

THE LINK

DEALING WITH MANIFEST SINNERS IN THE CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION

Dear fellow heirs of Christ's eternal glory:

There are two things that every member of a Christian congregation has in common. First, we are sinners, every one of us. There is no member of Immanuel Lutheran Church that can claim to be without sin. And Scripture tells us that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Not only that, but we make God a liar. Every baptized Christian is and remains a sinner this side of glory. Some of our sins are known only to us and to our Lord. Some we are not even aware of. But make no mistake—this is our great common denominator.

Second, every one of us has been covered by the blood of God's righteous Son in our baptism. So even though we remain sinners until we die, if we continue in repentance and faith, those sins that we commit daily out of weakness will not harm us or condemn us. In fact, we have this gracious promise from the Lord through His holy apostle: "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

It is expected, of course, that those who do receive absolution will take strides to amend their sinful lives. This is the fruit of a living faith. We tell those who come to the Lord's Table that they should be sorry for their sins, trust the words of Christ in the Sacrament, and intend, with God's help, to amend their lives. It would be wrong for someone to come to the Sacrament (or receive absolution) with a malicious intent to continue whatever they were doing before.



We recognize, however, that such correction is often done with great weakness and not always with perfect success. Perfectionism is not a possibility, even in the Christian community. If a person is making a sincere attempt to correct what is amiss in his or her Christian

IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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life and is continuing to seek God's help and forgiveness, we consider that person to be a part of Christ's kingdom of grace. He or she would not be subject to church discipline or suspension from the holy Sacrament. This is also true of those who struggle with habitual sins. They remain under God's grace, so long as they do not yield their will completely to sin.

It is this strong belief in the reconciling love and mercy of God in Christ that leads the Church to act with care and patience towards erring members of its community. The Lord's teaching, "with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged" (Matt. 7)

and His desire that we forgive others as we have been forgiven (Matt. 6:14-15; 18:15 ff.) prevents us from acting hastily when removing someone from the Christian congregation. Even when this must be done, it is done so only reluctantly and after several attempts to win the erring brother or sister back to repentance.

On the other hand, Jesus knows that manifest sin must be dealt with in the Christian community, or else it will be harmful to the whole body of Christ. This is likely what he was implying when he said in the Sermon on the Mount: "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell" (Matt. 5:29-30). If the Church is the "body of Christ," then the "eye" and the right hand" are the offending members of the Church who are causing others to fall away.

So, while the Church should not be hasty in excommunicating someone from its fellow-

ship, it also cannot afford to ignore manifest sin or let it go unchecked. Otherwise, it will "so contaminate the entire community that they soon find it acceptable for themselves and the whole body (Matthew 5:30; that is, the church), with the result that the adulter-

ous member goes to hell (Matthew 5:29-30)." 1.

While the Church cannot root out all sin in the congregation since that would mean uprooting the wheat with the weeds (See Matthew 13:24-30), a faithful practice of fraternal discipline would accomplish two things—first, it would strike godly fear into the hearts of the other mem-

bers and warn them against committing the same errors, and second, it would give opportunity for the offending party to repent and for the Church to speak Christ's forgiveness.

But why do this at all? Why not just deal with such matters privately? Why bring the whole congregation in on it? For one thing, this is the wise instruction and counsel of our Lord Himself. In Matthew 18, Jesus says: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

If the sin is private, known only to you and the offending party, then it must remain a private matter, until the effort has been made to show him his fault. Only then, and only if one is first unsuccessful in gaining the brother through



