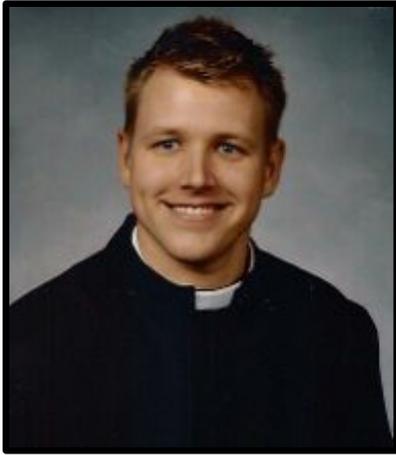

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Volume 1, Issue 5 February 2011



From Pastor's Desk

What is Lent?

Lent is the forty days minus the six Sundays before Easter. For centuries, it has been observed as a special time of self examination and repentance. Lent is a time for preparation for Good Friday and Easter. It is a time of repentance: feeling sorrow for our sins and fervent faith that they're forgiven for Christ's sake. And so we fast, but the Lenten fast prepares us for the Easter Feast.

This fast is seen in two places 1) in our services, and 2) in our lives. In our services, we say goodbye until Holy Saturday to the *Gloria in Excelsis* and the *Alleluias*. During Passion Week, we even refrain from saying the *Gloria Patri* (Glory be to the Father . . .) and veil our crosses. In this way we become hungry for them to return and yearn for them.

In this way we become hungry for them

But we also fast in our lives.

Our fallen flesh desires to rule our souls and make us slaves to our desires. Fasting is a way of disciplining ourselves, of proving to our minds that

In this way we become hungry for them to return and yearn for them.

we can survive on less, that the pains of hunger that gnaw at us are false. The body's demands for food, drink, sex, and sleep do not always need to be met. They must often be subdued. Subduing the flesh is always a spiritual exercise.

Most importantly such training prepares us for future battles. If we learn not to eat when we think we are hungry, then perhaps we can bring that same self-denial and strength to bear when it is more serious, when we face a more deadly seduction. Since fasting is not a good work and breaking a fast is not a sin, fasting is a safe way to practice for real spiritual battles. It is said of the Spartans that they had more comforts in war than in training. They were so well prepared that when they faced actual combat it was easy. In a similar manner, we, too, prepare ourselves for the battle with our Old Adam, that clings so fiercely to our fallen flesh.

But as we fast, we never fast from Grace. We never deprive ourselves of the Word and the Sacrament of Christ's flesh and blood that gives us life and salvation. Thus, we resume weekly observance of the Lord's Supper and Midweek services to meditate on God's Word. Blessed Lent to you all.

The Blood of Jesus: The Book of Hebrews in Lent

Refreshments served after services.

Ash Wednesday, March 9, 7:00 pm
Divine Service with Holy Communion
Shared Blood (Hebrews 2:10–18)

Wednesday, March 16, 7:00 pm
Cleansing Blood (Hebrews 9:6–14)

Wednesday, March 23, 7:00 pm
Pardoning Blood (Hebrews 9:15–22)

Wednesday, March 30, 7:00 pm
Access With Blood (Hebrews 10:19–22)

Wednesday, April 6, 7:00 pm
Speaking Blood (Hebrews 12:22–24)

Wednesday, April 13th, 7:00 pm
Holy Blood (Hebrews 13:9–16)

Maundy Thursday, April 21, 7:00 pm
Divine Service with Holy Communion

Good Friday, April 22, 7:00 pm
Divine Service with Holy Communion

Easter Vigil, April 23, 5:30 pm
Divine Service with Holy Communion

Easter Sunrise, April 24, 6:00 am
Divine Service with Holy Communion

Easter Day, April 24, 9:00 am
Divine Service with Holy Communion

GREETERS LIST

- Mar 6 Laverl Byers – West
Bekcy Kappes – East
- Mar 13 Tim & Tresa Pollock – West
Harold & Irene Wattjes - East
- Mar 20 Donna & Gunnar Campbell – West
Jim Dyer – East
- Mar 27 Joan Vukelich – West
Laverl Byers – East
- Apr 3 Becky Kappes – West
Tim & Tresa Pollock – East
- Apr 10 Harold & Irene Wattjes – West
Donna & Gunnar Campbell – East
- Apr 17 Jim Dyer – West
Joan Vukelich – East
- Apr 24 Ruth Sims – West
Laverl Byers - East

