

Spirit of the Redeemer

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH, NASHVILLE, TENN.

May 2022

Family

“We are a family. We’re all family here.” It’s not uncommon for church members to say this about their congregation to visitors. Most of the time visitors will nod their head or say something like, “That’s so nice,” or “Wonderful.” But what if a visitor said, “How? How are you a family?” Or what if a visitor said, “Prove it. Prove that you are a family?” What would you say in response?



Every so often, it seems in order to evaluate our family-like qualities. Members need to determine if they really believe their congregation is a family or if it something they just say. And members need to determine if they are truly acting in ways that visitors can see their familial love for one another (Jn. 13:35).

Members of healthy families – not dysfunctional families – have all of these traits:

1. **They have a common name and identity.** As Christians we are all the adopted children of God. We have had the name of the Triune God placed on us (Matt. 28:19). We have one Father (Gal. 4:6-7). We have “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are the family of Christ himself. Jesus said, “For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matt. 12:50). Furthermore, we have the common identity of the Lutheran Confessions which we hold to be a faithful exposition of the Holy Scriptures.



together (Heb. 10:25) or caring for one another because it may make us sick. That wouldn't be acting like a family. Families "share all things, and if one becomes ill it is likely and unavoidable that others will follow. For married couples this is part of the 'in sickness and in health' to which they commit themselves. Parents gladly suffer with their children—and would suffer in their place, if it were possible" (<https://concordia-seminary.ca/2020/06/23/faculty-opinion-facts-and-faith-what-we-know-to-be-true-in-the-face-of-a-pandemic/>). Thus, if a congregation is truly a family, it operates differently from a business or other organizations. Suffering together is part of family life.

5. **They forgive one another.** If forgiveness is a trait of healthy families, how much more should a Christian congregational family practice this. We are forgiveness people. We pray the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Love "does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful" (1 Cor. 13:5).
6. **They eat together.** There are many dysfunctional families that don't dine together. Each member eats on his or her own schedule and in a separate room. But imagine if a family member were not eating at all. That would not be tolerated even in a dysfunctional family! In the congregation we eat together, at the Lord's Table. It is important that we come to the table together united in confession and desiring the heavenly food of Christ's body and blood. And when a member of the family is absent at the table, it is a shame and a loss, for a place has been prepared for that person by our Lord. 
7. **They stay together.** How does the saying go? "You can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family." Praise God for it when it comes to the family of Christ! To depart from it, to choose a different family, is spiritual death. But it is also wrong for members to leave their congregation for another congregation simply because of preference, or for a petty matter, or for a grudge (see #5 above). Unless members are moving to a different location or have a new circumstance requiring a closer congregation, or unless there is a serious problem in their current congregation's doctrine and practice (see #1 above), congregational families are to stay together. If members treat their congregation like a doctor's practice or a grocery store from which they feel free to switch their allegiance at a moment's notice, that's not operating like a family. It shows that they only consider their household to be their family. When members join our congregation, they are asked in the membership rite, "Will you support the work our gracious Lord has given *this congregation* with your prayers and the gifts God has given you?" They are not joining all LCMS congregations. They are joining this family at this table in this sanctuary. 

Are we at Redeemer a family, or is this just a place where we go to church? I pray that when the next visitor walks through our doors, you may all say (and believe and be prepared to explain), "We're a family."

– Pastor Young

What is the Commission on Theology and Church Relations?

(The full version of this article is available as a pdf here: <http://redeemernashville.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CTCR-article-for-newsletter.pdf>)

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) provides study documents, opinions, and statements on theological issues. Established by the Synod in 1962, the commission provides guidance and leadership in the areas of theology and church relations. See:

<https://www.lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations> for more details. I have excerpted sections from that and the CTCR Guidelines, in the interest of disclosure, and you can find much more there. The CTCR document library includes reports, resources and evaluations concerning religious organizations and movements.

Reports: The CTCR brings matters of theology to the membership of the Synod through special studies and documents.

Evaluations: The CTCR provides evaluations on a broad range of religious organizations and movements from a Lutheran theological perspective.

Theological Opinions: Documents are prepared in response to a request for an opinion on a specific theological issue (e.g., from the president of the Synod, a district, board, commission, or dispute resolution panel).