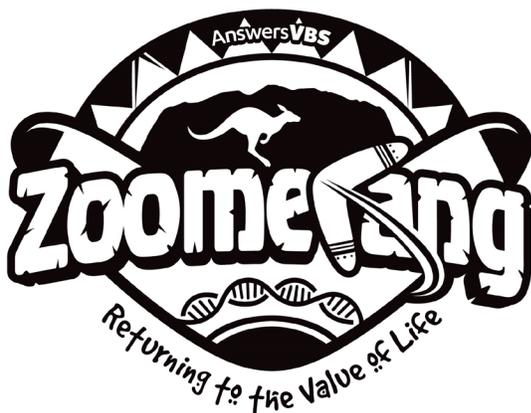
private admonition, should it be shared with others. The purpose of bringing it to the attention of one or two others is so that they can be brought in as witnesses and further attempt to show him his fault that he might repent. If this proves unsuccessful, then the matter can be brought before the congregation. The purpose of telling it to the church is, again, to try and move him to repent of his sins and be reconciled to Christ. If he repents, then he is to be forgiven and the matter is dropped. If not, the final step is excommunication. "If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

To a large extent, the Church has forgotten how to use the Lord's keys. We think it is enough if the Word of God is preached. We prefer to leave things up to an individual's conscience rather than lovingly and evan-

gelically seeking correction and repentance. Our fear of being viewed as hypocritical often leads us to treat impenitent sinners as if they were still members of Christ's kingdom of grace when in fact, they are outside of it by their own doing. In short, I think that we are afraid of saying what needs to be said. I believe more instruction is needed in our congregations on this matter and plan to work with our church leaders and elders in becoming more faithful in exercising the Office of the Keys.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Beisel

1. David Scaer, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Church's First Statement of the Gospel*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2000).



**Join us for VBS
 August 8-12
 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
 (Meal provided.)**

**Volunteers needed!
 Questions?
 please contact Liz Wieting.**

HUMAN CARE

Be of support to mother and child.

- Support the Lighthouse Center of Hope in Iowa Falls with your financial assistance, donation of supplies, or volunteer help.
- Pray for the Lighthouse as it provides care and support for women who grieve abortions in their past.
- Host a meal for clients of the Lighthouse so they can build community, hear the Good News, and experience the love of God through Christian friendship. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unaware" (Hebrews 13:2).
- Ask the Lighthouse how you might "adopt" an expectant mom. Take her for coffee or lunch. Do Bible study together.
- Inquire about helping with a parenting class at the Lighthouse so that a new mom and her family might gain wisdom for "training up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6).

THANK YOU, IMMANUEL, FOR PARTNERING FINANCIALLY WITH THE LIGHTHOUSE FOR MANY YEARS

CHRISTIANS IN A WOKE WORLD

A Bible Study

(Editor's Note: Every other Sunday, Steve Barhite is leading Immanuel's adult Bible class in the study of *Christians In A Woke World: A Call to Courage, Confess and Love* written by Rev. Paul Dare. To understand "wokeism," a Christian must first understand the new Marxism, which is often called Cultural Marxism. It is a religion, with teachings and practice that oppose the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The following are excerpts from Lesson 7 and 8.)

LESSON 7 MARXISM IN AMERICA



Last month, we discussed the ideas of Antonio Gramsci who, in order to overthrow the culture, envisioned an army of Marxist intellectuals gradually controlling all key institutions of civil society. . . . In Gramsci's words, "In the new order, Socialism will triumph by first capturing the culture via infiltration of schools, universities, churches, and the media by transforming the consciousness of society."

In 1923, followers of Gramsci's ideas and intellectual members and sympathizers of the Marxist communist party set up The Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt University in Weimar, Germany. It became known as the Frankfurt School Willi Munzenberg, a leading Marxist scholar, stated explicitly that its goal was to "organize the intellectuals and use them to make western civilization sink."

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, most members of the Frankfurt School were forced to flee the country because they were not only communists but also Jewish. Eventually they settled in the U.S. In 1935, the Institute for Social Research affiliated itself with Columbia University. The Frankfurt School existed as a think tank to corrupt traditional Christian values of western culture with pseudo-values included under the umbrella term of Cultural Marxism.

Do you see evidence of Cultural Marxism in universities, schools, and churches today?