GREETERS NEEDED

COFFEE COMMITTEE

- Mar Laverl Byers
- Apr Ann Carroll
- May Arleigh Jones
- Jun Ruth Sims
- Jul Harold & Irene Wattjes
- Aug Pastor & Lauren Braaten
- Sep Laverl Byers
- Oct Harold & Irene Wattjes
- Nov Jerry & Joyce Alexander
- Dec Pastor & Lauren Braaten

ALTAR COMMITTEE

- Mar Ann Carroll, Ann Hilgendorf & Janice Arthur
- Apr Ruth Bretz, Marylin Joergens , Carol Munson & Sue Danielson
- May Joan Vukelich & Theresa Fields
- Jun Holly Wikoff and Sharon Allen
- Jul Delores Ford & Becky Kappes
- Aug Janice Arthur & Janet Stumeier
- Sep Wanda Long & Irene Wattjes
- Oct Theresa Fields & Sharon Allen
- Nov Ann Hilgendorf & Carol Munson
- Dec Ann Carroll, Holly Wikoff, Sherrie Hoel & Tonia Timlin

ATTENDANCE		OFFERINGS		
Saturday	Sunday	General	Missions	Building
2/5 11	2/6 64	1985.00	55.00	175.00
2/12 20	2/13 80	2812.78		20.00
2/19 13	2/20 69	1602.27		20.00
2/26	2/27			
TOTALS 44	213			
Average	86	6400.05	55.00	215.00

EDUCATION CORNER

Raising Children in a Sensual Society

by Ted Kober

Today's technology has opened the dangers of sexual temptation to the youngest users of the Internet and cell phones. The Internet, primetime television, movies, music videos, books and tabloids have desensitized parents and children to sexual impurity. Advertising in all media promotes products with sensual messages. Sex is used to tantalize, entertain and sell.

The result? Our biblical perspective of sexuality is undermined. Intimacy within marriage is violated. Sex before marriage is now expected. Homosexuality is portrayed as acceptable. Internet pornography appears as entertainment and useful for improving relationship between "partners." We live in a highly sensual society that directly contradicts the Bible's teaching on God's intent for sexual relations.

Unless Christians proactively seek God's direction, our views on such matters will be shaped by the world around us. When parents fail to be intentional about addressing these issues, their children develop values contrary to God's will. When pastors and teachers fail to proactively teach God's Word on sexuality, God's people are influenced more by society.

Aren't Christians minimally impacted?

Christian families are not immune from these ills. Christian institutions from elementary schools to universities wrestle with these issues. At Ambassadors of Reconciliation, our reconcilers have encountered numerous cases involving youth from Christian families.

For example, children, teenagers and young adults of both genders have engaged in sexting,

that is, sending nude photos or explicitly sexual messages through cell phones. Using personal Web pages, young people have posted naked pictures of themselves or friends. Some youth have used computer Web cameras to video stream live sexual activities. A number of these events have taken place in Christian communities including schools and universities. These cases occur in rural settings as well as urban—any place where Internet and cell phone services exist.

Consequences are severe. Some young people have forfeited their opportunities to serve in careers such as teaching school or working with youth at church or in sports. Children and parents have experienced criminal consequences and legal liability. Sadly, some cases have resulted in suicide.

These situations give rise to significant conflict and hurt, and the families involved are devastated. Many are crying for help. But the church remains mostly silent, pretending that sexual temptation in a high-tech society is not affecting us.

What makes this form of sexual temptation so dangerous?

Luke (not his real name) started viewing Internet pornography at age 12. He progressed into live chat rooms where he engaged in cybersex (interacting with others online for sexual purposes). At 14, he told his parents that he was spending the weekend at a friend's house. Actually, he flew to another state to meet his 45-year-old male Internet friend for his first homosexual encounter. Luke is now in his twenties, and his father cried sharing with me that Luke's first long-term partner had just died from AIDS.

We live in a highly sensual society that directly contradicts the Bible's teaching on God's intent for sexual relations.

The dangers of sexual sins are addressed in Holy Scripture. However, more than any other form of sexual impurity known before, the exploding industry of Internet pornography and cybersex threatens to spark a new wave of sexual immorality and misconduct in our homes, schools, churches and businesses. What makes this form so dangerous? Sexual temptation from the Internet is easily accessible to anyone regardless of age or gender;

- offers a sense of anonymity;
- is affordable;
- seeks users out. A person doesn't have to be looking for it;
- feeds sexual lust, contributing to a deeper progression of sexual sin.