Examples featured on the current website include:

Report titled [Marriage Between Church and State: A Report on Clergy Serving as “Agents of the State.”](#)

Opinion: [Communion and COVID-19](#)

CTCR Report and Bible study on [An Inexpressible Treasure: The Theology and Practice of Holy Baptism](#)

Over the last 50 years the CTCR has developed many documents, and I have some older ones in print. Many are available on-line. Please check these out. These topics are occasionally revisited and, if deemed necessary, updated. My committee (Committee III) is currently working on a new end-of-life document, dealing largely with euthanasia.

What is the CTCR?

The Holy Christian Church is the sum total of all who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin. Because the church’s life is so intimately involved with these means of grace, the Word and Sacraments, it must take special care that they are not falsified or weakened in any way as the church communicates to people living in the modern world. A church body that prizes the Gospel will therefore be concerned about *theology*.

Moreover, because Christians are “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3), a Christian church is committed to deepen and strengthen the relationships both between its own members and with other church bodies. Such a church body is therefore vitally concerned with proper *church relations*.

In order to provide leadership in dealing with the Synod’s needs and opportunities in the areas of theology and church relations, the Synod established the Commission on Theology and Church Relations in 1962. Since that time, the Commission has provided reports on a number of significant theological issues and has been the Synod’s primary agency for monitoring the Synod’s ecumenical relationships with other Christians.

Membership of the CTCR.

The membership of the Commission is carefully chosen so that it is as representative of the Synod as possible. Because of its membership and the way it is chosen, the

Commission represents a microcosm of the Synod itself.

The Executive Director is Rev. Dr. Joel D. Lehenbauer and the Associate Director is Rev. Dr. Richard Serina. These are good, faithful men, and we should be thankful that we have so many confessional people serving on this Commission now. I understand that was not always the case in the past. (These are the only individuals paid for this work, other than the Synodical president and first vice-president. I do receive travel reimbursement.)

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations consists of 16 voting and 4 advisory members.

How does this work? Four meetings are held each year, generally at the Synod's International Center in St. Louis, usually all day Thursday and Friday plus ½ day Saturday. As indicated below, much of the work (½) is done at the meetings in the Committees and the other ½ is done in the plenary sessions (i.e., with all members meeting together). At each meeting, the Executive Committee has a separate session before the start of the rest of the meeting. We break for a ½ hour Chapel service at 10 AM on weekdays in the International Center—it's an interesting chapel there, if you get a chance to visit. (Unfortunately, we had to have most meetings in 2020-2021 by Zoom.) We each lunch together and have one evening dinner. I have really enjoyed the informal settings and the opportunity to learn from these excellent theologians—also at breakfast, usually with Revs. Vogel, Saunders, and Pless getting there early when I do. There are also intermittent Committee meetings by Zoom between our regular meetings, to cover some of our homework assignments.

I was appointed by the Council of Presidents in September 2019 for a 3-year term (which has turned into a 4-year term due to the postponement of the Synodical Convention). I was surprised to be asked, but some of the

members were excited to now have a scientist on the Commission for some help understanding new developments. I refer to myself as the “resident chemist” on the Commission. One of the other lay members, Ken Blasters, is a lawyer from Illinois. During lunch, we discovered that we had both been members of the same fraternity at the University of Illinois, although I just missed him because I am a little older—we have mutual friends from there. Also, we both own and operate farms. Small world.

I have been very blessed to be in the company of these excellent theologians, and this has been a real learning experience for me. I have come to particularly appreciate the many excellent faculty we have in our seminaries and the work that they do, not only teaching seminarians in their classes at Ft. Wayne and St. Louis but also writing important work and teaching around the world.

What do we deal with at CTCR? As I have told people, just easy things such as end of life issues, beginning of life issues, order of creation.... I am on Committee III. One big project we have spearheaded (in Committee III and the CTCR plenary sessions) is the generation of an annotated version of Luther's Large Catechism, which should be out (Concordia Publishing House) before the end of the calendar year 2022. We did not write it all ourselves; some of the theologians on the Commission did write excursus, though. This will resemble a study Bible, explaining points in contemporary terms. I hope that many of you will get one.

