arguments put forward for change. This can sadly give the impression to some that there is little in the way of meaningful roles for women in the life of the Church. On the other side, those who have advocated for having female pastors in the church have focused their energies on bringing about this change.....



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# LUTHERAN MEN



Photo taken by Peter Wittwer

By Luke Nuske  
2026

## Where to from here?

Many of you may have seen my articles in the Lutheran Men newsletter, I received much feedback, most of it good some of it less so even some people asking to be unsubscribed from the newsletter due to my articles. It was certainly all enjoyable and possibly too much so, I may be too comfortable causing friction and need to be wary of not being contrary for the sake of it. Well, LMA and LMV are no longer, due to the committee members inability to stay in the LCA and the constitution of Lutheran men stating we must be members of the LCA to stay in Lutheran Men Aust/Vic they no longer were able to remain functional, however we will be continuing under the framework of the CWF as "Lutheran Men" in an attempt to have a specific men's ministry for confessional Lutheran men in Australia that is separate from any synod, and thus able to serve any confessional men regardless of synodical affiliation.

Like many of you I have left the LCA and alongside others have been involved in forming a new congregation within LM-A. There is much work that goes into this and much that the LM-A leadership (with help from Alex Milner, LCMS and ILC and no doubt others) have done to lay the groundwork for us to join and be apart of which has been a great blessing. Nevertheless many of us will find that as we start settling into new congregations with much of the essential setup work done and things seeming to tick along quite nicely that we may find ourselves settling back into old habits quite quickly, and old habits die hard.

Perhaps there is some tension in our new churches, someone saying things that seem not quite right? Or someone throwing their weight around getting their own way? Maybe things are a little too similar to how they were in the LCA or perhaps you're not too keen on how different things are from the LCA?.....

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# WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?



# WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING? AN INVITATION TRANSFORMED INTO A TAUNT

By Rev. Dr. Kevin Golden  
2026

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed. Alleluia! The Easter acclamation carries unfettered joy. Christ has broken the fetters of death because He has shattered the bonds of sin and its curse. We cannot overstate the significance of Christ's resurrection. Thus, the magnitude of the Easter acclamation cannot be overstated, nor can it be proclaimed too often.

The Scriptures resonate with the beauty of the resurrection, a resonance that is particularly evident in 1 Corinthians 15. The apostle Paul delivers what is of first importance, namely, that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose on the third day, appearing to Peter, the twelve, to more than five hundred at once, to James, and to the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:3-7). The crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Christ are of first importance not only because they are historical events but also because those events accomplished something. The proclamation of Christ's death and resurrection produces faith

(1 Corinthians 15:11). Furthermore, Christ's bodily resurrection means that we too will rise from the dead when He comes again (1 Corinthians 15:20-24). When that happens, our last enemy, death, will be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:25-26). That grand future forms our present lives. Because we too will rise, we live accordingly, daily dying to sin and rising to live to a holy life (1 Corinthians 15:30-34). The resurrection is our hope, so Paul gives attention to the mystery of that hope, describing the glory of our resurrection bodies, which will far exceed our present bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). So, we will be transformed to be like Christ at the last trumpet in a moment, the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). When that happens, death will be swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:55). Our victory over death, given to us by Christ, will be so complete that we speak a taunt against death: where is your victory, where is your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:55). All this is ours because we have victory in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57).....

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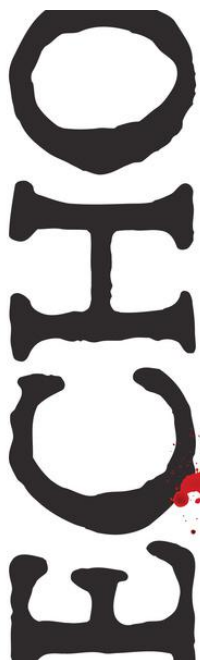
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# THE FORMAL PRINCIPLE OF THEOLOGY

# THE FORMAL PRINCIPLE OF THEOLOGY: THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS' UNDERSTANDING AND USE

By Tasmin Bourne  
2025

## Introduction

In this article, I will be exploring the questions, 'What was the Formal Principle of Theology in the Lutheran Reformation, how did it differ from contemporaneous traditions, and is it still relevant today?'

To determine the Formal Principle for each tradition, I will, in the first instance, be consulting their confessional and/or doctrinal statements. Once their official position has been established, I will test the claim based on how they determine theology in practice. Does the practice match the confession?

For the Lutheran position, I will be engaging primarily with the Augsburg Confession, which is the foundational Lutheran confessional document, but will also address the Small Catechism and The Formula of Concord.

Quotations from these documents will be succinct, so I highly recommend that you have your Book of Concord with you and read the quotes in their larger context.

Through this exercise, I intend to show that the Lutheran Formal Principle is Scripture alone, which makes it distinct from the other theological traditions surveyed, and that this Lutheran distinction is still relevant and must continue to be upheld.

## Definition of terms

Firstly, I need to provide definitions for several key terms being used:

### **Formal principle**

The Formal Principle is the source of theology and doctrine within any particular church body. It is that thing, or number of things, that in concert provide the normative authority for the doctrinal and practical positions upheld by that entity. The Formal Principle is usually discussed in parallel with and in distinction from the *Material Principle*.....

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**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

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