Alarming dangers for children

Today's technology provides more access to information and social networking than any time in history. Children learn early on how to use technology without fear or reservations. Young users quickly become proficient, accessing volumes of information not previously available.

Because of the prolific expansion of sexually explicit material on the Internet, this, too, has become accessible to children with horrific effects. Sara Gaines of *Guardian Unlimited* reports that, in a study by the London School of Economics, 90 percent of children ages 11-16 have viewed Internet pornography, usually unintentionally at first. While some reject first encounters, curiosity often draws many in. Soon a child's view of sexuality is shaped by what is experienced online. Sexually explicit content that was once unavailable to minors is easily accessible through computers in the bedroom, a friend's home and even on cell phones.

- While there are significant benefits to technology, dangers can include
- spending too much time in social networking or playing games;
- bullying or being victimized by others;
- viewing sexually explicit sites;

- interacting with strangers in a sexual manner;
- being solicited by a sexual predator;
- exchanging nude or sexually explicit material by cell phone or e-mail.

Parenting children in a high-tech world

Fighting a sensual culture is neither easy nor simple. One must be proactive to raise Godly children in a sexually impure society.

Parents who invest time developing close relationships with their children work proactively. This deliberate effort requires sacrifice but provides lifelong rewards. When parents are too busy to invest in their children's lives, kids often fill their time with unsupervised activity that includes unrestrained use of technology.

To minimize dangers and prepare children for resisting sexual temptation in a high-tech world, try some of these options.

- Spend time with your children, playing, working and, most important, meditating on God's Word (devotions).
- Teach your children about God's design for sexuality.
- Talk to your kids about the dangers of the Internet and sexual temptation in our society, including the Internet, television, movies, music texts and videos, magazines, cell phones and friends' influence.
- Build relationships through conflict. Practice confession and forgiveness in the home, including proclaiming God's forgiveness when sin is addressed.

Provide accountability:

- Explain that use of technology in the home is a privilege, not a right.
- Limit use of all technology.
- Monitor use of television and movies, music, Internet, personal Web pages and cell phone.
- Do not allow computers to be located in a bedroom or other private space.
- Install accountability software that reports access of inappropriate sites to the parent.
- Install blocking software to limit what is accessed in the home.

*Responsible
parents
Monitor their
Children's
use
Of
technology.*

- Model balanced and appropriate use of technology. Children learn by a parent's example.

Some parents resist setting boundaries for their children's use of technology. However, even non-Christian employers restrict and monitor the use of technology in the workplace. Should parents do any less for their own children? Furthermore, federal law holds the contracting person responsible (Internet service, wireless service, etc.) for possession, production or transmission of child pornography. When a minor is engaged in sharing nude photos or videos, parents may be legally responsible and charged with a felony. Responsible parents monitor their children's use of technology.

Seize the opportunity to share God's grace

When we realize how dangerous our world can be for our children, we can either live in fear or

see an opportunity. God promises that with the power of the Gospel we can live lives worthy of our calling. Remember when teaching and or exercising discipline to proclaim God's forgiveness. Use experiences of dealing with sinful matters as opportunities for applying both God's Law as well as His Gospel. Monitoring and boundaries will not protect children from all dangers. They need to learn how to apply both Law and Gospel to daily temptation and sin.

No matter how threatening our sinful world can be. Christ came to conquer sin, death and the devil. We need not fear the temptations of our world but rather put our trust in Him who died for us. As the apostle Peter teaches, "He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed" (1Peter 2:24).

> **Did you know?** Pew Internet and American Life Project reports that, "54% of teens [are] texting daily. Half of teens send 50 or more text messages a day, or 1,500 texts a month."

> **Did you know?** Pew Internet and American Life Project reports that, "96% of 18-to-29-year-olds own a cell phone of some kind."

About the Author: *Ted Kober* is president of *Ambassadors of Reconciliation*, a non-profit organization whose mission is equipping Lutherans and their churches for living, proclaiming and cultivating lifestyles of reconciliation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CPH offers excellent resources for parents, teachers, and children in its Learning about Sex series. They provide a biblical view with a Law/Gospel approach and are available for different age groups and genders, as well as for parents (www.cph.org).

GO TO www.hisaor.org/articles

The Ambassadors of Reconciliation Bible study and DVD *Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society* is designed for all teens and adults. It can be used in small groups, youth groups, Sunday mornings, youth or adult retreats and more (www.hisaor.org).