Duties of the CTCR.

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations assists the president of the Synod at his request in discharging his constitutional responsibilities for maintaining doctrinal unity within the Synod. The Commission provides guidance to the Synod in matters of theology and church relations.

(a) It brings matters of theology and church relations through special studies and documents to the membership of the Synod and to conferences.

(b) It refers theological issues and questions to the proper individuals or groups of individuals for additional study.

(c) It suggests and provides studies of contemporary issues, including also current social issues, as they affect the church and as the church may affect such social issues.

(d) It fosters and provides for ongoing theological education through institutes, seminars, and other means.

(e) It obtains and studies theological treatises, conference papers, and similar documents and studies.

With regard to fraternal and other organizations, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations assists congregations and ordained and commissioned ministers of religion in fulfilling their commitment to witness publicly and privately to the one and only Gospel set forth in the Holy Scriptures specifically as they carry out their responsibilities relating to membership in societies, lodges, cults, or any organizations of an unchristian or anti-Christian character to which the Synod has declared itself firmly opposed.

CTCR committee structure.

The Commission has three subcommittees, one executive committee, and such special or ad hoc committees as are deemed advisable from time to time. Subcommittees have a reasonably even distribution of professors, pastors, teachers, and laypersons, with new members distributed as evenly as possible, and continuity retained in some major assignments. The membership of the executive committee includes the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary of the Commission, as well as the chairmen of the three subcommittees. Ad hoc and special committees are used only

when it is inconvenient, inefficient, or unwise to use the regular committee structure.

Committee I: Church Relations/Church and Ministry

Committee II: Theology

Committee III: Church and Society

No committee is autonomous but reports its recommendations to the plenary Commission. Committees may not act independently except when authorized to do so by the plenary Commission. Each committee furnishes a progress report and pertinent recommendations to each plenary meeting of the Commission. To that end, each committee should keep a record of its proceedings and distribute them with the plenary minutes after each meeting of the plenary.

Major assignments on the CTCR's agenda in the current (2019-2023) triennium include:

- Unity in Doctrine and Uniformity and Variety in Practice (2019 Res. 5-11)
- Inter-Christian Relationships (standing assignment)
- Pending requests by various church bodies for church fellowship with the LCMS
- Marriage and Human Sexuality (2019 Res. 1-06A; 2016 Res. 14-03A)
- Order of Creation/Relationship of Man and Woman (2016 Res. 5-14)
- Development of Annotated and Expanded Large Catechism (2019 Res. 12-03A)
- Beginning of Life Issues (2019 Res. 11-01A)
- End of Life Issues
- Evaluations of Religious Organizations and Movements

Ongoing responsibilities

1. Internal Church Relations
2. Partner Church Relations

Through the Commission the Synod devotes considerable time and effort to improving and deepening relationships with our partner churches, that is, the 38 churches with which the

Synod is in altar and pulpit fellowship. For a list of LCMS Partner Churches, see <https://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1372>.

A meeting of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) is held every three years so that the leaders of the ILC's 54 member churches (many of whom are partner churches of the LCMS) can discuss common problems and seek common solutions that are faithful to the Word of God, see <http://www.ilc-online.org/>.

3. Other Lutheran Bodies

The CTCR also monitors the activities of Lutheran church bodies and groups with which the Synod is not in altar and pulpit fellowship. In so doing it seeks: (1) to recognize obstacles to and opportunities for altar and pulpit fellowship; (2) to support and encourage faithfulness to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and (3) to consider ways in which we can work with fellow Lutherans in external matters without violating doctrinal integrity.

Internationally, the Commission has regularly reviewed the structure and functions of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and has continued to monitor developments in this organization. CTCR staff members have also engaged in various conversations and meetings with representatives of large and growing Lutheran church bodies such as the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, the Lutheran Church of Tanzania, the Malagasy Lutheran Church, and others. Such contacts have increased significantly recently due to strong opposition by many LWF churches to the Church of Sweden's and the ELCA's sexuality decisions of 2009.

4. Other Christian Churches and Groups

Although the LCMS is not a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC) or the National Council of Churches (NCC), the Commission makes an effort to keep abreast of the latest developments within these groups.