7a. Universities: In a 2006 poll of American sociology professors, nearly 18% identified themselves as Marxist. Other polls have had the num-

ber as high as 25%. **[What do you think] about your child having roughly a 1 in 5 chance of being taught a Marxist worldview at college? Does this in any way help explain why the values of [many] Christian youth abruptly change when they go to college?**

7b. Schools: A "hot" issue today is the teaching of Critical Race Theory in schools. Critical Race Theory is Critical Theory applied to the matter of Race. It is a key philosophy of Cultural Marxism that claims that all of American society is based on White Supremacy. Critical Race Theory teaches people to see every matter in society in terms of a racial power dynamic, mainly white people oppressing minority groups.

- There have been many stories of Critical Race Theory in the schools over the last year.
- Included among them are: 1. Schools claiming traditional approaches to math education [such as getting the correct answer], promotes racism and white supremacy; 2. Insisting that assignments being turned in on time is racist; 3. Objectivity is racist. . . .
- **Are values such a objectivity, responsibility, punctuality, and correct answers born out of racism? Why do you answer as you do?**
- As of May 20, 2021, this Critical Race Theory is being formally challenged in 20 states. Clearly, it is being taught across the country. **[What do you think] about school children, perhaps your child or grandchild, being taught that he or she is either an oppressive racist or a helpless victim that needs to overthrow "the system?" . . .**

7d. The Church: In major sections of the Christian Church, "social gospel" has replaced the true, Biblical Gospel. Social gospel is the application of Christian ethics to social problems such as poverty, poor nutrition and education, crime, and war. Unfortunately, these things are emphasized at the expense of teaching sin, salvation, heaven and hell, and most importantly, Jesus dying on the cross to save us from our sins. In other words, fixing society *is* the (social) gospel. While the origins of this so-called gospel are not Marxist, they have found themselves to be partners because of their shared ideology. Some prominent theologians from mainstream Christian denominations even credit Marx for their church's social interests. Churches

who no longer regard the Bible as the inspired Word of God often preach this so-called (social) gospel.

7e. The presence of Cultural Marxist ideology in our major institutions can be concerning, even frightening, to Christians. **How do the following verses provide comfort and strength for Christians while living in these gray and latter days? Specifically, what does God promise in Psalm 23:4-6? Matthew 16:18?**

LESSON EIGHT MARXISM IN THE CHURCH: LIBERATION THEOLOGY



Cultural Marxist thinking intentionally targeted [and undermined] the church. . . . Ibram Kendi* contrasts Liberation Theology with the Biblical Gospel, which he calls "Savior Theology." Savior Theology, according to Kendi, is "to go out and save these individuals who are behaviorally deficient. In other words, we are to bring them into the church, these individuals who are doing all these evil, sinful things, and heal them. And save them. And once we've saved them, we've done our job."

8a. While Christians may not entirely agree with Kendi's definition of "Savior Theology," do you agree that as Christians we are to call people to repent of their sins and find healing in the forgiveness of sins provided in our Savior Jesus Christ? Consider the words of Jesus in Luke 24:46-47.

8b. By contrast, Kendi said that Liberation Theology teaches that "Jesus is a revolutionary" and the job of the Christian is "to revolutionize society" and the job of the Christian church is to "liberate society from the powers that are oppressing humanity." **Are Christians called to be part of liberating the oppressed? Consider God's Word in Jeremiah 22:3.**

8c. That being said, is Jesus our "Savior" from sins or a "revolutionary liberator?" Consider the very name the Father Himself gave to His Son, Jesus. The name "Jesus" means, "The Lord saves." Read Matthew 1:21.

8d. According to the Father Himself, what is Jesus saving us from?

8e. Marxism and Liberation Theology desire a heaven on earth, but did Jesus come to set up an earthly kingdom? Consider Jesus' response in John 18:36.