Free website information (www.hisaor.org) under "Articles."

Video: Why a Bible Study on Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society?

"Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society," a three-part article series

Sexting: A Dangerous New Temptation ... and an Opportunity for Ministry

Announcing God's Grace for confession and forgiveness in the family

From the Lutheran Witness Magazine; February 2011 Issue



Life Together

What Is It We Actually Share?

So, what is this “life together” in the Church? What does it mean that we in the Missouri Synod are “in this together”? And what finally holds us together anyway?

The answer to these questions would appear to be quite simple. We are like-minded religiously or at least enough to participate in a local congregation. We are comfortable together in this or that congregation. We are free to associate as we wish in this country and have freely decided to join our local LCMS church. Though we have many differences across the Synod, we share certain goals, and as free individuals and congregations, we freely decide to associate for worthy religious and charitable ends.

As much truth as there is in these answers, they certainly don’t get at what the Bible says holds us together as Christian and truly Lutheran.

In the new three-fold emphasis—WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER—this third aspect of LIFE TOGETHER is how we’ve rendered the New Testament word *koinonia*. The word means “participation,” “having something in common,” or “a sharing in something.” Quite often in the writings of St. Paul, when he mentions this sharing, he also notes what is shared. Thus, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship [*koinonia*] of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). In other words, those “called into fellowship” share Jesus.

Now note who the actor is: “*God* is faithful.” He’s the One acting. He’s doing the primary sharing too! What Jesus says to His apostles applies also to us: “You did not choose Me, but I chose you” (John 15:16). “You were called [passive] into the fellowship of His Son.” Because of God’s action, God’s doing, God’s calling, we have been brought into a “fellowship,” a “communion,” a “sharing.” As Paul notes, we share in “His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

This life in Christ—the vertical *koinonia* or sharing in Christ, created by *Him*—also creates a “life together” with others in Christ—the horizontal *koinonia*. Even with

Christians with whom we do not share official church fellowship, we believe *koinonia* exists, though hidden. For we believe, with our Lutheran Confessions, that wherever Jesus is with His Word and Sacrament, there are believers (Preface to the Book of Concord), also far and wide outside the orthodox Lutheran Church, if only the Gospel is not totally eclipsed.

The great importance of *koinonia* as LIFE TOGETHER is marvelously displayed by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 10–12, his great teaching chapters on the Lord’s Supper and the Church. Paul writes, “The bread that we break, is it not a participation [*koinonia*] in the body of Christ?” In the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, we share Christ’s body and blood, so Paul continues: “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor. 10:17). From our sharing in Christ’s body come very deep ethical ramifications. Because we are one body in Christ, “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Cor. 12:26; cf. Acts 2:42, 45; 4:32).

Luther wrote a splendid tract on this topic. In one of my favorite passages, he stated,

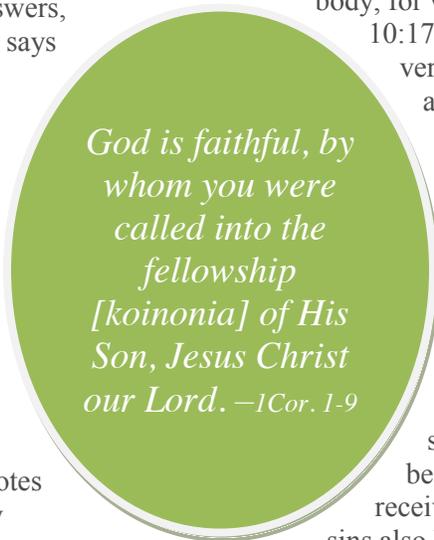
This fellowship consists in this, that all the spiritual possession of Christ and his saints [i.e., believers] are shared with and become the common property of him who receives this sacrament. Again all sufferings and sins also become common property; and thus love engenders love in return and [mutual love] unites (LW 35:51).

What do we share? What finally brings us together and holds us together? Jesus. And so we have a LIFE TOGETHER that includes a great array of important aspects and tasks (circuits, pastor and teacher conferences, Concordia Plan Services, seminaries and universities, reconciliation, CTCR, and many others).

Our life together is a gift (“spiritual possession of Christ”) and a gift to be tended (“love engenders love . . . and unites”).

Pastor Matthew Harrison

From the Lutheran Witness Magazine; February 2011 Issue



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