In short, the CTCR is one of the Synod's key agencies for guiding and directing its contacts with other Christians. This contact is important not only to show continued interest in and concern for fellow Christians, but to bear witness to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as we know it in the Holy Scriptures.

I hope that this article has been of some use to you. I will be glad to discuss aspects of the CTCR, insofar as I can, if you have any questions. This work at CTCR does take some time, but I am very grateful to have this experience and I hope that I have been of help to the CTCR. In all honesty, I never imagined doing this when I was younger.

Soli Deo gloria—Fred G.

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, June 4

4-6 PM

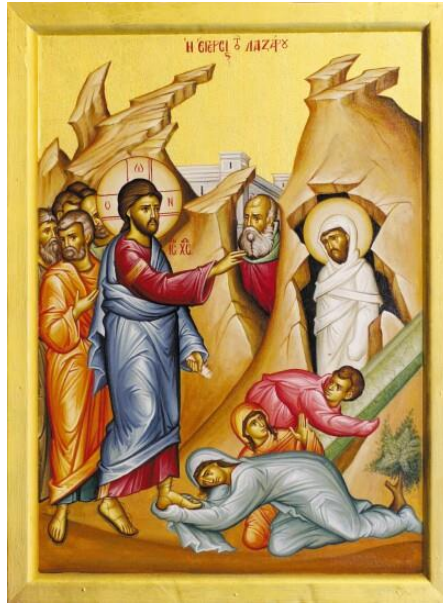
More Details to Come

Kroger Community Rewards Program

Are you a Kroger shopper? If so, you can link your Kroger Plus Card to their Community Rewards Program online and Redeemer will receive a quarterly check. Redeemer has elected to place these dollars in the Sanctuary Renovation Fund. In fact, we just received a check for \$50.68. Simple, easy stewardship! Contact Redeemer's office for details on how to participate.

Ongoing Prayer Needs

*Please update Pastor and
the church office on these
needs.*



*Jesus Raises Lazarus
from the Dead*



The Ascension of Our Lord

(Thursday of Easter 6, 40 days after Easter)

Ascension Day is the coronation celebration of our Lord as He is proclaimed to be King of the universe. Jesus' ascension to the Father is His entrance to the greater existence beyond the confines of time and space, being no longer bound by the limitations of His state of humiliation. Jesus now sits at the right hand of God, which Luther correctly taught is everywhere, having again taken up the power and authority that were His since before time.

Yet our Lord is present with us who remain bound by time and space. He is with us as true God and true man, exercising His rulership in the Church through the means of grace which He established: His Word and His Sacraments. We mortals in those means of grace can grasp the King of the universe and receive a foretaste of the feast to come.

(Treasury of Daily Prayer, CPH 200, pp. 302-3)

Collect for The Ascension of Our Lord

Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

(LSB Altar Book p.797)

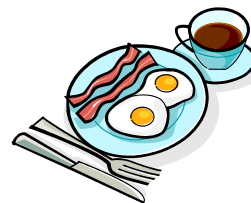
Find our newsletters online at:
<http://redeemernashville.org/newsletter/>

Gradual for The Ascension of Our Lord

Christ has risen from the dead.
 [God the Father] has crowned him with
 glory and honor,
 He has given him dominion over the
 works of his hands;
 he has put all things under his feet.

adapt. from Matt. 28:7; Heb. 2:7; Ps. 8:6

Thanks to everyone involved in our Easter Brunch! Whether you provided food, cleanup labor, or simply enjoyed the day your participation made it a great joy! A special recognition goes out to Sam & Ron, our pancake cooks.



Thanks to Work Day crew! Much was accomplished indoors and out. The windows were cleaned, lights replaced, palm crosses made, trees and shrubs trimmed, rocks glued and leaves cleaned off the building! That's only a partial list of what was accomplished. The crew was kept moving by a motivational master (see the photo below).



A Simple Way To Pray

Martin Luther

*Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, the 10 Commandments, and the Creed.
A Letter to His Barber, Master Peter Beskendorf, Spring 1535
(Continued from April.)*

<https://wmpl.org/filed/resources/public/Literature/ASimpleWaytoPray.pdf>
(Available for purchase at [Concordia Publishing House](#).)