8f. Based on the above verses alone, it's clear that Jesus was sent in love by the Father to be our Savior from sin. Jesus did not come to set up an earthly utopia. Yet, read Jeremiah 22:3 again. **Are Christians excused from caring about what happens here on earth?**

8g. Liberation Theology does not accept Savior Theology (as it was dubbed by Kendi) that teaches Jesus is our Savior from sin who also cares for the downtrodden. Kendi said that is "right in line with racist ideas and racist ideology." In short, Ibram Kendi considers traditional Christian ministry to be racist. Kendi concluded that Savior Theology is racist because it tells people the reason they are struggling on earth is "because of their own sinful deeds," rather than oppressive power structures. Kendi also said, "That type of (Savior) theology breeds bigotry." In other words, Kendi is saying that you are not responsible for your actions or the consequences of them. Proclaiming repentance of sins isn't just bigotry but it is breeding bigotry. In Liberation Theology, oppressive power structures cause all problems and if you don't get on board with that thinking, you are a racist.

8h. What does this mean for Christian ministry? Liberation Theology excuses a person in an oppressed group from reflecting on his thoughts and actions and repenting. Consequently, suggesting that an oppressed person may need to repent is considered racist. Liberation Theology eliminates the very thing that Jesus told us to do, proclaim "repentance" and "forgiveness of sins" in His Name.

8i. The words of Kendi demonstrate that Marxist thinking and Christianity are not compatible. Kendi clearly understands this. **Do we? What do you answer as you do?**

* Ibram X. Kendi is a professor of Humanities at Boston University, a #1 New York Times bestselling author, and generally considered the leading antiracist voice in the country. His third book, *How to be an Antiracist*, is required reading on most college campuses. He recently released a child's book, *Antiracist Baby*. He states that the greatest threat to the antiracism movement is being "colorblind," that is, treating people equally no matter who they are.

Rev. Dare serves as Sr. Pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Alexandria, MN. He has been featured on the national podcast "Issues, Etc."

Please order *Christians In A Woke World* for your family from Amazon.com while it is still available.

Roe v Wade: Now What?

LIFE THROUGH LUTHERAN LENSES



God tells Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart...” (1:5).

This means that before Jeremiah ever knew God, God knew Jeremiah. It also means that before you ever knew God, God knew you. Before the foundations of the world were laid, Jeremiah was set apart to be with God and to love and serve God. The same is also true for you.

God’s purposes for you go back before your birth, before you were conceived, and before the world was created. Long before you thought God was important, God thought you were important. Long before you ever heard the name of Jesus Christ, Christ had already committed to dying for you so that you could live a life truly worth living--a life lived in hope.

On June 24, 2022, in one of the most historic rulings of the last 50 years, the United States Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. This is a giant step toward protecting life, particularly the life of the unborn. It is a giant step toward honoring the fact that God knows and has a purpose for each and every human being--a purpose formed before the creation of the world

However, to be clear, the overturning of Roe v. Wade does not make abortion illegal. It simply puts the authority to ban, regulate, or promote abortion into the hands of each state. This will both change and charge the political landscape of the United States. Our deeply divided nation will now be more divided than at any point in recent history.

So, what does this mean for us as Christian members of our society? What do we do and how are we supposed to act in light of this ruling?

First, we need to humble ourselves and pray. . . . We can ask God to show us how to be a part of the solution, part of the healing our nation so desperately needs, healing that can only be found through the love of Jesus Christ. The reality is that Jesus died for us all. He died for those who are feeling challenged and hopeless because they are faced with an unexpected pregnancy. He died for the unwed

mother. . . . He died for the father who may not have any say in whether or not his child [is allowed to live]. He died for those who have nowhere to turn. He died for those who feel like abortion is the only option. He died for those grieving the abortions they have had.

Second, we need to find ways to truly support life. [For many of us, that means doing what we’ve been doing. For others, it means engaging in ways we have not. It means not only supporting the Lighthouse Center of Hope in Iowa Falls financially and prayerfully, but also as a volunteer. It means we need to be willing to walk alongside moms and dads who have chosen to bring life into the world.] We, as the Church, should be leading the way in this arena. People need to know that we will be there for them for the long haul.