The Ten Commandments

The Fourth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother." First, I learn to acknowledge God, my Greater; how wondrously he has created me, body and soul; and how he has given me life through my parents and has ins ed in them the desire to care for me, the fruit of their bodies, with all their power. He has brought me into this world, has sustained and cared for me, nurtured and educated me with great diligence, carefulness, and concern, through danger, trouble, and hard work. To this moment he protects me, his creature, and helps me in countless dangers and troubles. It is as though he were creating me anew every moment. But the devil does not willingly concede us one single moment of life.

Second, I thank the rich and gracious Greater on behalf of myself and all the world that he has established and assured in the commandment the increase and preservation of the human race, that is, of households and of states. Without these two institutions or governments the world could not exist a single year, because without government there can be no peace, and where there is no peace there can be no family; without family, children cannot be begotten or raised, and fatherhood and motherhood would cease to be. It is the purpose of this commandment to guard and preserve both family and state, to admonish children and subjects to be obedient, and to enforce it, too, and to let no violation go un

punished—otherwise children would have disrupted the family long ago by their disobedience, and subjects would have disorganized the state and laid it to waste for they outnumber parents and rulers. There are no words to fully describe the benefit of this commandment.

Third, I confess and lament my wicked disobedience and sin; in defiance of God's commandment I have not honored or obeyed my parents; I have often

provoked and offended them, have been impatient with their parental discipline, have been resentful and scornful of their loving admonition and have rather gone along with loose company and evil companions. God himself condemns such disobedient children and withholds from them a long life; many of them succumb and perish in disgrace before they reach adulthood. Whoever does not obey father and mother must obey the executioner or otherwise come, through God's wrath, to an evil end, etc. Of all this I repent and ask for grace and forgiveness.

Fourth, I pray for myself and for all the world that God would bestow his grace and pour his blessing richly upon the family and the state. Grant that from this time on we may be devout, honor our parents, obey our superiors, and resist the devil when he entices us to be disobedient and rebellious, and so may we help improve home and nation by our actions and thus preserve the peace, all to the praise and glory of God for our own benefit and for the prosperity of all. Grant that we may acknowledge these his gifts and be thankful for them.

At this point we should add a prayer for our parents and superiors, that God may grant them understanding and wisdom to govern and rule us in peace and happiness. May he preserve them from tyranny, from riot and fury, and turn them to honor God's word and not oppress it, nor persecute anyone or do injustice. Such excellent gifts must be sought by prayer, as St. Paul teaches; otherwise the devil will reign in the palace and everything fall into chaos and confusion.

If you are a father or mother, you should at this point remember your children and the workers in your household. Pray earnestly to the dear Father, who has set you in an office of honor in his name and intends that you be honored by the name "father." Ask that he grant you grace and blessing to look after and support your wife, children, and servants in a godly and Christian manner. May he give you wisdom and strength to train them well in heart and will to follow your instruction with obedience. Both are God's gifts, your children and the way they flourish, that they turn out well and that they remain so. Otherwise the home is nothing but a pigsty and school for rascals, as one can see among the uncouth and godless.

(Continued in June)

May 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Third Sunday of Easter 9:30 Divine Service Door Offering Sunday School Confirmation	2 8 AA	3	4 9:45 Matins 10 Bible Study	5	6	7
8 Fourth Sunday of Easter 9:30 Divine Service Sunday School Confirmation <i>Mother's Day</i>	9 8 AA	10	11 9:45 Matins 10 Bible Study	12	13 6:30pm LWML	14
15 Fifth Sunday of Easter Confirmation Sunday 9:30 Divine Service Sunday School	16 8 AA	17	18 9:45 Matins 10 Bible Study	19	20	21 8:30 Men's Breakfast
22 Sixth Sunday of Easter 9:30 Divine Service Sunday School	23 8 AA	24 6:30 Council	25 9:45 Matins 10 Bible Study	26 The Ascension of Our Lord 7 Divine Service	27	28
29 Seventh Sunday of Easter 9:30 Divine Service LWML Mite Collection Sunday School	30 8 AA <i>Memorial Day</i>	31				

Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church

800 Bellevue Road
Nashville, TN 37221

(615) 646-3150

www.redeemernashville.org

info@redeemernashville.org