Third, we need to offer support in a way that shows the unconditional love of Christ. Love is not love if there are strings attached. Love is not love if it is only given to those who love us. To love as Jesus loves is to live and serve with *agape* love, the sacrificial love that is given freely while expecting nothing in return. To truly support life, then, means that we are to love and support those facing unexpected pregnancies regardless of their past experiences, regardless of how they see their future. Protecting life can have no qualifiers. Jesus died for the preborn child and we are called to be Christ’s hands and feet in this world for everyone, not just those who look like us, think like us, or believe like us.

. . . If we truly believe God’s Word in Jeremiah 1:5, then we will recognize that God called us to be His Church for such a time as this--to love and support those whom God has lovingly created and set apart.

. . . Long before you ever heard the name of Jesus Christ, Christ had already committed to dying for you so that you could live a life truly worth living--a life lived in hope. May we glorify God in word and deed as we strive to help others realize this too.

(Source: www.lutheranlenses.com)

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!**

- 1 Jade Thomas
- Marilyn Venner
- 5 Zach Rodamaker
- 8 Gordy Lubbers
- Wendy Lyman
- 11 Bret Schutt
- 12 Emma Harding
- 14 Craig Bell
- Dennis Irwin
- 15 Austin Thies
- 16 Marc Richmann
- 18 Kelsey Barhite
- 19 Brayden Thies
- 21 George Mumm
- Gary Pommrehn
- 22 Lance Barhite
- 31 Joyce Irwin

ACOLYTES

- 3 Collyn Hofmeister
- 10 Isaac Doering
- 17 Will Hofmeister
- 24 Collin Pieper
- 31 Jackson Wieting

ELDER:

Randy Harding

VIDEOTAPERS

- 3 Jon Bartlett
- 10 Chris Wieting
- 17 Paul Bartlett
- 24 Steve Barhite
- 31 Scott Wosepka

VIDEO SHOWING

- 3 Lance Barhite
- 10 Gordy Lubbers
- 17 Steve Ites
- 24 Denny Neubauer
- 31 Denny Neubauer

**HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY!**

- 8 Bret & Jackie Schutt
- Chris & Liz Wieting
- 11 Jon & Angie Bartlett
- 13 Branden & Lisette Pieper
- 13 Jerry & Joan Rieghard
- 22 Mike & Donna Aldinger

GREETERS

- 3 James & Bonniesue
- Van Hove
- 10 CJ Doering family
- 17 Bret & Jackie Schutt
- 24 Bill Moats,
- Fred & Mary Schutt
- 31 High School Boys

WELCOMERS

Steve & Sandi Ites
Dennis Neubauer

ALTAR ASSISTANTS

- 3 Ann Ellen Hofmeister
- 10 Sydney Holland
- 17 Emma Kloetzer
- 24 Ava Pieper
- 31 Allie Off

VIRTUAL ORGAN

Blake Pieper
Martin Beisel
Ethan Bartlett



**COUNCIL MEETING
July 14 - 7:00 p.m.**

(includes president,
vice president, secretary,
treasurer & board chairmen)

**VOTERS' MEETING
July 21 - 7:00 p.m.**



LWML

Assignments

Altar: Lisette Pieper,
Margaret Ritland

Flowers: Sandi Ites

Coffee: Sharon Henson

Rebekah Circle

No July meeting

Joy Circle

No July meeting

THRIFTSHOP

Friday, July 15 - 9:45

Angie Bartlett, Donna Olsen,
Sandy Lettow, Sharon Henson

1:00 p.m.

Charlene Hanson,
Nancy Waggoner

***We could use more
volunteers!***

**PLEASE PRAY
FOR OUR HOMEBOUND
& SHUT-IN MEMBERS:**

SCENIC MANOR:

Dorothy Barhite
Audrey Fleener

**HUBBARD
CARE CENTER**

Brad Mumm
503 State St. #313
Hubbard 50122

**AT HOME IN
IOWA FALLS:**

Gary & Sharon Groff,
Norman & Dorothy Fiddelke